CHAPTER 6

THE ORIGIN OF THE JUSTICE PARTY AND

THE NON-BRAHMIN REGENERATION
There are varied opinions regarding the origins of the 'Justice Party'. It is worthwhile to consider these various views expressed by different writers from time to time, and then establish as to how and when the Justice Party actually originated. It is a question which no student of "Non-Brahmin Movement" can afford to ignore. It helps not only to understand the origins of Non-Brahmin Movement but also to understand the movement scientifically and in the proper perspective.

"The Non-Brahmin Movement has had to pass through the classical experiences known to history before it may succeed in rivetting attention on its aims. It is unnecessary to go into the historical and ethnical aspects of the mutual relations that subsisted between the Brahmana and Non-Brahmanas. Suffice it to say that there is a body of the country's population, not certainly homogeneous, not perfectly organised, but animated by a common grievance and inspired by a common ambition."† 'Justice Party celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1968, and on this occasion it published the Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir. In this

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Souvenir are expressed varied types of opinions which throw light on the origins of the Justice Party. Some of these opinions can be examined at this stage.

In the Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir various shades of opinions on the origins of the Justice Party are expressed. The views expressed in this Souvenir are those of important personalities, scholars - both Indian and foreign - e.g., Eugene F. Irshick, Robert Hardgrave and Philip Spratt. These opinions can be considered as authoritative ones and the study relies much upon the opinions expressed in the Souvenir. It was planned to interview some personalities in Madras who were connected with the Justice Party but it was also felt that interviews would not serve the purpose of study much because the close associates of Shri Shahu from Madras like Dr. T.M. Nair, Sir P.T. Chettiar, Raja of Panagal, Sir Ramswami Mudaliar were the originators of the Justice Party and they could throw better light on the origins of the Justice Party. The letter written by Ramswami Mudaliar to Shri Rajaram Maharaj of Kolhapur (Appendix 44) throws enough light as to what Shri Shahu meant to Madras Presidency. In this direction the study bases its conclusions on the correspondence found in the Shahu Daftar and the opinions expressed in Madras on the Justice Party.
Dr. S. Saraswati states: "The Justice Party had played a notable part during 1920-1935, as the ruling party. It was a political party with 'moderate' political ambitions, with 'realistic views on socio-political questions and a party with a definite practical programme to carry on the Government of the Province in co-operation with the British rulers. The basic ideologies of the party, which governed its politics while in power, were largely determined during the years of its foundation between 1916 and 1920."

It was a period of serious constitution-making. The British authorities had promised a further step towards responsible and representative government after the war. Several constitutional schemes were proposed by different organisations in India. The Home Rule Movement organised by Mrs. Besant became very active in 1915. The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League concluded a pact in 1916 and jointly proposed a scheme of Reforms. ... The Justice Party was born in this political climate to express the views of the Non-Brahmin Castes in Madras about the Constitutional Reforms. On November 20, 1916, some prominent Non-Brahmin leaders including Dr. T. M. Nair an eminent physician, and (later) Sir P. T. Chettiar a prominent industrialist, gathered at a conference in Madras (at the residence of T. Ethiraja
Mudaliar - High Court Vakil of Poonamale High Road) resolved to start a company for publishing a newspaper advocating the 'cause of the Non-Brahmin Community' and to form a political association to "advance, safeguard and protect the interests of the Non-Brahmin community. A joint stock company was started - known as 'South Indian Peoples Association', and also published English 'Justice' and two vernacular dailies- 'The Dravidan' (Tamil) 'Andhra-Prakanika' (Telugu)."^2

Another view is that of Gopala Menon who states: "During the middle of the war, Dr. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, started the Home Rule Movement in Madras. This secured a great accession of support of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. This alliance between Theosophical Society (Madras) and G.Tilak of Poona, provoked Shri Shahu to become more active in the politics of Madras Presidency. It was Dr. T.M. Nair who faced Mrs. Annie Besant in Madras, and Tilak was opposed by Shri Shahu in Bombay Presidency. The alliance between the advocates of the Home Rule Movement resulted in establishing the Justice Party. There was widespread political agitation in India for securing self-government. The active participation of India in Britain's

