CHAPTER-VI
ANTI-KAMARAJ AND ANTI-CONGRESS POLITICS OF RAJAJI

The Congress party, the oldest and biggest political party in India, founded in 1885 with the object of seeking constitutional redress for the grievances of the Indian masses, slowly attained the status of a genuine national organization, with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919. During the Gandhian Era, the national movement was going on one side and the ideological conflicts going on the other side within the Congress. From the beginning, Congress party had been having a number of groups such as the Mylapore group, Egmore group, Moderate group, Extremist group, Gandhian group, Swarajist group and so on.\(^1\) In Tamil Nadu, for instance, two factions vied for control of the T.N.C.C., in 1920. One faction known as the Nationalists, centred in Madras City and was led by S.Sathyamurthy and Kasturiranga Iyengar. The other was led by Rajaji contained upcountry men largely from western Tamil Nadu who wished to challenge the city’s domination of provincial politics.\(^2\) In 1920, Rajaji’s faction aligned with Gandhi in All India Politics and emerged the ascendant.

Rajaji had helped to establish Thiru.Vi.Kalyanasundara Mudaliar’s \textit{Desabaktan} as an organ of his faction in the Congress.\footnote{Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, T.V., \textit{Valkkai Kurippugal} (Tamil) Autobiography, Madras, 1969, pp.275-282.} Rajaji attempted to convert the Madras wing of the Congress Party into an active Pro-Gandhi organization.\footnote{Eugene F.Irschick, \textit{Politics and social conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil separatism 1916-1929}, \textit{Bombay}, 1969, p.193} The groupism and factionalism was rightly called the ‘Cancer of the Congress party’ and it paved the way for the decline and downfall of the Congress party in power in Tamil Nadu in 1967.\footnote{Report on the Fourth General Elections in Madras 1967, Vol.II, Madras, 1968, pp.98-99.} K.Kamaraj and Rajaji were the two personalities of the Congress party in India as well as in Tamil Nadu at that time. In every stage and every matter K.Kamaraj and Rajaji were indulged in struggle for power on the ideological lines. Rajaji’s caste politics and programmes such as the new educational scheme or ‘\textit{Kula Kalvi Thittam}’ and other activities created difference of opinions between the two on the one side and the ideological conflict paved the way for the growth of the Dravidian political parties particularly \textit{Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam} (D.M.K.) which captured the power in Tamil Nadu on the other. The ideological conflict between Rajaji and K.Kamaraj continued till the D.M.K., came to power in 1967 in Tamil Nadu.
Tamil Nadu contributed its share to the emergence of the national consciousness. Along with the first generation leaders of the I.N.C., in Tamil Nadu such as G.Subramania Iyer, Salem C.Vijayaraghavachariar and others, Rajaji and K.Kamaraj were the second generation leaders who laboured much for the cause of Independence and so on. Basically K.Kamaraj having no proper education or social status but he could become the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and later the president of All India Congress Committee. It was a rare feat which only a few could achieve, especially when politics was confined only to the educated and the aristocrats. Rajaji was a well educated person. He was a Hindu nationalist as much as an Indian nationalist. Tilak was the hero of his youth and later Gandhiji. But later he went against the Congress ideals. When the ideological conflict between Rajaji and K.Kamaraj arose in 1945 many could not understand about this conflict which originated in 1931. During the time of the Civil Disobedience movement, the Tamil Nadu Congress was a divided house. There were two factions in the Tamil Nadu Congress. One was led by Rajaji and the other by S. Sathyamurthy. Rajaji represented the affluent and intellectual section of the Congress in Madras. S.Sathyamurthy on the other hand, was poor and represented the have-nots section of the Congress. The history of Tamil Nadu Congress from 1931 to 1942 was one of the histories of personality politics. There were ups and downs on both sides but the final round was won by S.Sathyamurthy with the help of K.Kamaraj. These personality
politics occurred on the ideological lines. These ideological conflicts were reflected in some of the events such as T.N.C.C., presidential elections of 1931, 1939, and 1940 the, first Congress Ministry of 1937, Quit-India movement of 1942, and the Tiruparankunram incident of 1945 and K.Kamaraj’s resignation in 1946 over the Gandhiji’s statement of ‘Clique’ and so on.6

The year 1946-1947 witnessed the power struggle that took place in the Madras Presidency after the 1946 general election among the prominent leaders of the Congress. Among the leaders of the Madras Presidency, two were then towering personalities; one was Rajaji who had the support of the Congress high command and the other was K. Kamaraj, the resident of the T.N.C.C. and the disciple of S.Sathyamurthy. Rajaji who was the Premier of the first Congress ministry had a natural claim to become the Premier but could not ascertain his claim as a result of his action and policies before 1946. He re-entered the Congress with stiff opposition after his exit in 1942. But he had a group of his own. At the same time, the T.N.C.C., was under the full control of K.Kamaraj, the President of the Congress Committee from 1940 to 1952. In the Tamil Nadu Congress Executive Committee out of 14 members, 13 were the supporters of K.Kamaraj. But the Madras Legislative Congress party was the combination of members from the whole of Madras

6 Extracts from F.R., 1942-1944, Vol.74, p.32; All India Congress Committee File No.29/1945 and No.26/1945; Harijan, 10th February 1946.
Presidency. No meeting of the legislature was held since November 1939 after the resignation of Rajaji ministry. During the period of the Second World war the Madras Presidency was under the rule of the Governor. The Assembly was not dissolved till 1st October 1945 though the Rajaji ministry resigned in 1939.\footnote{Report on the Administration of the Madras Presidency, 1945-1946, Part-I, Madras, 1947, pp.4-7.} Fresh elections were ordered but were not completed by 31st March 1946.\footnote{Ibid., Part-II, pp.5-9.}

