CHAPTER-III

RAJAJI VERSUS SATHYAMURTHY

The Extremists showed their difference with the Moderates during the *Rowlatt Satyagraha*. The conflict for the control of M.P.C.C., reached its climax in March 1919 between the Extremists and the Home Rulers. Anne Besant resigned along with B.P.Wadia, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, L.A. Govinda Raghava Iyer and G.A. Natesan, who had been the P.C.C. President of the Moderates. Ten days later, the Extremists took over the posts in the M.P.C.C. In stimulating mass unrest\(^1\) these extremists were not interested. For them the *Satyagraha* was a convenient gesture against the Raj, coinciding with the takeover of the P.C.C. Extremists stopped their activities and began to prepare for the first elections to the legislature in November 1920.

**Satyagraha Association**

A *Satyagraha Association* was formed by Gandhi in 1919 in Madras. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Rajaji, Thiru.Vi.Ka, Adi Narayana Chetty, Rangaswami Iyengar, S.Sathyamurthy were the important among those who worked for the *Satyagraha* and defended Gandhi.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) F.N.R., 11\(^{th}\) March 1919; Report of The Executive Committee of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, 1919, Madras 1920, p.4.

Nationalists Party

At the end of 1919, they shed their old name and adopted the name of Nationalists. As the Moderates enjoyed more public reputation than the Extremists, the Extremists launched a political organisation in November 1919 and it was called 'Nationalists Party’. C. Vijayaraghavachari of Salem, became the President and K.V. Rangaswami Iyengar of Tiruchirappalli, was one of the Vice-Presidents.³ By April 1920, the Nationalists seemed to be firmly in command but their ascendancy was to be short lived.

First Clash - Gandhiites and Nationalists

A complete boycott of legislatures was declared by the central item of Gandhi’s Non Co-operation Programme of August, 1920. The Madras Nationalists differed from Gandhi over the question of Council Boycott. They wanted to follow a more restricted agitation focusing on Swadeshi and the boycott of foreign goods. The first clash between the Gandhiites and Nationalists was seen at the Madras Provincial Conference held at Tirunelveli during 21st-23rd June 1920, when Rajaji moved an Additional Resolution calling for Non Co-operation, which was not agreed with by the Nationalists and even S. Srinivasa Iyengar objected to it.⁴ But the resolution was passed with the help of Khilafat Muslims and Youth League. The Youth League group included K. Santhanam, K. Subramaniam, N.S. Varadachari, S. Ramanathan, G.V.Krupa nidhi K.V. Rajagopalan, and others.⁵

³ The Hindu, 18th October, 1919.
⁴ Ibid., 21st and 23rd June, 1920.
⁵ Ramanathan, S., League of Youth, Madras, 1946, pp.11-14.
Undeterred, the Nationalists refused to be bound by the Tirunelveli Resolution and continued their election campaign for the capture of legislatures. The P.C.C., rejected the Tirunelveli Resolution and approved the Non Co-operation Resolution, but without, the Council Boycott. The next round of the struggle between Gandhiites and Nationalists took place, outside the regional area. Rajaji saw to it that Non Co-operators were elected delegates from Madras to the Calcutta Special Congress in September 1920 and he was successful in making the I.N.C., to adopt Gandhi’s Strategy of Non Co-operation.

Three Surprising Changes

In the six weeks following the Special Congress, three surprising changes transformed the leadership of the Congress in Tamil Nadu. Firstly, many of the Nationalists withdrew as candidates for the Provincial and Central Legislatures, including C.Vijayaraghavachari and A.Rangaswami Iyengar. This was accompanied by the resignation of nine leading Nationalists from the Pradesh Executive Committee, including Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who was the President. 6 Finally, on 19th October the vacancies on the Committee were filled without opposition by the Associates of Rajaji. T. V. Venkatarama Iyer was elected as the President7, thus facilitating the M.P.C.C. to come under the grip of Gandhiites.