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war-efforts created a tremendous change in the outlook between the British rulers and their Indian subjects. ... Non-Brahmin leaders became conscious of the fact that if they failed to organise themselves and place before the British public realities of the political situation in South India, their cause would go by default. With this object, the South Indian Liberal Federation was inaugurated under the joint leadership of Dr. T. M. Nair and Sir P. T. Chettiar. The leading articles in the Justice were written by Dr. Nair. They sparked with wit and humour and ruthlessly exposed the pretentious claims of the Brahmin community. Dr. Nair sailed for England to educate British statesmen about the realities of the political situation in South India and to urge the inclusion of the principle of communal representation in any scheme of political reforms. Quite unexpectedly, when he arrived in London, he was served with a 'Gagging order' restraining him from addressing or participating in any public meeting. The question was raised in the House of Lords by Lord Sydenham, a former Governor of Bombay, which eventually led to the withdrawal of the order. Dr. Nair then addressed the members of Parliament and explained to them that without a provision for communal representation the reforms would be a failure.  

Further, Philip Spratt in his book, *D.M.K. in Power*, states: "Dr. T. M. Nair was usually described as the principal leader of the movement in its earlier phase. Dr. T. M. Nair practised in Madras city, and was one of the most respected figures in public life in the presidency. He attended Congress sessions from the 1890's, and took active part in them. In 1916 he expected himself to be elected by the Madras Legislative Council to the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi, but in the event two Brahmins, B. N. Sarma and V. S. Srinivas Sastri (Refer Appendix 17) were elected. This incident provided the immediate impetus to the formation of Non-Brahmin Political Party. In 1916 these leaders with Dr. P. T. Chettiar, established the 'South Indian Peoples' Association'. Finally in August 1917, they set up the 'South Indian Liberal Federation', which later came unofficially to be called the Justice Party."

Eugene F. Irschick states: "on November 20, 1916, some thirty or so Non-Brahmin leaders, including Dr. Nair and Tyagaraja Chettı, met at the Victoria Public Hall in Madras city. This meeting can be considered the real beginning of

a Non-Brahmin Party, although the decision that night was simply to form a Joint Stock Company, to be called the South Indian People's Association Ltd., for the purpose of publishing English, Telugu and Tamil newspapers to voice Non-Brahmin grievances. At first, the new party had little organizational cohesion or direction, but as Dr. Nair pointed out a few days after the initial meeting, Non-Brahmins had never before united for corporate action. Only by working together would they ever take their 'proper place' in the Government of the country. He urged a policy of non-violence, with leadership in the hands of the landed aristocracy. 

While examining the various shades of opinions regarding the origins of the Justice Party it is to be realised that no party can be established at a single stroke or without a particular background. An examination of the background as to the origins of the Justice Party points to the fact that it is like an iceberg whose greater portion is hidden. It is only when we are able to bring out the hidden part that better light can be thrown on the origins of the Justice Party. From the views mentioned in the

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foregoing, one thing is well established and that is Dr. T. M. Nair and Sri P. T. Chettiar were the principal leaders in starting the 'South Indian People's Association'. It is interesting to note that these principal leaders of the Justice Party had been much influenced and inspired by Shri Shahu of Kolhapur and even his heir apparent H.H. Shri Rajaram, the next Maharaj of Kolhapur, who followed in the glorious path of Late Shri Shahu Maharaj. Shri Shahu was well known for his active support to the Non-Brahmin cause all over the country. This aspect will be dealt with later. Shri Shahu never made a difference between Bombay Presidency and Madras Presidency as far as this cause was concerned. "The fact is that 'Maratha Education Fund' in Madras Presidency was established as early as 1912 by Rao Saheb Pingle Ramchandra Rao in 1912."6

From 1913 onwards it was a period of climax for Shri Shahu Maharaj's efforts in spreading and extending the Non-Brahmin cause outside his native state also. Besides this Shri Shahu was closely associated with Lord Sydenham when he served as Governor of Bombay Presidency

6 The Hindu (Madras), 'Maratha Education Fund', Silver Jubilee Celebration dated April, 6, 1937.
and also with Lord Willingdon, another Governor of Bombay Presidency, who was later transferred to Madras Presidency. Thus the British policy and politics also in a way brought the Non-Brahmin leaders of Bombay and Madras Presidencies closer to each other.