In the 1946 election, Congress swept the polls and in the legislature of the composite Madras Presidency, the Congress won 164 seats out of 215.\footnote{Extracts from F.R., 1945-1950, Vol.75, p.27.} K.Kamaraj himself was elected to the Assembly from the Sattur, Aruppukottai Constituency without opposition.\footnote{G.O.No.822, Public (Election) Department, 4th April 1946.} The problem that came up after the success of the Congress party was the choice of a leader. In other presidencies, the leaders who led the Congress ministries during 1937 returned to power. Only in Madras there was opposition to the return of Rajaji to power. But the Central leadership of the Congress was keen on bringing Rajaji back to head the ministry.\footnote{C.W.M.G., Vol.LXXXIII, Ahemedabad, p.249; Durga Das, (ed.), Sardar Patel’s Correspondence, 1945-1950, Vol.III, Ahemedabad, 1972, p.2.} K.Kamaraj did not favour either Rajaji or T.Prakasam and his choice was not known. Under such difficult conditions a proper leader should be chosen, otherwise the province would
go to ruins.\textsuperscript{12} Even a message was sent to the provincial Congress by Azad, the President of All India Congress on the eve of the election of the legislative party leader with the approval of Mahatma Gandhi to elect Rajaji as its leader. To avoid difference of opinion T.Prasam, K.Madhava Menon and K.Kamaraj Presidents of the Provincial Congress Committee of Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively were summoned by the Congress high command to ensure the election of Rajaji.

The party, however, was in no mood to listen to the advice of the high command. When the name of Rajaji was proposed, it was defeated by 148 votes to 38.\textsuperscript{13} The High Command thereupon wanted a panel names to be submitted to the centre to make the choice. This proposal was rejected by the Congress legislature party which again met on 23\textsuperscript{rd} April 1946 to elect its leader. To accommodate the wishes of the Central Party Organisation, K.Kamaraj supported C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar against T.Prasam. But Rajaji, having failed in the race for leadership observed neutrality along with his followers. This led to the victory of T.Prasam, a candidate not favoured by Mahatma Gandhi. Of the two contenders T.Prasam and C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar, the former got elected by 82 votes to 69. But soon difference of opinion arose between K.Kamaraj and T.Prasam over various issues and K.Kamaraj wanted to include Madhava Menon, President

\textsuperscript{12} All India Congress Committee File No.C.L.74/1946, p.22; \textit{M.L.A.D.}, Vol.IV, 1946, pp.1016-1019.

of the Kerala Congress Committee, in the cabinet. But T.Prakasam accommodated Raghava Menon of Malabar area, who belonged to the Pro-Rajaji group. As a result, there was opposition to the T.Prakasam ministry. In March 1947, T.Prakasam was voted out of power and he tendered his resignation to the Governor on 14th March 1947.\(^{14}\) The remarkable feature of the study of the political career of K.Kamaraj from 1946 to 1952 was the key role that he played as the King-Maker in the Madras Provincial politics. Omandur P. Ramasami Reddiar was elected chief minister two times from 21st March 1947 to 1948; P.S.Kumarasamy Raja in 1949 and Rajaji in 1952.\(^{15}\)

Following this, the first general elections were held in 1952 in India as well as Tamil Nadu under the new constitution. In this election, the Congress could not obtain a majority in the Madras Assembly. The Congress was reduced to a minority with only 152 seats in a House of 375. Half of the seats were won by other parties like the Communists-61, Kisan Mazdor Party-35, Tamil Nadu Toilers Party-19, Krishikar Lok Party-15, Socialists-13, Independents-63 and the other parties-17.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Legislative Measures of Popular Ministries from 1920 to October 1939 - May 1946 to October 1963, pp.5-11.
Subsequently K.Kamaraj was deeply affected by the defeat of the Congress candidates. Six of the ministers in P.S.Kumarasamy Raja ministry including the chief minister and B.Gopala Reddy and Kala Venkata Rao were defeated.\textsuperscript{17} Yet the results had shown that no party was in a position to form a ministry. As the Congress could not obtain a majority, some thought of forming a ministry with independents. K.Kamaraj did not support such moves. But at the initiative of the Communists, a United Democratic Front was formed and they claimed absolute majority.\textsuperscript{18} K.Kamaraj’s opponents were trying best to come to an agreement on a common minimum programme in order to see that the Congress do not have an absolute majority. The Non-Congress party felt that it was possible for the rest of them who had opposed the Congress candidates to succeed in forming a coalition government. Efforts were made by leading independents to form a homogeneous bloc.\textsuperscript{19}

At the same time, the Communists Party in alliance with the Praja Socialist Party and some independents, under the leadership of T.Prakasam held a convention of all Non-Congress M.L.A’s on 12\textsuperscript{th} February 1952. About 160 newly elected members for the State Assembly representing the Communist Party, the Kizan Mazdor Party, Tamil Nadu Toilers Party, Krishikar Lok, Common Weal, Forward Bloc and Independents attended the

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\begin{enumerate}
\item F.R., 1\textsuperscript{st} February 1952, p.1.
\item F.R., 25\textsuperscript{th} February 1952, p.2 .
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convention. The general feelings however was that the fundamental differences between the various parties would make it impossible for them to evolve a common front and form a stable ministry and ultimately the Congress as the largest single unit, had to shoulder the responsibility. There was an agitation to remove K.Kamaraj from the presidency of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

Furthermore a section of the Congress leaders like T.T.Krishnamachari, Ramnath Goenka and Sanjiva Reddy wanted Rajaji to be invited to head the ministry. He was their only hope to meet the growing Communist danger and to retrieve the position of the Congress Party. K.Kamaraj supported this move too. K.Kamaraj and Sanjiva Reddy met Rajaji in this connection. At the same time, the All India Congress Working Committee (A.I.W.C.), which was then meeting in Calcutta, decided that the Madras Congress Legislature Party should form a ministry. Following this, the Congress Party met on 29th March 1952 and invited Rajaji to take over the leadership.

When the party’s delegation met Rajaji he asked them to consult Nehru. Two Congressmen went to Delhi for consultations with Nehru. He said he had no objection to the party electing anybody but stipulated that whoever he was, he should be a member of the Assembly. If the person chosen was not such, he should get him elected to the Assembly as soon as possible.