6 *The Hindu*, 13th, 15th and 20th September, 1920.
Period of 1920-1930

In the period of 1916-1922, the emergence of new forces in the field of provincial politics, the indecision of the old Congress leaders over Council Entry, the arrival of Gandhi on the All India stage and the explosion of Non Co-operation Agitation equipped the Provincial Congress with new aims, new policies and new leaders. Rajaji led a batch of leaders from mofussil Tamil Nadu P.Varadarajulu Naidu (Salem), T. Adinarayana Chetty (Coimbatore), E.V.R. (Erode), T.S.S. Rajan (Tiruchirapalli) and Thiru.Vi. Ka. (Madras) to control the newly established Madras Provincial Congress. Meanwhile, a new Constitution was drafted for the I.N.C., which included an All India Working Committee, capable of keeping the Congress active throughout the year, a scheme for membership with a four-anna (old measurement of coins used in Tamil Nadu it means 25 paisa) subscription and a hierarchy of Committees from the All India Working Committee down to province, district, taluk and village. But, while these important years grafted new elements on to the Congress, the old leaders were not entirely superseded. Many of the old leaders, who had apparently been pushed aside by the Gandhian agitation, returned to the Congress in the early 1920’s.

By November 1921, Congress was revitalised at the centre and as a sequence, P.C.C’s were re-organised the basis of on linguistic regions. The Madras Provincial Congress was divided into linguistic committees and

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Tamil Nadu Congress Committee came into existence (T.N.C.C.). This re-organisation of the Congress was one among the several issues over which the Gandhiites and Nationalists clashed during 1921. The Nationalists wanted to keep the Congress open to those who disagreed with Gandhi's ideas and tactics and also wanted to guarantee for themselves a position in the national leadership through representation in A.I.C.C. and P.C.C., but this was not accepted. In September 1921, the Gandhiites further strengthened their position by shifting the P.C.C. Headquarters from Madras to Tiruchirappalli. This was done deliberately to control the influence of the Nationalists in offices and in meetings. The T.N.C.C., elections in November 1921, reflected the power shift from Madras to the Mofussil and from the Nationalists to the Gandhiites. Rajaji, E.V.R. and T.S.S. Rajan began to control the Congress from now onwards. However, the proportion of the Non-Brahmins in P.C.C., was high in comparison to the composition of the previous P.C.C.’s. Hence Gandhi’s Non Co-operation did not attract many sections of the Tamil population.

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9 The Nagpur Session of I.N.C., 1920, shifted the focus of the Congress from achieving limited Constitutional objectives by Constitutional means to the attainment of Swaraj through Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience. In November 1921, Provincial Units of the Congress were re-organised to facilitate the drastic change. (David Arnold, The Congress in Tamilnadu: Nationalist politics in south India, 1919-1937, New Delhi, 1977, pp.46-47.)

10 The Hindu, 7th September, 1921.

11 Ibid., 22nd November, 1921.

12 Gandhi’s strategy did not make a sufficiently attractive appeal to their interests and ambitions. And Gandhiites were also desperately short of funds.
By 1922, the Gandhian Non Co-operation Movement crumbled and its organizational weaknesses became apparent. Consequently an Alternative Policy emerged. The protagonists of this Alternative were called 'Swarajists'. The Swarajists in the Province were the old Nationalists, the Faction which remained reluctant about the idea of Non Co-operation and took the first opportunity to guide the Congress back towards a modified electoral strategy. In mid-1922, the Madras Nationalists joined with other dissidents to lay the foundation for the All India Swaraj Party. But C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru relegated the Southerners to the background.  

S.Sathyamurthy was doing an excellent job of courting all the dissidents in Madras Politics. C. R. Reddy, T. A. Ramalinga Chetty and A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar of Justice Party turned Swarajists due to their quarrel with the Raja of Panagal over issues of patronage. He also picked up several rebel congressmen from the Non Co-operation camp like the Salem P.Varadarajulu Naidu and Andhra leaders like Konda Venkatappya, A. Kaleshwara Rao and others.

The Swarajist Cause attracted these men because it promised to provide a vehicle for displacing the Justicites. Srinivasa Iyengar and Thiru.Vi. Ka. attempted to bring about consensus between the Gandhiites and Swarajists. Srinivasa Iyengar was a staunch Non Co-operation but

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14 *The Hindu*, 29th and 31st December, 1924.
Thiru.Vi. Ka. though he did not support Non Co-operation, disliked the division within the Congress as Non Co-operators and Swarajists. The Swarajists faction, by 1924, had won the control of the Congress Organisation and had attracted a variety of political dissidents to their new organisation.\textsuperscript{15}