In this connection, the correspondence between Shri Shahu and Colonel Wodehouse (Appendix 21) throw much light on the close but behind the curtain relations between Dr. Nair, Lord Sydenham and Shri Shahu Maharaj. In the letters (Appendixes 21 and 22) it is stated that when Dr. Nair returned from England, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj calls upon him, and learns regarding the various developments in England. H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj also points to Col. Wodehouse regarding his association with Lord Sydenham and refers to the unity of purpose (between Dr. Nair, Lord Sydenham and His Highness) and states "learning from different sources that if the despotic Brahmin bureaucracy of India does not allow communal representation, Lord Sydenham, Lord Curzon and others will see that the Bill does not stand in the Parliament."  

In another letter with the same contents, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj informs Mr. Cadell regarding his meeting with Dr. Nair and points to "the keenness of Lord Sydenham on giving Communal Representation and further refers to the invitation extended to Dr. Nair to visit places such as Belgaum, Dharwar and Kolhapur to canvass for communal representation." It was Lord Sydenham as a close associate of Shri Shahu and his close acquaintance with India, and especially with Bombay, that helped Dr. Nair to be saved from the "gagging order" as mentioned in the foregoing.

Lord Sydenham's association with Shri Shahu of Kolhapur, while he was Governor of Bombay Presidency, helped him in assessing the importance of the Non-Brahmin cause, and made him see "the fallacy of applying the Western principles of equality to the priest-ridden and caste-divided illiterate millions of India. The Deccan has been for centuries groaning under the tyranny of the Brahmin priest who had seized supremacy in every way -- in religious

8 Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No.1919, L.No.10/1, Appendix 22.
9 Memorandum submitted to Lord Sydenham by H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, September 1918, Appendix 41.
as well as secular matters, commerce, education banking and so on. The masses of the country are not, therefore, free agents and unless special precautions are taken to safeguard their interests they are sure to fall an easy prey to the tyranny of their Brahmin masters. Communal representation is the only way for safeguarding their interests in the provincial and imperial councils."  

In this way the two organisations - the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and the Justice Party - were integrated, and thus Shri Shahu was in close touch with the Justice Movement of Madras.

Lord Sydenham had attended and presided over many conferences which took place under the leadership of Shri Shahu Maharaj and these had in turn led Lord Sydenham to firmly believe that "Independence with caste system would be meaningless."  

Since 1913 Shri Shahu Maharaj strove to create "a large volume of public opinion in South India, and there was wide-spread political agitation in India for securing self-government. Non-Brahmin leaders

11 Memorandum submitted to Lord Sydenham by H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, September 1938, Appendix 41.

12 Jadhav B.B., Rajashri Shahu Maharajanche Bhashene, Kolhapur, 1971, pp. 5-10.
became conscious of the fact that if they failed to organise themselves and place before the British the public realities of the political situation in South India, their case would go by default. With this object the South Indian Liberal Federation was inaugurated under the joint leadership of Dr. T. M. Nair and Sir P. T. Chettiar.¹³

To understand the *modus operandi* of Shri Shahu Maharaj in bringing about such an awareness in Southern India, it is necessary to analyse some of the speeches delivered by him at various conferences. Shri Bhaghwan Rao Babu Saheb Jadhav, has published these speeches under the title *Rajashri Shri Shahu Maharajanche Bhashene* (in Marathi), which also mentions the various centers Shri Shahu visited, carrying his reform spirit to the desperate and the downtrodden sections of the society.

In his speech delivered on 27th December, 1917, presiding over the Eleventh All India Maratha Education Conference at Khamgaon, he explained clearly the meaning of patriotism. He identified Home Rule with education and he replied to the extremist forces, who criticised H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj as anti-nationalist. He declared in

his speech that he also stood for Swaraj. "We want Swaraj, and we are also using our energies in that direction. British education itself has taught us the meaning of freedom, but I agree with Lord Sydenham who states that independence with caste system would be meaningless, and we fear that under Swaraj, the whole power would be vested in the hands of the upper castes." Shri Shahu also referred to the example of Japan as to how they got rid of the caste system. He felt that earlier the society gets rid of the caste system the better for achieving Home Rule. On 10th November, 1918, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj addressed the labourers of Bombay in Parel. In this speech he advocated for Labour Unions and criticised capitalism. He was also a great socialist in mind, and in his own Native state he had established co-operative credit societies to help the agriculturists. Shri Shahu was also in touch with the Lingayat community of Mysore State. Suffering under the Brahmin bureaucracy, the masses in Mysore state had also been subjected to various difficulties. Under the powerful influence of Brahmins, the

14 Jadhav B.B., Rajashri Shahu Maharajanche Bhagshene, Kolhapur, 1971, pp. 5-10.

15 Ibid., p. 13.
British administrators in Karnataka had been persistently refusing the Lingayats the practice of parading 'Vyasantol' for nearly a century.