In this regard, the Congress party met on 31st March 1952. K.Kamaraj moved that Rajaji be elected as leader and was supported by Sanjeeva Reddy, Kuttimalu Amma and A.B. Shetty and others. Meanwhile a revealing incident occurred. P.S.Kumarasami Raja recommended to the Governor to nominate Rajaji to the Madras Legislative Council. K.Kamaraj was not informed about it and he learnt it only afterwards. He was deeply disappointed that this had taken place in spite of Nehru’s clear advice that the party should choose an Assembly member or have the selected person become a member of the Assembly. Following this, Rajaji formed his ministry with the support of K.Kamaraj on 10th April 1952. His first move was to invite M.A. Manickavelu Naicker of the Common Wealth the Party to join the ministry. Thereupon the United Front of the opposition broke down.23 Soon after Rajaji’s assumption of power, K.Kamaraj resigned his presidency of T.N.C.C., owing responsibilities for the defeat of the Congress. So that K.Kamaraj gave way to Rajaji to make him President for the effective co-ordination between the party and Government.

Following this, 30th on April 1952 was fixed for the election of the new President for the T.N.C.C., P.S.Kumarasamy Raja had taken pains to Rajaji’s come-back and acceptance of Chief Ministership. Hence Rajaji wanted P.S.Kumarasamy Raja to be the President. K.Kamaraj however did

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23 F.R., 17th April 1952, p.43.
not agree and suggested that P. Subbarayan should elected the President.\textsuperscript{24} As a result, P.Subbarayan was elected the President with the support of K.Kamaraj. Though was not holding the presidential office, K.Kamaraj controlled it. However, the responsibility of heading the T.N.C.C., was too much for him that he laid down the office at the end of the year. When once again on 26\textsuperscript{th} December 1952 there was an election for the presidentialship, Rajaji wanted Bhaktavatchalam to be the President. K.Kamaraj did not accept the suggestion and announced that he would himself stand for the presidency. When his name was proposed, there was none to oppose him. Rajaji did not attend the meeting even. In this regard to presidency K.Kamaraj had never accepted the name suggested by Rajaji.

After the formation of Rajaji - Ministry in 1952, Rajaji proved to be an efficient administrator and he managed the food crisis and countered the Communist menace. At the same time, difference of opinions rose within the Congress Party particularly between Rajaji and K.Kamaraj. As a result the, downfall of the Rajaji - Ministry began. Further, K.Kamaraj was not the prime cause for the overthrow of the Rajaji - Ministry. The prime cause was Rajaji himself who, by his speeches and actions had forfeited the confidence of the party. Those who were dissatisfied with Rajaji expressed the dissatisfaction through K.Kamaraj. The moment Rajaji accepted the Chief

\textsuperscript{24} F.R., 26\textsuperscript{th} April 1952, p.51.
ministership, he said there was no need for the Congress Party. He even cited a proverb and said that just as a ripe fruit ceases its connection with the tree, so too after the achievement of Swaraj, there was no need for the Congress party. This naturally enraged all Congressmen. Furthermore, Rajaji passed orders that Congress Tyagis should not have land assignments and preached those who had already received such assignments to give them up. But Rajaji himself was not doing his ministerial work without salary. Not only was he receiving his salary as minister, but also he was drawing a pension as an ex-Governor-General. Such a man should not object to land assignments to Tyagis. It roused the anger of everyone except those who envied the Tyagis. Secondly, Rajaji dabbled in caste controversies and made liberal use of terms such as Brahmins, Sudras and so on. “I am a Brahmin, so listen to my words”, he said repeatedly. His reappointing of Brahmins who had already retired from service and appointing Brahmins for important posts, cancellation of the reservation of seats for Non-Brahmins in admission to College were all responsible for the widespread feeling that he was deliberately acting against the interests of Non-Brahmins. All these contributed to start the opposition to his ministry. This was strengthened when he started his New Elementary Education Scheme and it was completed when he openly said that his new education scheme was intended to teach traditional callings which only meant the perpetuation of the caste

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system. When he announced his education scheme, even his Education Minister was not consulted, nor did he consult the Legislature Congress Party.\footnote{Muruga Dhanuskodi, \textit{Kamaraj Oru Charithiram}, Madras, 1976, pp.163-165.} When this was pointed out to him, pontifically he proclaimed out that Sankara and Ramanuja did not wait to consult others before they propagated their doctrines. This reply in particular roused the opposition to action. The new Elementary Education Reform was termed ‘\textit{Kula Kalvi Thittam}’ in Tamil, meaning caste based education. It was thought that it would give an opportunity for the village children to help their parents in their traditional profession. According to the system, children were to attend school for half a day and to learn the occupation of the parent during the rest of the day.\footnote{Chockalingam, T. S., \textit{Kamaraj}, Madras, 1955, p.54.} E.V.R., the bitter critic of Rajaji’s return to power, spearheaded a campaign against the scheme. It was alleged that it was an attempt to revive the caste superiority and privileged position of the Brahmins. The agitation gained momentum. K.Kamaraj had been critical of the scheme and wanted Rajaji to withdraw it. There was mounting pressure in and out of the Congress party.\footnote{Thangavelu,G., \textit{Tamizhaga Samuga Panpattu Varalaru}, (Tamil), Part.2, Chennai,2002, pp.331-332.} It was then that K.Kamaraj gave out his views at the T.V.S., function in Madurai.