By using Congress funds for Anti-Swarajist propaganda, and by controlling the Party Patronage, Rajaji struggled desperately to maintain his regional position. In August 1924, the constitution of the T.N.C.C., was changed for the third time in four years to minimize the avenues of participation by the Swarajists. But between 1922 and 1925, Rajaji’s position was being steadily eroded. The Muslims, who supported him in 1920, deserted the Congress in 1922, with the feeling that they had gained nothing by the alliance. From 1922, a rift broke out among the Gandhiites - between Rajaji who was supported by a few Brahmin activists and a nebulous band of dissatisfied Non-Brahmin congressmen, led by E.V.R. and S. Ramanathan.\textsuperscript{16} At first, their grievance was that Rajaji had tricked them into capitulating to the Swarajists. Secondly, their protest pertained to the Kakkinada Congress in which Rajaji did not let them to argue their case and also endorsed the Delhi agreement without their consent.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} David Arnold, \textit{Op.Cit.}, pp.84-86.
In November 1924, the T.N.C.C., met at Thiruvannamalai. It was presided over by E.V.R., mainly to decide about the Council Entry. To bring co-operation among the factions, the Non Co-operation Movement was suspended and instead Non Co-operation within the Councils was accepted. Dissatisfied with Rajaji and hankering for dramatic new campaign led E.V.R. to join Satyagraha at Vaikom in Travancore in 1924 and it brought fame to E. V. R. Meanwhile, Rajaji was suspected of a covert hostility to the advancement of the Untouchables. The rift quickly widened in 1925. Varadarajulu Naidu, T.N.C.C. President, discovered that Brahmin and Non-Brahmin pupils were expected to dine separately at the Seranmadevi Gurukulam, a National School run by V.V.S.Subramania Iyer. This revelation produced an outburst of Anti-Brahminism from P. Varadarajulu Naidu, E.V.R. and Thiru.Vi.Ka., Rajaji and six of his associates resigned from the T.N.C.C. and this marked the final withdrawal of Gandhiites from the leadership of T.N.C.C. The Swarajists took over and S. Srinivasa Iyengar was elected as the President at the end of 1925.

In Tamil Nadu, because of Rajaji’s rearguard action, the Swarajists could gain ground only gradually. Denied access to the T.N.C.C.’s resources until 1925, they entered the 1923 elections short of funds, with few candidates and little organisational structure. As late as July, 1923, only Rangaswami Iyengar and S.Sathyamurthy had declared themselves as

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18 Ibid., p. 332.
Swarajists and no more than a dozen of Tamil Swarajists contested seats for the Madras Legislature in that year. They won five out of six Assembly seats but they could not rival the Justice Party’s influence in the local bodies.  

The Tamil Swarajists in March 1924 entered into an alliance with other opposition Members of Legislative Assembly (M.L.A) to form the United Nationalist Party. Its leader was C.V.S. Narasimharaju and its Executive Committee included only one Brahmin, namely S.Sathyamurthy and a number of Non-Brahmin dissidents like T.A. Ramalingam Chetty (Coimbatore), C. Ramalinga Reddy (Chittoor), C. Natesa Mudaliar (Madras) and P. Subbaroyan (Salem). It was not merely the numerical weakness of the Swarajists that was responsible for their alliance with the dissident opposition. Ideologically they were interested less in the destruction of Dyarchy than in seeking to work it to their advantage. By denouncing Non Co-operation as an aberration and calling for a return to normal political work, ‘the Tamil Swarajists thus laid themselves open to criticism from Congressmen who feared a reversion to the politics of Ghokale and Srinivasa Sastri’.

In November 1925 T.N.C.C., met in Kanchipuram. It was presided over by Thiru. Vi. Ka. Two recommendations were made there: (1) The Khadar Programme was made compulsory; and (2) Congress was asked to work to enter the councils so that there would be no need for the Swarajist

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20 The Hindu, 27th November, 1923.
21 Ibid., 14th March, 1924.
Party within the Congress. The second proposal was opposed by E.V.R., S.Ramanathan and Rajaji. Finally the proposal was rejected. But E.V.R. and S.Ramanathan made another proposal which was concerned with Communal Representation in the councils. This proposal was also rejected by Thiru.Vi.Ka. who maintained that this issue should be decided only by the Swarajists and not by the Congress. Confusion arose and immediately E.V.R., S.Ramanathan, Surendranath Arya and Chakarai Chetty staged a walk out. S.Srinivasa Iyengar came forward to assuage the feelings of the Swarajists who were wounded by the rejection of the second proposal. However, E.V.R. disliked the re-entry of the Swarajists into the Congress and was also against their Council Entry. He left the Congress after the Kanchipuram Conference and started working against Congress. Thiru.Vi.Ka. also resigned from the Working Committee when he came to understand that the Non Co-operator who was expected to enter council to wreck it, would be required to extend Co-operation in forming the Ministry. Though S.Srinivasa Iyengar tried to persuade him, he was not successful.