"Under these circumstances, the Maharaj was approached for permission for the 'Vyasantol' parade in connection with the procession of the high priest or the Jagadguru (Pontiff) of the Lingayats who had his head-quarters in Mysore State. H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj allowed the parade which to the great joy of the community in Karnataka was held with due pomp as early as May 12, 1911, in Kolhapur city. As this took place in Kolhapur, the authorities in Belgaum also changed their view and allowed

*Vyasantol* is a Kannada phrase which has a story behind it. The legend has it that sage Vyasa after writing ten chapters of Skanda Purana in praise of his personal deity Lord Vishnu declared from the portals of Kasi Visveswara temple that Lord Vishnu alone is superior to all Gods. No sooner he made this declaration his right hand with which he had written the ten chapters of Skanda Purana got cut off and fell to ground on its own. Realising his folly in undermining Lord Siva, he wrote with his left hand the remaining chapters of Skanda Purana stating that Siva is the greatest among all Gods. With the grace of Lord Siva his right hand which was cut off developed and he got it back. After this incident the Jagadgurus of Pancha Peethas or the five seats of the Veerasaivas (Lingayats) began demonstrating the right hand of Vyasa (Vyasantol) by tying it to their palanquin as a warning to the detractors of Siva. A detailed narration of this is found in chapter 11 to 18 of the Skanda Purana (Revealed to me in an interview with the Swamiji of Nargund).
the Vyasantol processions in several places like Athani, Munoli, Yagathi and others."16

These contacts of Shri Shahu with the Lingayats in Mysore further resulted in July 1920, when the leaders of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Karnataka like Rao Bahaddur Kambli, Gavai, Menshirikai, invited H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj to preside over the Non-Brahmin conference held in Hubli when a huge procession was held in honour of H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur."17 It may be noted here that Sir P.T. Chettiar was present on this occasion. Shri Shahu, at the outset, acknowledged with gratitude the presence of Non-Brahmin leader of Madras. Shri Shahu in his speech at Hubli, stated that in the absence of the British rule in India and in the absence of Western education, the Brahmin hold over the caste system would have tamed our castes like dogs and cats."18 H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj here commends Mahabharata also.

Further, these were the years of most intense Non-Brahmin activity throughout Southern India, and the

17 Ibid.
Maharaj of Kolhapur as its leader left no corner untouched, nor the leaders of the Non-Brahmin Movement of any part could work in isolation, because, "Dr. Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak joined hands in launching the Home Rule Movement," and Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur was opposed to the terrorist extremist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak. So Shri Shahu Maharaj repudiated these forces and consolidated the Non-Brahmin Movement under his leadership. His utmost dislike towards the Brahmins was not different from his dislike for the extremists everywhere. Shri Shahu's views regarding the extremist activities have been already mentioned. They may also be inferred from the various letters. They also point to the attitude of Shri Shahu towards the various communities (Non-Brahmins) which he termed as (Bahujan-Samaj) which indicates majority of people who were Non-Brahmins. Besides, Shri Shahu's movement followed the lines of 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' of Jotiba Phule under Shri Shahu's leadership. This movement was also known as 'BRAHMANETAR - CHALWAL' which implies to be a movement of the masses i.e., of all people except the

Brahmins; a movement which cannot be termed as anti-Brahmin Movement, because it was social reform oriented. Of course critics interpret it to be anti-Brahmin, but again to support the statement that it was not anti-Brahmin the term 'BAHUJAN-SAMAJ' was used. This term indicates that it was a movement of the masses and not an anti-Brahmin Movement as such. Under Shahu's leadership this movement was not limited to any caste. The correspondence throws ample light in this direction and shows how Shahu's movement was really a Bahujan Samaj movement.