In this regard, Rajaji, K.Kamaraj and C.P. Ramasamy Iyer among others participated in the house warming ceremony of the new T.V.S., Buildings in Madurai in 1953. As usual Rajaji dragged the Brahmin, Sudra
controversy in his speech. He said that Brahmins were engaged in Motor business which should be done only by Sudras. This angered K.Kamaraj. After praising T.V. Sundaram Iyengar for his handing over the affairs of the company when he became old, Rajaji sat down.30 Here was an opportunity for K.Kamaraj to teach Rajaji some home truths. K.Kamaraj did not let it go. In his speech he said that he agreed with Rajaji’s remarks about handing over responsibility to the younger generation by the old. But he did not stop with this expression of agreement with Rajaji’s view. He went further and said that if such a principle was followed not only in business but in politics also, the nation would be making greater progress than it did now.31 Everyone of the audience was dumbstruck, for K.Kamaraj in his speech had clearly enunciated his views on Rajaji’s leadership and implicitly persuaded him to give place to younger men.

The Anti-Rajaji feeling in Tamil Nadu was no less in intensity in 1953 than in 1945. Though the scheme of educational reorganization which Rajaji propagated was opposed by the Congress party members, K.Kamaraj agreed to avoid a vote whenever the subject came up before the party. This only added fuel to the fire of opposition and in spite of it, K.Kamaraj continued to remain patient. That was a fine political strategy. For there was agitation for fresh election of the leader of the Madras Legislature Congress party after the separation of Andhra. On 6th September 1953, Rajaji made an

important announcement. He said he would be convening a meeting of the party to ascertain whether he was to continue as leader or not.\textsuperscript{32} On 7\textsuperscript{th} September 1953, he made another announcement that he had issued the earlier statement in the belief that K.Kamaraj did not like Rajaji’s continuing as leader. But after a discussion, K.Kamaraj made no objection to the continuance of Rajaji’s leadership and hence he did not convene any party meeting.\textsuperscript{33} This was a veiled attempt to create a mistaken impression about K.Kamaraj. At that time, let it be recalled that the controversy revolved round the Elementary Education Scheme of Rajaji and not about Rajaji’s leadership.\textsuperscript{34} Many urged K.Kamaraj to issue a statement to that effect, but K.Kamaraj did not do so. He was justified in this. Rajaji thought that by offering ministerships to two members of the K.Kamaraj group he could break down the group’s opposition and proceeded to appoint new ministers. When consulted on this, K.Kamaraj opposed the move, for he said, there was no need for more than nine ministers after the formation of the Andhra State.\textsuperscript{35} But Rajaji did not agree. He wrote to the Congress High Command. K.Kamaraj too conveyed his views to them. The High Command asked whether the new ministers were necessary. In his communication to the Congress High Command, Rajaji wrote that since he had the responsibility for the government, he alone felt the need for more ministers. The Congress High Command did not like to prolong the controversy. As a result, Rajaji

\textsuperscript{33} F.R., 29\textsuperscript{th} September 1953, p.322.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{The Indian Express}, 8\textsuperscript{th} September 1953; \textit{The Mail}, 8\textsuperscript{th} September 1953.
\textsuperscript{35} F.R., 12\textsuperscript{th} October 1953, p.331; 29\textsuperscript{th} October 1953, p.342.
appointed three more ministers. Those appointments instead of shattering the opposition intensified it. As a result of this, the rift on *Kula Kalvi Thittam* between the Chief Minister Rajaji and a section of the Congress M.L.A.s such as P.Varadarajulu Naidu, V.K.Ramasami Mudaliar, K.T.Kosalram, D.G.Krishnamurthi, Panchesaram Chettiar, A.M.Sambath and others was widening and that there was a move on the part of these M.L.A.s to bring a motion of no confidence against the Chief Minister at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly party.

Following this, Masilamani Chettiar, M.L.A., while addressing a public meeting near Vellore, said that a petition containing the signatures of about 90 Legislators expressing want of confidence in the chief minister would be presented to the Chief Minister towards the end of November 1953. The agitation by a section of the Congress Legislators to oust Rajaji from power was supported by the D.K. and the D.M.K. who exploited this development to further their own campaign against the Chief Minister. These two parties have been trying to create a split in the rank and file of the Congress Party to overthrow the Congress administration. They had been appealing to the so-called ‘Dravidian’ element in the Congress to dissociate itself from the ‘Aryan’ associates. Strangely enough the Communists who were generally very quick to seize opportunities for overthrowing the administration were silent over this development. This was perhaps due to

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37 F.R., 27th November 1953, p.357.  
38 F.R., 10th December 1953, p.354.
their dislike of the communal propaganda carried on by the *Kazhagams*.\(^{39}\)

As a result, the Anti-Rajaji group collected signatures for a motion of no-confidence. When they came to know that a majority had signed the proposed resolution, the Rajaji group tried to obtain similar signatures, expressing confidence in him. But this failed and the crisis deepened.\(^{40}\)

At this juncture, the annual election of Congress legislature party leader came and there was a move to remove Rajaji from office. Sensing this, Rajaji announced that he had decided to quit office for reasons of ill-health.\(^{41}\) But Rajaji wanted C. Subramaniam to be elected as the leader of the Congress legislature party. However, the predominant opinion in the party was that K.Kamaraj should take up the Congress legislature party leadership. At the meeting of the Congress legislature party held on 31\(^{st}\) March 1954, K.Kamaraj was elected leader defeating C.Subramaniam by 93 votes to 41.\(^{42}\) Then K.Kamaraj was representing the Srivilliputhur Parliamentary Constituency in the Lok sabha. He decided to enter the legislative assembly through election and he accordingly got elected from the Gudiyatham Assembly Constituency, where by-election was held on 1\(^{st}\) August 1954.\(^{43}\) E.V.R. openly announced his support by addressing

K.Kamaraj as *‘Pachai Tamizhan’* (TrueTamilian). C.N.Annadurai extended his support through a series of articles which he wrote in his party journal,

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\(^{39}\) F.R., 23\(^{rd}\) December 1953, p.371.
\(^{40}\) F.R., 12\(^{th}\) April 1954, p.34.
\(^{42}\) G.O.No.1087, Public (Election) Department, 15\(^{th}\) July 1954.
\(^{43}\) F.R., 26\(^{th}\) July 1954, p.74.
Dravida Nadu. K.Kamaraj took office as the Chief Minister on 13th April 1954. He surprised everyone as usual by including C.Subramaniam and other ministers of Rajaji’s cabinet. Thus the ideological differences paved the way for the overthrow of the Rajaji ministry. K.Kamaraj, was not the prime cause for the overthrow of the Rajaji ministry. The prime cause was Rajaji himself who, by his speech and actions had forfeited the confidence of the party. Those who were dissatisfied with Rajaji expressed the dissatisfaction through K.Kamaraj.