When Non Co-operation began, Rajaji, P. Varadarajulu Naidu, Thiru.Vi. Ka. and T.S.S. Rajan were all united and worked with high discipline. P.Varadarajulu Naidu left this faction in 1924, Thiru.Vi.Ka. left it during the Thiruvannamalai Conference and E.V.R. left it after the Kanchipuram Conference and the strength of the Conference was reduced.

The Congress of Tamil Nadu wanted to form the Ministry immediately after the 1926 elections and did so by accepting P. Subbaroyan, an Independent as the Chief Minister. This was to prevent the Justice Party from returning to office. By these tactics, the Ministry was formed. But cracks appeared in the Congress facade. One breakaway group, headed by Muthia Mudaliar of Tanjore wanted to dismiss the Caretaker Ministry and take office regardless of the Congress ban; another group, consisting mainly of Telugu and Malayalam Members of Legislative Council (M.L.C.) who were resentful of the control exercised by S.Srinivasa Iyengar and his Tamil Associates, wanted the Ministry to be defeated and pave the way for the Justicites to form a new Ministry. The main attack on the party’s tactics came, however, from T. Prakasam, the Congress leader of Telugu areas.23

After the defeat of the Justice Party, many of its leaders like Kumaraswamy Raja, Thanikachalam Chetty, Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Patro, and others wanted to join the Congress. But the Tamil Nadu Congress did not agree to it and the unity proposal was a failure. With the help of the Justicites, it would have been easier to wreck the Council but the good chance was missed.24 S. Srinivasa Iyengar left Congress in 1929 after the Lahore Session of I.N.C., disagreeing with the National Leadership on several issues. The Congress again accepted Non Co-operation in 1929 and again Rajaji gained an upper hand.

Period of 1930-1947

At the Lahore Session of the I.N.C., the decision to launch Civil Disobedience Movement was received with mixed enthusiasm by the majority of the Tamil Congressmen, especially by the former United Nationalists. Five Congress M.L.C’s. refused to resign in Madras. Though Venkatachalam Chetty in the L.C. and R.K. Shanmugam Chetty in the Assembly resigned, they successfully contested as Independents. S.Sathyamurthy canvassed for a new Nationalist Party for the continuation of work in the Madras Legislature, but later dropped the idea and resigned from the Assembly, with the intention that the Pro-Changers would have to be quiet and wait for the chance, to lead the Congress back to constitutional action.²⁵

Reflecting upon their lessons of the protracted struggle for control of the T.N.C.C. in 1922-1925, the leading Swarajists quickly surrendered their places in the T.N.C.C., in 1930. Following S.Srinivasa Iyengar, his successor Muthuranga Mudaliar also resigned from T.N.C.C., in March 1930, having struggled half-heartedly to resist the boycott of Madras Legislature. When Rajaji returned in April 1930 to lead the T.N.C.C., the party headquarters which was functioning in Madras City since 1925, was shifted back to Tiruchirappalli. T.S.S. Rajan resumed his old post as the Party Secretary.²⁶

²⁵ The Mail, 6th, 11th and 13th January 1930.
²⁶ The Hindu, 4th April, 1930.
Authorised by the A.I.C.C. and the T.N.C.C. to direct the Salt Satyagraha in Tamil Nadu, Rajaji was cautious in approaching the issue and started the Vedaranyam March in mid-April 1930. In the initial stages of the Satyagraha, Rajaji miscalculated that Satyagraha in Tamil Nadu would gain momentum only gradually. However, even before he reached Vedaranyam, the turn of events in Madras showed that the agitation had sufficient popular support. But it was to be noted that the support for the Satyagraha came mainly from the Telugus like T.Prakasam and K. Nageswara Rao and others.\(^\text{27}\)

The Swarajists did not have a long term commitment to Civil Disobedience. Their faith in constitutional action was unshaken but they saw the political gains of the agitation at that juncture. They, like Rajaji, believed that Civil Disobedience could influence the outcome of the constitutional discussion in London.\(^\text{28}\) This was in marked contrast with the basic Nationalist hostility to Non Co-operation in 1920-1922.