In his letter to Col. Wodehouse of 19th February, 1919, Shri Shahu points to the Brahmin hold in religious and educational fields and he expresses his dislike regarding the extremists and also his views on the 'Kesari' the newspaper of Tilak, which was always coming in the way of Shri Shahu Maharaj. Shri Shahu Maharaj was also known to be supporting institutions, press, organisations which were against the Tilak's views, because of the rivalry between the two. In his letter to Mr. Robertson, dated 19th February, 1918, he points to the mischievous role which the Brahmins had resolved to play. He had passed many

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rules to face them by which the 'Brahmin Kulkarni' had lost his supremacy in the villages. "In this letter Shri Shahu Maharaj also points as to how extremist newspapers had seen to it that Non-Brahmin newspapers collapsed and he expresses a desire to help it up." It was this political cry and the conflict between the extremist Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Shri Shahu which made him to go even beyond his Native State to create a political awareness in favour of communal representation and hence "the basic ideologies of the Justice Party, which governed its policies while in power, were largely determined during the years of its foundation between 1916 and 1920." The unifying feature of the peninsular Non-Brahmin Movement was the dislike of; if not hatred, the Brahmin. Shri Shahu was against caste, but was not communal. "To the leaders of the different communities, he said "I have only one message to convey. Do not be shortsighted. Have a vision of the future. To dissolve castes

is a necessity. To uphold them is a sin. Castes are obstacles in the path of the common advancement of all of us and our duty, therefore, is to remove it with all the courage we can muster. Hold your caste-meetings, but ignore not the point that they are only a means to end the caste. Let not then your caste-meetings help to mend the castes."24

Shri Shahu, true to his outlook, was admired by one and all. Working for the cause of Non-Brahmins he was in close touch with the Non-Brahmin leaders of Madras, and he was also a guide and philosopher of the Justice Party. Leaders of Justice Party and Shri Shahu were close associates, and had always exchanged their views, (Letter No.1/5 File No.19, K.R.O.). Appendixes 21 and 23 speak for the close association of the Non-Brahmin leaders of Madras, and Shri Shahu of Kolhapur. As has already been pointed out though there were two Presidencies the administration was of the same type. Lord Sydenham worked in between the two movements in the early 1900's. In this letter it is clearly pointed out as to how efforts were being made by Lord Sydenham and Lord Curzon and others who would see that the

24 Latthe A.B., op.cit., p.470.
Bill does not stand in the Parliament which was influenced by the despotic Brahmin bureaucracy who wish that communal re-presentation would not be allowed."\(^{25}\) From this letter it can also be inferred that Shri Shahu and Dr. Nair were no less good friends, and the establishment of the Justice Party "by a small influential group of men maintained all-India perspectives. They also were trying to connect Madras public life with that of Bengal, Bombay and the rest of British India."\(^{26}\) It is in this context that Eugene Irschick and other scholars have failed to note and appreciate the background to the rise of the Justice Party. When the Justice Party was established in 1916, an all-India perspective was already provided by Shri Shahu of Kolhapur, through his Non-Brahmin Movement, and he was already in touch with the Non-Brahmin leaders like B.A. Gupte of Bengal Presidency, who was propagating Non-Brahmin ideals by helping Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur in establishing an ethnographical institute."\(^{27}\) Shri Shahu was already

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25 \textit{Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No.19, L.No.1/5, Appendix 21.}

26 Eugene Irschick, \textit{op.cit.,} p.2.

27 \textit{Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No.27, (1919), letter of B.A.Gupte to Dewan of Kolhapur, Appendix 5.}
acknowledged as the leader of the Non-Brahmin Movement in India. Of course the Non-Brahmin Movement of Madras was also the result of the conflict in the form of social rivalry that was already there between the Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. But all the social and political thoughts on which the Justice Party worked and framed its basic ideologies agree with the thoughts of Shri Shahu. The rise of the Justice Party "was explicitly so; to the Home Rule Movement, and was established within a few days of the announcement by Montagu in the House of Commons." Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras and Bombay worked in collaboration with each other. Dr.T.M.Nair and Shri Shahu moved together and inspired the Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras Presidency. Shri Shahu perhaps remained behind the curtain, saving himself from the critics' eyes as he was against publicity. "The relation between these two kindred spirits based on community of nature and principles resulted in endowing a Memorial Scholarship by Shri Shahu in the name of Dr.T.M. Nair. This token of his admiration for the Madras leader testifies, in that presidency, to the solid unity of purpose.

between the two sections of the Deccan." Shri Shahu Maharaj was in constant touch with the Madras affairs, either through his visits, or through his pleaders in the Tanjore case pending in Madras High Court, or through H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj's friendship with Dr.T.M.Nair, Sir P.T. Chetiar and Sir A.Ramswami Mudaliar.