Rajaji had his enemies not only outside but also within Congress. However, Rajaji had his own intelligentsia and elite group at the national level. On 15th August 1954, Rajaji became the first recipient of India’s highest civilian award, the *Bharat Ratna*. From 1954 to 1956, Rajaji withdrew from state politics and concentrated on his literary pursuits. He authored a translation of Kambar’s *Ramayana* in English and followed it with English translations of the Sanskrit *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Dissension.

In 1956, Rajaji resigned from the I.N.C. and formed the Congress Reform Committee (C.R.C.) along with some of his followers. The C.R.C., was formed just before the 1957 elections to the Lok Sabha and the Madras State Legislative Assembly by a group of dissidents that left the I.N.C., in

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44 Dravida Nadu (Tamil Weekly), 11th July 1954, p.2.
45 G.O.No.520, Public Department, 13th April 1954.
the Madras State. It was guided by Rajaji, who had been defeated by K.Kamaraj in the inner-party disputes over leadership of the Congress in Tamil Nadu. C.R.C., was formed. Rajaji and other leaders of C.R.C., found in Muthuramalingam Thevar, a crusader of Non-Congressism and a rival of K.Kamaraj and a fitting personality for counsel and leadership. The C.R.C., had co-operation with the All India Forward Bloc (A.I.F.B.,) of Muthuramalingam Thevar. The CRC-AIFB combine contested 59 seats in the assembly election in the following manner: 54 candidates from C.R.C., 5 candidates from A.I.F.B. One of the five A.I.F.B., candidates, P.K. Mookiah Thevar, stood as a C.R.C., candidate. There was also an informal understanding with the Communist Party of India, which decided not to contest against the C.R.C., in some constituencies.

The C.R.C., A.I.F.B., combine formulated a 12-point election manifesto. The C.R.C., A.I.F.B., alliance emerged as the major opposition alliance in these elections, but could not defeat the Congress government. C.R.C., won 14 seats and A.I.F.B., three. Half of the seats won were from the Ramnad and Madurai districts.

Following the election, a joint C.R.C., opposition group was formed in the legislative assembly. This was done to counter the bid of the D.M.K., which had 16 seats to hold the post of leader of opposition. Soon five independent assembly members joined the C.R.C., opposition group.

V.K.Ramaswamy Mudaliar was elected leader of the C.R.C., opposition. On September 28-29, 1957 C.R.C., held a state conference and reconstituted itself as the Indian National Democratic Congress (I.N.D.C.).\textsuperscript{48} Notably, Muthuralingam Thevar, one of the inaugural speakers of the event, was arrested just after having delivered his speech.

In March 1959 elections to the Madurai Municipality was held. An alliance of I.N.D.C., A.I.F.B., C.P.I., and the D.M.K., was formed. The Forward Bloc members stood as I.N.D.C. candidates, denoting that the Tamil Nadu state unit of that party had virtually merged into I.N.D.C., 12 I.N.D.C., candidates, 12 C.P.I., candidates and 2 D.M.K., candidates were elected against only 10 of the Congress. This was the first time the Congress lost its hold over the municipality after Independence. The I.N.D.C., A.I.F.B., C.P.I., M.K., front only lost in three constituencies.\textsuperscript{49}

**Swatantra Party**

The Swatantra Party was founded by Rajaji and N.G.Ranga in August, 1959. It was at the Sixteenth Session of the I.N.C. held at Avadi, Madras on January 1955, organized by K.Kamaraj, the Congress under Nehru’s inspiration, declared its socio-economic objective as one of socialistic pattern of society.\textsuperscript{50} But Rajaji and his Swantantara Party opposed the Nehruvian socialist outlook of the Congress Party. Rajaji attacked the

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 29\textsuperscript{th} September 1957.
license-permit Raj, the complex post-World War, the bureaucracy introduced by Nehru’s government regulated the business activity, fearing its potential for corruption and stagnation notwithstanding the public support for Nehru’s government.

He wrote in his newspaper Swarajya, “Encouraging competition in industry and giving incentives for higher production are good for the public as well as for the private interests. I want an India where talent and energy can find scope for play without having to cringe and obtain special individual permission from officials and ministers, and where their efforts will be judged by the open market in India and abroad. I want the inefficiency of public management to go where the competitive economy of private management can look after affairs. I want the corruptions of the permit license-raj to go. I want the officials appointed to administer laws and policies to be free from pressures of the bosses of the ruling party, and gradually restored back to the standards of fearless honesty which they once maintained. I want real equal opportunities for all and no private monopolies created by the permit-license-raj. I want the money power of big business to be isolated from politics. I want an India where dharma once again rules the hearts of men and not greed.”

Prominent individuals affiliated with the Swatantra Party included K.M. Munshi, Prof. N.G. Ranga, Minoo Masani, H.M. Patel, V.P. Menon and Maharani Gayatri Devi, the Queen of Jaipur. Beginning in the early 1960’s, the Congress base in Madras State began to Erode. The decline was partly due to the entry of the D.M.K., into the political arena, and partly due to increasing corruption in the Congress. Rajaji capitalized on the weakness of his adversary and strengthened the Swatantra Party. Rajaji criticized India’s use of military force against Goa. Referring to India’s acts of international diplomacy, he said that “India has totally lost the moral power to raise her voice against the use of military power.”
In 1960 Rajaji and other Swatantra leaders wrote about why Swatantra Party had to be formed despite having worked closely with Nehru to obtain independence for India. The Swatantra Party stands for the protection of the individual citizen against the increasing trespasses of the State. It is an answer to the challenge of the so-called Socialism of the Indian Congress party. It was founded on the conviction that social justice and welfare could be attained through the fostering of individual interest and individual enterprise in all fields better than through State ownership and Government control. It was based on the truth that bureaucratic management led to loss of incentive and waste of resources. When the State trespassed beyond what is legitimately within its province, it just handed over the management from those who are interested in frugal and efficient management to bureaucracy which was untrained and uninterested except in its own survival.