A group of activists, namely K.Kamaraj of Virudhunagar, N. Annamalai Pillai of Thiruvannamalai and Srinivasa Varada Iyengar of Madurai were drawn into the Congress between 1918 and 1922. They distrusted Rajaji and after 1922, they were alienated by his intellectualism. They began to follow Subramania Siva and held many unofficial

\(^{27}\) The first attempts at salt making on the Madras Beach at the beginning of April was amateurish and comic. Nageswara Rao was arrested. (David Arnold, *Op.Cit.*, p.124.)

\(^{28}\) *The Hindu*, 9th October, 1930.
Satyagrahas. After the displacement of Swarajists in April 1930, K.Kamaraj - N.Annamalai Pillai Faction tried to gain control of the T.N.C.C., by proposing that Rajaji should concentrate more on the Vedaranya Satyagraha, thus leaving organisational issues and routine work of the office of the President to somebody else.\(^{29}\) Absence of a competent leader among them, who could rival Rajaji, made them line up with S.Sathyamurthy. Ever since 1920, Rajaji and S.Sathyamurthy represented two different strategic views in the Tamil Nadu Congress. Rajaji, the Gandhian, led the agitation, Khader organizations and Congress Constructive Programmes and had shunned involvement in local and provincial Government. But S.Sathyamurthy, the Swarajist, had co-operated reluctantly with Gandhian agitations and had consistently urged that Congress should enter the governmental framework.\(^{30}\) The continuing battle for leadership between these two factions had been essentially a battle over the Congress Policy.

As the influential leaders like S.Srinivasa Iyengar, E.V.R., P.Varadarajulu Naidu and Thiru. Vi. Ka. had deserted the Congress by 1930, only Rajaji and S.Sathyamurthy remained to contest for the leadership. Thus the struggle between their factions started vigorously in 1931 during the T.N.C.C. Presidential elections. Both intended to become


influential in the T.N.C. Tamil Nadu Congress. Rajaji was supported by the workers of Khader shops and the Anti-Swarajists. Generally the rich class supported Rajaji and it was financially strong. On the other hand, S.Sathyamurthy, backed by K.Kamaraj, had the support of ordinary Congress workers. He also gained the organisational support of T.N.C.C. which met at Madurai, to elect the President. Initially both were to contest but on a compromise, Rajaji was to be made the President and S.Sathyamurthy the Vice-President. Accordingly, Rajaji was made the President and when it was his turn to propose S.Sathyamurthy for the office of the Vice-President, Rajaji’s faction proposed Sardar Vedarathinam. The other faction was shocked by this action and they proposed N.Annamalai Pillai of Thiruvannamalai for Vice-Presidentship. Rajaji, realising the strength of the other faction, again made a compromise and made the other faction to withdraw the proposals and allowed S.Sathyamurthy himself to become the Vice-President. As S.Sathyamurthy’s faction enjoyed the strong support of the organisation, it was able to capture the Working Committee of Tamil Nadu Congress also. K.Kamaraj helped S.Sathyamurthy in all these efforts and he became one of the members of the Working Committee for the first time and he was also made as an A.I.C.C. member. Thus a new Non-Brahmin element was injected into the party leadership. Largely it was the Non-Brahmin forces which supported the 1930-1931 Non Co-operation Movement.
Unlike the bitter debate over the strategies in mid-1920’s, there was a general consensus in the Tamil Nadu Congress in mid-1930’s. Constitutionalism was the only course possible and there was no conflict between factions with regard to the ideological basis of the Movement, whether to enter councils or not. S.Sathyamurthy launched the Madras Swaraj Party in October 1933.\(^{31}\) His supporters included the former Swarajists like Bhashyam Iyengar and Muthuranga Mudaliar, allies from K.Kamaraj-N.Annamalai Pillai faction and several of Rajaji’s Brahmin associates. A broad consensus amidst them on a parliamentary programme afforded the internal unity which was absent in the 1920’s.\(^{32}\) The Rajaji Faction represented the rightists or perhaps the Establishment, and S.Satyamurthy, K.Kamaraj, and Socialist and Communist Factions together represented an agglomeration of wide interests.

When the A.I.C.C., met at Karachi in May 1934, it confirmed the abandonment of Civil Disobedience and the adoption of a Constitutional Programme.\(^{33}\) Rajaji rapidly established himself as one of the leading spokesmen of the Rightists who wanted to enter the Council, because they were tired of prison life and wanted to gain political influence through power. Another reason for this course of action was their aversion to the growth of the Left Wing Movements in India such as the Congress Socialist

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\(^{31}\) *The Hindu*, 17\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} April 1933.