Further, it can be stated that there is a lack of reference to indicate the links between the Non-Brahmin Movement of Bombay, and the Justice Movement of Madras. But this does not mean that Shri Shahu left Madras unrepresented when he advocated communal representation. During the Delhi Conference, the Dewan of Kolhapur Sir Chitnis and Dr.T.M.Nair were put-up together in Chandani Chowk." Shri Shahu had travelled extensively in order to understand the existing social conditions. "In 1891, he visited Bijapur, Hyderabad, Madras, Pondichery, Tanjore, Tuticorin, Colombo, Candy and Newara-Eliya. On his way back he paid a visit to two principal cities of Mysore state - Bangalore and Mysore, and when he visited Madras Shri Shahu found a contrast in Madras regarding the social

30 Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No.18 (1918), (Refer Telegram copy), Appendix 23.
conditions in Bombay and Calcutta."  Shri Shahu Maharaj paid a visit to Madras in January 1921. He was a close friend of Lord Willingdon, who was transferred from Bombay to Madras Presidency. Shri Shahu Maharaj was the guest of Lord Willingdon." When Lord Willingdon was transferred to Madras "H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj had used all his efforts to get the transfer order of Lord Willingdon as Governor of Madras cancelled. In the same context it can be further stated that on 12th November, 1917, Shri Shahu, besides pressing for communal representation when he met Montagu, also appreciated the services of Lord Willingdon, and Shri Shahu "thought that no Viceroy or Governor such as Willingdon ought to be moved during war." Even then Lord Willingdon was transferred to Madras Presidency. This once again helped to spread Shri Shahu's influence in Madras Presidency in all directions and spheres, with the Princes, with the leaders and with the Governor of Madras Presidency himself who also blessed the Justice Party of Madras.

Implications of the Transfer of Governors

Governor Lord Willingdon's transfer from Bombay to Madras Presidency has some relevance to the present study. Its implications are two-fold:

(a) To check the growing importance of Non-Brahmin Movement under the leadership of Shri Shahu which had gained much strength compared to the Nationalist Movement.

(b) Lord Willingdon's services were required more to play Brahmins against Non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency rather than in Bombay Presidency.

The Non-Brahmin Movement during 1916-1918, had made a great impact on the British politics. The unity in the movement which had spread all over the south by now, and almost all Non-Brahmin leaders uniting amongst themselves posed another threat to British stability. Perhaps Muslim politics also has its strength drawn from the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict which would weaken the Non-Brahmins (this is another aspect of British politics). The Non-Brahmin Movement which was started in a small way by Jotiba Phule developed itself to strength and solidarity with the invigorating role of Shri Shahu in course of time. No
wonder the movement came to be considered as having greater homogeneity and cohesion than even the Nationalist Movement. As a matter of fact Shri Shahu's hold over the Non-Brahmin Movement was stronger compared to the Nationalist leadership during 1916-1920. The movement could have certainly become a strong anti-British movement, had Shri Shahu been allowed to grow in strength and influence. The transfer of Lord Willingdon precisely at this juncture to Madras Presidency in the year of 1918, is therefore, full of significance. In view of the intimacy between Lord Willingdon and Shri Shahu and also in view of Lord Willingdon's known sympathy to the Non-Brahmin cause, this particular transfer had important political implications which cannot be ignored in this context.

In the second place it can be pointed out that, during the interview that Shri Shahu and Dr.T.M.Nair, with Lord Montagu, Shri Shahu appreciated, rather evolosised the services of Lord Willingdon, whereas Dr.Nair expressed his dissatisfaction with the role of Lord Hardinge the then Governor of Madras Presidency. This only meant that Lord Willingdon's services as a renowned parliamentarian in the Bombay Presidency were badly needed in Madras Presidency. It can be fairly concluded, that what seems to be routine
transfer for administrative reasons had been politically motivated, and expected to influence the politics of the Presidency concerned, particularly the Non-Brahmin politics.