The Swatantra Party was founded on the claim that individual citizens should be free to hold their property and carry on their professions freely and through binding mutual agreements among themselves and that the State should assist and encourage in every possible way the individual in this freedom, but not seek to replace him.
Against Congress

The new party sought to oppose the trend of the ruling Congress Party to adopt the ways and ideals of the Communists in its eagerness to prevent the Communists from going forward. The Swatantra party believed that going over to the enemy was not defence, but surrender.

The Swatantra Party hoped to furnish a real opposition to the Congress Party so that parliamentary democracy might be properly balanced. The absence of a true opposition led to the rapid deterioration of democracy into a kind of totalitarianism. Voices were raised from all quarters calling for a strong opposition and the new party was supplying a felt wanted.

This party of freedom was further making a novel experiment in restricting disciplinary control over party members to essential issues, giving freedom in all other matters to vote according to individual opinion. It was an answer to the constantly expressed sense of dissatisfaction with party rigidity, and to the complaint that it often amounted to suppression of opinion and rule by a minority in the name of a majority. A majority in the ruling class could can always, under present conditions, impose their views on all and every issue in the Parliament of the nation.

The Swatantra Party intended to initiate a departure from the usual practice of political parties and, true to its name, gave Swatantra or freedom to its members to vote according to their own convictions and conscience on
all but the party’s fundamentals so that the decisions of Parliament may on those issues truly reflect the prevailing opinion, and not be just, a replica of the majority opinion of the ruling party or the fads of the ruling clique.

Without the inconveniences resulting from proportional representation and in particular the instability of Governments formed under such a system, the reduction of voting in accordance with whips to the barest minimum, as proposed by the Swatantra Party would be a healthy example for all parties. If followed generally or even by the more important ones among the various parties, the freedom given to members on all but essential issues would result in a Government more in accordance with the ideals of those who conceived the system of proportional representation and laid high hopes thereon. In this matter, the new party claimed to have initiated a great democratic advance worthy of trial in all countries really believing in democracy, and not willing to be subjected to a form of dictatorship in the name of party discipline which often served only the ambition of individuals or groups.

The new party did not believe that legislative compulsion, any more than the violence that preceded and enthroned Communism in certain countries, could contribute to true or lasting human happiness. We must depend on the moral sense of the people in order to equalise without destroying freedom. 51

Principles of Swatantra

Rajaji and N.G. Ranga, the founders of Swatantra Party framed twenty-one principles broadly based on classical liberal lines. They are

1. The Swatantra party is pledged to social justice and equality of opportunity for all people without distinction of religion, caste, occupation or political affiliation.
2. The party holds that progress, welfare and happiness of the people depend on individual initiative, enterprise and energy. The party stands for the principle of maximum freedom for the individual and minimum interference by the state consistent with the obligation to prevent and punish anti-social activities, to protect the weaker elements of society, and to create the conditions in which individual initiative will thrive and be fruitful. The party is, therefore opposed to increasing state interference of the kind now being pursued.
3. The party holds that the state would foster and utilize the sense of moral obligation, the pride, satisfaction, and fulfillment felt by individual in serving others which are inherent in our tradition, instead of adopting legislative or other forms of compulsion which commence with want of faith in the people and are consummated in the serfdom of the governed under the official machine, in an omnipotent state controlled by a political party voted to power. The party, therefore, adheres to the principle of trusteeship adumbrated by Gandhiji.
4. The Party holds that the policies of government should be founded on faith in the people and not on state compulsion and the encouragement of hatred and conflict between class and class, expropriation, repudiation of obligations and the conferment of more and more powers on the officials of government at the expense of the freedom of the citizens.
5. The party stands for every effort being made to foster and maintain spiritual values and preserve what is good in our culture and tradition, and avoid the dominance of a purely materialist philosophy of life which thinks only in terms of the standard of life without any reference to its content or quality.
6. The party holds that steps should be taken to remove the pervading sense of uncertainty that has been created by the present policies of the government and its varying forecasts of future plans, leading to

the drying up of initiative and enterprise in land, shop and factory alike. The party holds that a sense of stability and incentive for individual effort can be restored only by strict adherence to the fundamental rights and guarantee specified in the Constitution as originally adopted in respect of freedom of property, trade and occupation and just compensation for any property compulsory acquired by the state for public purposes.

7. The party holds that in the policies adopted for national development, priority must be assigned to the basic needs of the people, namely, food, water, housing and clothing. The party believes that every citizen has a fundamental right to educate his children according to his choice and in a free atmosphere untrammeled by official directives and that the state should afford facilities for such education without discrimination.

8. The party holds that the paramount need is for increasing food production and that this is best attained through the self-employed peasant proprietor who is interested in obtaining the highest yield from his land. The party believes in an intensive program of agricultural improvement by promoting the material and psychological inducements for greater production without disturbing the harmony of rural life. The party holds that there should be no disturbance of ownership, management and cultivation of land, but believes in a more effective programme than is being followed at present in respect of irrigation and the supply of material, implements, credit and marketing facilities. The party believes in the need for giving every kind of help to agriculture but is opposed to cultivation through organizations which reduce price ownership to an empty paper-title and which bring into being a loose kind of multiple ownership which is certain to sap the incentive of the farmer and his family, reduce output, and take us to a collective economy with official management. It is firmly opposed to collectivization and bureaucratic management of the rural economy. The Party takes note of the dissatisfaction amongst the rural population that adequate attention has not been paid to their needs. It holds that the level of life of the rural people should be improved by removing all such impediments as are likely to stand in the way of their attaining a high standard of life and by taking all steps necessary for the purpose in particular for maintaining a reasonable and steady price for agricultural produce, which is on parity with other prices.