\(^{32}\) *Ibid.*, 30\textsuperscript{th} October 1933.

\(^{33}\) *Ibid.*, 29\textsuperscript{th} May, 1934. The first task was to elect candidates and organise the campaigns for elections to the Central Assembly scheduled for November 1934.
Party (C.S.P.) and the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.). However, Rajaji maintained unity with the Socialists and Communists of Tamil Nadu. The core of the Socialists in Tamil Nadu grew around S.R. Subramaniam, P.S.Chinnadurai, S.Muthulakshmi Reddy and A. Nallasivam. The notable Communists were P.Ramamurthy, Kalyanasundaram, M.R.Venkataraman and others.

In the meanwhile disagreement between Rajaji and S.Sathyamurthy widened and extended to the control of local boards also. Except in mid-1920’s when the Swarajists attempted to control the Madras Corporation and the Municipal Councils, the Tamil Nadu Congress had not made any systematic efforts to capture the local boards. Rajaji opposed the involvement of Congress men in local government in the belief that it would distract them from agitational and Constructive Programmes and would entail enormous labour and expense.34

But S.Sathyamurthy, who succeeded Rajaji as the T.N.C.C., President in May 1935, along with a majority of party leaders, activists and sympathizers, believed that by ousting the supporters of the Justice Party from the local boards, the Congress would undercut its rivals and command patronage for itself. Party activists, especially those from the K.Kamaraj-N.Annamalai Pillai group, were eager that the Congress should get into positions of power and profit there from.

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34 Ibid., 8th January, 1935.
So in May 1935, S.Sathyamurthy announced the formation of T.N.C. Civic Board to select party candidates for local elections. Its programme pledged to work for the removal of corruption, the promotion of swadeshi goods, the improvement of local education and medical facilities, the extension of water supplies and roads and the voting of addresses to nationalist leaders. The composition of the Board, however reflected the co-operation between Congress factions. S.Sathyamurthy, Kumaraswamy Raja and Baktavatsalam were the office bearers of the Board while former Swarajists, local activists and associates of Rajaji were its members.\textsuperscript{35}

To gain support for their factions, they used their own tactics each. Rajaji was deeply engaged in the Harijan Movement and brought the Harijans into the Congress. S.Sathyamurthy took up the cause of the land owners and cultivators who were fiercely hit by the falling crop prices during the Depression and he campaigned for the reduction of the land revenue rates and earned the support of the land owning class.

When S.Sathyamurthy was made the President of the T.N.C.C., in 1935, it aroused considerable hostility within the Party, especially amidst the Swarajist colleagues like Muthuranga Mudaliar and Bashyam Iyengar. However, Rajaji permitted S.Sathyamurthy to become the President because the latter could control K.Kamaraj- N.Annamalai Pillai faction easily. Rajaji worked himself to be the link between the Gandhian High Command and the

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 13\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} May 1935.
Tamil Nadu Congress on the one hand and at the same time, turned the rivals into friends by his superior tactics. Thus Rajaji controlled the Tamil Nadu Congress to a remarkable extent.

S.Sathyamurthy master-minded the Legislative Assembly and the District Board Campaigns in 1934-1936 and thus dominated the Congress Organisation in Tamil Nadu. However in the T.N.C.C., meeting in January 1936 at Karaikudi, his leadership was challenged by C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar who was a follower of S.Sathyamurthy and lieutenant of S.Srinivasa Iyengar. S.Sathyamurthy defeated him. But by the time of the next contest in December of the same year, the political temperature was far too high, and S.Sathyamurthy was accused of rigging his success in January. S.Sathyamurthy had, it was alleged, wooed supporters with promises of patronage from the Madras Corporation, where he had wielded enormous influence. In December, nevertheless, C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar defeated S.Sathyamurthy.

By 1936, many of the defectors returned to the Congress. Liberals and a few United Nationalists like Subbaroyan joined the Congress. Although S.Sathyamurthy was alarmed that their entry might lessen his own chances of office, Rajaji welcomed them as he thought it would further strengthen his hands as well as the Congress Party. Another group of men like S. Ramanathan and P.Jeevanandam, returned to the Congress in 1935. After E.V.R's arrest for seditious articles, P.Varadarajulu Naidu also entered the Congress after ten years of association with the Justice Party.