"Madras was lucky then to have Lord Willingdon as the Governor. The Governor could have selected any three men of the party as Ministers but he did not do so. Being wellversed in Parliamentary practice, he called Sir P.T. Chettiar to form the ministry. Sir Chettiar declined the honour. This convention of calling upon the leader of the majority party to form the ministry has been followed since then. Then M.A. Subbarayallu Reddiar formed the first ministry with Raja Ramarayanigar, who later became Raja of Pangal, and Mr. K.V. Reddi as his colleagues."34

Further even the Raja of Pangal had been closely associated with Shri Shahu and he was present at Nasik on April 15, 1920 when Shri Shahu had presided over the Backward Class conference which had impressed the Raja of Pangal, the Minister of Madras very much. The Raja of Pangal described the speech of Shri Shahu as an 'epoch-making speech.' He also stated that, he was getting it reprinted from the columns of the 'Justice' for circulation, and also thought of getting it translated into Telugu for publication, so that even the Telugu-knowing Non-Brahmins may have access to its inspiring contents."35


introduced in the Madras council by the Non-Brahmin Minister there, the Raja of Pangal is based on the same principles as guided by the Maharaj of Kolhapur in the policy he had laid down in this respect. He had been carefully studying the administration of these charities in His state ever since he came to power.  

"Shri Shahu was himself a great force, and under his influence the Non-Brahmin movement had different phases in different regions. In Andhra the Non-Brahmin Movement was not without its effects. The Non-Brahmin reforms did influence the thoughts of Rao Bahaddur Viresalingam Pantulu. "His writings and sacrifices focussed the attention of the society on the plight of child-widows, and urged widow remarriage. The literature 'Shatakas of Janapati Kamasatra' (1855-1915) are full of odium against the evils of caste hierarchy in the society." Viresalingam Pantulu also helped the advance of education, the maintenance and upbringing of orphans etc. He was known as 'Vidya-Sagar' of the South for his life long and strenuous efforts for social purity." The Non-Brahmin

Movement in Andhra, though was very much influenced by the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin conflict, the Telugu Brahmins of Andhra may have escaped the experiences of the Tamil Brahmins of Madras by joining the other castes in protest movement against 'Tamil domination'. Besides, the Telugu Brahmins were less concerned with pollution and more willing to attend ceremonies of other castes. No movement had such a wide influence as that of the Non-Brahmin Movement under the leadership of Shri Shahu. He, as a leader of the


Foot notes:

Mysore and Andhra have not been immune to anti-Brahminism but it has been much less virulent and politically significant than that formed in Madras and Maharashtra. Kerala has not experienced much anti-Brahminism either; but this may be partly because of the links of blood and kinship that unite Nairs and Namboodiri Brahmins; and in part because of strong Brahmins of Andhra may have escaped the experience of the Tamil Brahmins of Madras, because of the history of the Telugu linguistic area. Andhra became aware of a distinct original identity that differentiated her from Tamil and with which she shared a single political identity in the Presidency of Madras - earlier in the twentieth century. Telugu Brahmins were able to join with other Andhra castes in protest against 'Tamil domination', which turned out, incidentally to be mostly Tamil Brahman domination; at a time when the Brahman-Non-Brahman conflict was joined in Madras. But it is also true that Indian and English observers at the beginning of this century, in contrasting Madras and Andhra, note that Telugu "Brahmans were less conceived with the pollution and more willing to attend ceremonies of other castes. Rudolph and Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*, Political Development in India, ff. pp. 78-79.
Non-Brahmin Movement, reached such a status that whenever something went wrong with a Brahmin, Shri Shahu was blamed for it. "In one of the issues of the ‘Justice’ at Madras there appeared an article against Mr. Shastrī, and abused H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj for the same." Shri Shahu’s popularity in the cause of education of Non-Brahmins was not unknown to Madras publications because of which he was appreciated and also criticised in both the Presidencies. 'The United India and Indian States' had published an editorial "A Maharaj on the Reform of Caste", which was based on a speech delivered by H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur as the president of the All-India Depressed classes conference at Nagpur. In this speech Shri Shahu Maharaj pointed that "facts of history carry their significance to us today if we only think about it, it was the neglect of such lessons in the past which must account for the present political position of India. H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj condemned the absurd doctrine that the Brahmin is the living god. Further, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj pointed that there are Hindu states like Travancore and Cochin where a

Brahmin murderer cannot be hanged though the Penal Code of their states is a faithful re-edition of the British Criminal Law. He also further refers to the whole social outlook which had undergone notable change, because of notable Hindus like the late Dr. Nair, who exposed the cruelty; the inhumanity and the folly of caste in its "untouchable" aspects. Shri Shahu in this speech also refers to states like Travancore and Cochin, which certainly point to the consolidated nature of the "The Non-Brahmin Movement". Besides these contacts of Shri Shahu in Madras and elsewhere his Non-Brahmin lieutenants like Rao-Bahadur Sabnis, Mr. A. B. Latthe, Mr. Prabhavalkar and others had always tried to work with a sense of unity for the cause of Non-Brahmins with the justicites. They constantly visited various places and acquainted themselves with the activities of the extremists, throughout Southern India. They had visited Bangalore and Melakote, when they had been there to see Mr. Setlur—the best authority on Hindu Law, to consult him in the Jagadguru matter. They also expressed a desire to see Dr. T. M. Nair there.