9. In industry, the party believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion inherent in competitive enterprise with adequate safeguards for the protection of labour and against unreasonable profits, prices or where competition does not secure the necessary corrective. The party stands for the restriction of state enterprise to
heavy industries such as are necessary to supplement private enterprise in that field, such national services as Railways and the starting of new enterprises which are difficult for private initiative. The party is opposed to the state entering the field of trade amid disturbing free distribution and introducing controls and official management with all its wastefulness and inefficiency. The party believes that in the field of production, the free choice of the producer and the consumer must be given basic place and importance.

10. The party stands for the preservation of the freedom of the small and self-employed artisans, craftsmen and traders who are in danger of losing their occupational opportunities by reason of the policy of statism. These persons perform a great, widespread and inexpensive function in our society, and their gradual extinction is a national misfortune and adds to our unemployment problem.

11. The party stands for great thrift in public expenditure. It holds that taxation should be kept at such levels as will not interfere with reasonable living standard for the people, both rural and urban, and while being necessary and sufficient for the carrying on of administration and such social and economic services as are taken up by the state, is yet not so high and exacting or so ubiquitous as to prevent capital formation and private investment.

12. The party is opposed to a programme of development based on crippling taxation, abnormal deficit financing and foreign loans which are beyond the capacity of the country to repay.

13. The party is opposed to all policies that lead to excessive inflation, high prices that reduce the value of savings, endowments and fixed incomes, and which create undue hardships for the present generation in the hope of a distant gain.

14. The party believes that the cost of public administration should be reduced considerably. It stands for integrity and efficiency in the services. It is against the expansion of the bureaucratic machine, with a hierarchy of officials asked to do work capable of being done by citizens and private agencies, resulting in unproductive waste of national resources.

15. The party believes that the state will best serve the nation by encouraging and affording facilities for a decentralised distribution of industry and by limiting its own regulatory function to the prevention and punishment of anti-social activities wherever called for.

16. The party stands for the creation of opportunities for full and lasting employment in all sectors of life. It stands for a programme of all round industrialization with a view to developing national resources and reducing unemployment. It believes in a balanced development of capital goods, industries, organized consumer goods industries and
rural industries that afford supplementary employment in small scale processing of the products of agriculture.

17. The party stands for a fair deal for labour, whether in the field, factory, or office and for correlating to wages, increased productivity and for workers’ right to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining. It stands for harmonizing the interests of capital and labour when they get into conflict.

18. The party is opposed to any form of pressure being put on officials to deflect them from the course of fair and just discharge of duties without discrimination. It stands for the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and for the full play of powers of judicial review given to the courts by the Constitution.

19. The party shall in all matters keep before itself the cardinal teaching of Gandhiji, maintaining faith in the people and in the efficacy of truth non-violence.

20. The Swatantra Party holds that democracy is best served if every political party allows freedom of opinion to its members on all matters outside the fundamental principles of the party. It, therefore, gives its members full liberty on all questions not falling within the scope of the principles stated above. ⁵³

The Twenty Point Programme of the Swatantara Party promised clean administration, abolition of land revenue, improvement of agricultural inputs to increase farm production, equal opportunity for all Indians, anti-satism and encouragement of thrift, trusteeship and individual initiative. ⁵⁴ Rajaji held that the anchor of the Swatantra Party was reliance on God and individual freedom and the main task ahead of them was to keep the party alive so that it could displace the Government which would put its “octopus fingers all over their private life,” said Rajaji, addressing a public meeting in Madras on August 13th. ⁵⁵ Pointing out that socialism had been accepted by the Congress in its various annual sessions and meetings, Rajaji said they should drop the historic name “Congress” and call itself as Socialist Party.

Then the people would understand the difference and say, “Here is the Socialist Party and here is the Swatantra Party; which is better for us?” \(^{56}\)

**Dissent on Socialism**

Rajaji, K.M. Munshi, Minoo Masani, N.G. Ranga, H.M. Patel, V.P. Menon, B.R. Shenoy, Piloo Mody, Khasa Subba Rau, A.D. Shroff and Gayaatri Devi of Jaipur stood courageously against the socialist orthodoxy of post-independence India. \(^{57}\) Not only did they challenge the state in their own field of work, whether academia, journalism, or business, they launched India’s first truly ideological opposition political party, the Swatantra Party. Shroff formed the Forum of Free Enterprise, India’s first free-market think tank. Khasa Subba Rau ran *Swarajya* and *Swatantra* when most of the press was reluctant to take on the ruling party. These men dedicated their life to protect the freedom and dignity of the individual.

No politician of stature was willing to oppose Nehru and K. Kamaraj’s march towards socialism. Rajaji at the age of 81 took up the challenge and formed the Swatantra Party. Rajaji coined Permit-License-Quota-Raj, the ubiquitous phrase since used to describe Indian central planning. He understood the unintended consequences of economic restrictions.

During 1938-1942, in the wake of the Second World War, severe controls were put on the movement of food grains, and rice was rationed at

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\(^{55}\) *The Hindu*, 14\(^{th}\) August 1959.


about 30 grams per person per day. It was typical for wedding invitations to carry an insertion, “Please bring your ration card with you.”

These controls were in place in 1952, when Rajaji became the Chief Minister of the Madras State. Without any notice or discussion, he announced at night over the All India Radio that food rationing and restrictions were abolished with immediate effect. Dire predictions of scarcity and starvation were made, but Rajaji stood by his decision.

N.G. Ranga led anti-zamindari struggles and established training schools for activists, but when Nehru proposed a ceiling on land holdings, prohibition on storage of grains, and collectivisation of agriculture as a solution, he became the founding president of the Swatantra Party. They helped to trace the evolution of Indian liberalism as they came from varied background, practised different professions, and traveled all the way from Marxism, to the mixed economy, to Gandhism, and to liberalism. The celebrated diversity of India was well reflected in the personalities, lives, and the paths taken in search for the truth.