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The Government of India Act of 1935 bestowed Provincial Autonomy on the Madras Presidency. Dyarchy was abolished and Provincial Government was vested in a Council of Ministers responsible to a bi-cameral legislature. The Governor remained a titular head. The franchise was considerably widened. The I.N.C., decided in July 1936 to contest the election. S.Sathyamurthy had of course been campaigning for a return to the constitutional strategy ever since it was abandoned in 1929. By 1936, even the staunch leaders of Civil Disobedience Movement in Andhra like T.Prakasam and Kaleshwar Rao, were firmly in favour of contesting the elections. Rajaji stated that "My own view is that …. as much benefit should be wrung out of the councils as possible for strengthening the prestige and position of the Congress". T.Prakasam and Sambamoorthy led the Election Campaign in Andhra and the Election Committee which toured Tamil Nadu consisted of prominent men like S.Sathyamurthy, P.S. Kumaraswamy Raja, C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar, Avinashilingam Chettiar, O.P.Ramaswami Reddiar and others.37

S.Sathyamurthy still hoped to lead the Congress Party in the Provincial Legislative Assembly after the 1937 elections and he secured the Congress nomination for the only 'pocket borough'. viz., the University Constituency. Meanwhile, Thiru. Vi. Ka. agitated against the growing

37 Ibid., pp.293-294.
corruption in the T.N.C., elections and intended to start a separate Tamil Nadu Congress as a rival to the existing one. Rajaji convinced Thiru.Vi.Ka. and stopped his action. In order to cleanse the organization, he made Sathyamurthy to withdraw his nomination. Instead, he himself stood in that Constituency and had won. S.Sathyamurthy had to withdraw his nomination because of an assurance extended to him that he will be made a Minister in the Ministry, subsequent to his nomination to the Upper House. But these words were not kept and T.S.S. Rajan was nominated to the Upper House in the place promised to S.Sathyamurthy. T.S.S.Rajan was also given Ministership. S.Sathyamurthy was left high and dry and the struggle for power between the factions reached a point of no return.

In 1937, the Congress obtained the majority and formed the Ministry with Rajaji as the Chief Minister. He also took hold of the Presidency of the T.N.C.C. For the next two years. S.Sathyamurthy contested in vain for the office of the President of T.N.C.C. Rajaji, who knew the growth of the sentiment of Non-Brahminism in the Congress, made C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar to oppose S.Sathyamurthy. The 1938 elections caused the splitting of votes of the Non-Brahmins and S.Sathyamurthy was again defeated. Similarly in 1939, Rajaji’s candidate O.P.Ramaswami Reddiar was persuaded to contest and he also defeated S.Sathyamurthy. The Brahmin and Non-Brahmin conflict which developed after the exit of E.V.R., was exploited fully by Rajaji while nominating a candidate for the T.N.C.C., Presidentship.
In the 1940 T.N.C.C. Presidential elections, S.Sathyamurthy instead of personally contesting, asked his deputy, K.Kamaraj to contest, while Rajaji put up C.P. Subbiah as his nominee. The election was hotly contested and K.Kamaraj won by a margin of three votes (103 to 100). S.Sathyamurthy himself became the Secretary and thus recaptured the Tamil Nadu Congress.  

Thus factionalism reigned supreme in the first phase of the Congress. The Moderates and Extremists vied with each other in the National Freedom Movement. In the second phase of factionalism, Uni-factionalism was dominant in T.N.C.C., for the Swarajists became the official Congress. The Gandhiites, however, remained within the Congress to clinch their political ideology. The Gandhiites brought out new recruitment and organisational viability to the Congress in ample measure. As years progressed, higher castes and the better educated gravitated towards Rajaji and participated in his struggles against the Swarajists. Due to the energies of E.V.R., the Brahmin versus Non-Brahmin conflict within the Congress gained ascendancy and the Self-Respect Movement of E.V.R. was a by-product of the factional conflict in T.N.C.C.

In the third phase Multi-Factionalism appeared in the Congress for the first time in the 1930’s. Social and economic aspirations, personality clashes, caste consciousness and organizational competitions were the reasons for the development of factionalism during the period. It led to the various activities, some constitutional and peaceful and others wholly violent. But in spite of Multi-Factionalism in the T.N.C., it was united against the common enemy - the British. The T.N.C., emerged from the Civil Disobedience internally more cohesive and organizationally more powerful than it had been during the previous decades.