**Electoral Performance of Swatantra Party**

The Swatantra Party contested in the third Lok Sabha elections in 1962. It received 6.8% of the total votes and 18 seats in the third Lok Sabha. It emerged as the main opposition in four states - Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Orissa. It became a significant force in some regions of India and became the single largest opposition party in the mid-1960’s in Parliament
with 8.7% of the total votes and 44 seats in the Fourth Lok Sabha. In 1971, it secured only 8 seats in the Lok Sabha with 3% of the votes. The following tables show the performance of Swatantra Party from 1962 to 1971.

Table-6-1
Performance of Swatantra Party, Third Lok Sabha Elections, 1962

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<th>State</th>
<th>Seat contested</th>
<th>Total Seats in States</th>
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<th>% of Votes Polled</th>
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Table-6-2

Performance of Swatantra Party, Fourth Lok Sabha Elections, 1967

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Table-6-3
Performance of Swatantra Party, Fourth Lok Sabha Elections, 1971

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After independence, the Indian Government had declared in its Constitution that Hindi was to be the official language of the country, along with English, but because of objections in Non-Hindi areas had allowed for a fifteen year period for the requirement to be phased in. From 26th January 1965 onwards, Hindi was to be made the sole official language of the Indian Union and people in Non-Hindi speaking regions were compelled to learn Hindi. This was vehemently opposed and just before the Republic Day, severe Anti-Hindi revolts broke out in the Madras State. Rajaji reversed his earlier position in support of Hindi and took a strongly Anti-Hindi stand in support of the protests. On 17th January 1965, he convened the Madras State Anti-Hindi conference in Tiruchirappalli. He angrily declared that the Part XVII of the Constitution of India which declared that Hindi was the official language should be ‘heaved and thrown into the Arabian Sea.

Rajaji was hell-bent to come to an electoral understanding with D.M.K. and if possible with the other parties as his aim was to unseat the Congress. In 1967 the fourth general elections were held in the Madras State. At the age of 89, Rajaji worked to forge a united opposition to the I.N.C., by forming an alliance between the D.M.K., Swatantra Party and the Forward Bloc. The Congress party was defeated in Madras in 30 years as the coalition led by D.M.K., was elected to power. C.N.Annadurai became Chief Minister of Madras state, serving from 1967 to 1969. During this

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period he changed the name of the state to Tamil Nadu and introduced reforms in the administration. C.N. Annadurai died in 1969 and was succeeded by Mr. M. Karunanidhi.

The Swatantra party also did well in elections in other states and to the Lok Sabha, the directly elected lower house of the Parliament of India. It won 45 Lok Sabha members in the 1967 general elections and emerged as the single largest opposition party. It was the principal opposition party in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. It formed a coalition Government in Orissa. It also had a significant presence in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar. In the mid 1970’s it won nearly 207 legislative assembly seats all over India, compared to 153 for the Communists, 149 for the socialists and 115 for the Jan Sangh. In Madras, though the Swatantra party was humbled, winning only nine seats, whereas the D.M.K., obtained fifty. But the Party started to disintegrate after the death of Rajaji.

In the 1971 Lok Sabha elections, Rajaji organized a united right-wing opposition to Indira Gandhi. The opposition once again created a major impact as it had during the 1967 elections. However, the I.N.C. Government was left unscathed and its majority had considerably increased compared to the 1967 elections, in large part because of the impact of Gandhi’s *Garibi Hatao* anti-poverty program. In his later years, Rajaji was opposed to the repeal of prohibition in Tamil Nadu by the M. Karunanidhi Government. As

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a result, the Swatantra Party withdrew its support for the D.M.K., during the 1972 state elections and Rajaji strongly opposed some of the government’s policies.

By November 1972, Rajaji’s health began to decline. On 17th December 1972, a week after celebrating his 94th birthday, Rajaji was admitted to the General Hospital in Chennai. Rajaji’s condition deteriorated in the following days as he frequently lost consciousness. Hearing verses from Hindu scriptures read by his son C.R. Narasimhan, Rajaji died on 25th December 1972 at the age of 94. Rajaji’s life began in the path of the foundation of traditional values, he marched in the path of Mahatma, and got rejuvenated in his liberal-critical approach, was trapped in his own conformist policies and ended in realizing the political limitations for a man who tried to combine theory and practice in one fold.

After Rajaji’s death in 1972, the Swantantra party declined rapidly. It was also associated in the public mind with wealthy industrialists and former maharajas. The Swatantra experiment of liberalism ended in 1974 by merging with Bharatiya Kranti Dal led by Charan Singh an omnibus of the left-wing, right-wing, and Hindu nationalist opponents of the Congress Party rule.
To conclude, Rajaji’s resignation of the Chief Minister’s post of Tamil Nadu marked the end of his political career in the Tamil Nadu State, though for long the Rajaji group continued to function in the party. In due course, the difference between Rajaji and Nehru erupted, and Rajaji became a pronounced Anti-Congress leader, and founded the Swatantara Party in 1959. Naturally the rift between Rajaji and K. Kamaraj also widened and the two leaders found themselves on opposite platforms. Rajaji often joined the D.M.K., and F.B. against K. Kamaraj’s Congress. K. Kamaraj was highly critical of Rajaji and his Swatantara Party. Rajaji joined hands with the D.M.K., in 1967 to form the ‘Grand alliance’ against the Congress and that succeeded in pulling down the Congress in Tamil Nadu State. Never since the Congress has been able to regain its strength, what with the split in its own ranks and K. Kamaraj’s old age. Both Rajaji and K. Kamaraj, were destined to give leadership to the state as well as to the nation in troubled times. Both were ardent patriots, yet political rivals. In their bid to uplift the masses from poverty Rajaji favoured private enterprise, while K. Kamaraj democratic socialism.