41 United India and Indian States, Madras, Wednesday, 23rd June, 1920, p. 362.

Shri Shahu, with all kinds of severe limitations in his own Native state, led the Non-Brahmin Movement to success. Limitations on his activities and the influence of the Brahmins in the Native States and such other problems are mentioned by Shri Shahu himself in every letter which he wrote." At times His Highness felt that the Brahmin strong-hold is sure to press the Non-Brahmins, but he was confident to fight them back. He felt that "Discouragement will not save us, but will kill us." It was this militant spirit that ran in the blood of Shri Shahu. The Non-Brahmin Movements' greatest success, was the introduction of the Montford Reforms along with a provision for communal representation. It was with these efforts that he made Kolhapur itself the centre for Non-Brahmin education i.e., of Jains, Lingayats, Christians, Marathas, and other backward classes.

In this context it is worthwhile to examine some criticisms levelled against Shri Shahu which throw ample light on the influence he wielded in the Deccan India. This goes to prove that the Non-Brahmin Movement of Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No.24, L.Nos. 316, 317, and 318, Appendix 10.
Tamil Nadu is nothing but a regeneration of the Shahu's Non-Brahmin Movement. Shri Shahu had brought the various Non-Brahmin classes under a single movement, the Non-Brahmin Movement and he spread the movement specially in Madras Presidency. In Madras itself 'The Citizen' had attacked 'Shri Shahu of Kolhapur, when the Non-Brahmins in Madras Presidency under the Presidentship of Dewan Bahadur R. Venkatraman Naidu had passed resolutions on this communal problem, and the President of the conference disclaimed any anti-Brahmin bias in the Federation. 'The Citizen' then challenged the President to "repudiate the nauseating hymn of hate which the Maharaj of Kolhapur is preaching and of which lucid illustration was provided in his angry effusion in the Justice the other day." Besides this criticism in Madras, in Poona the "Maratha", had also criticised Shri Shahu under the title "Maharaja of Kolhapur's Phobia" as follows: "His Highness the Maharaj of Kolhapur has aired his views on the Brahman and Non-Brahman question in Madras and elsewhere and has shown therein his intense hatred of the Brahmans adhoc as a class. H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj brings the knowledge of biology into requisition

and asks his followers to cultivate the habits of ravenous birds and blood-thirsty beasts, which perhaps is a reflection of his own ideals." 45

Shri Shahu gained great popularity and united this movement under his leadership to such an extent that the motive and outlook of British rule was shaken to its very roots. The "Divide and Rule Policy" was used by the British to divide the people into Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. This not only affected the British politics but also was used to limit Shri Shahu's Non-Brahmin Movement. Perhaps the British policy of "Divide and Rule" had no effect on the movement because of the unity in the Non-Brahmin Movement and its various organisations. The British also tried to limit the impact of Shri Shahu's personality. This can be inferred from Edwin S. Montagu's "An Indian Diary", which was written by Edwin Montagu daily during his visit to India in 1917-18, after the historic pronouncement of August 20, 1917, in the House of Commons. On 12th November, 1917, Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur met Montagu and appreciated the service of Lord Willingdon, and said that

"no Viceroy or Governor such as Willingdon ought to be moved during war." On January 17, 1918, Dr. Nair met Montagu and complained that "his relations were not good with Lord Hardinge, Governor of Madras." Knowing fully well Shri Shahu's cordial relations with the British administration and Governor Lord Willingdon, he pleaded on behalf of the Princes, Chiefs, Jahagirdars and the landed gentry of Bombay Presidency and requested Lord Chelmsford that His Excellency Lord Willingdon may be permitted to remain as Governor of Bombay for another term of 5 years. Shri Shahu was a great admirer of Lord Chelmsford. "When extremists had criticised His Lordship and his administration in their earlier meeting, Shri Shahu had expressed his regrets at the attempts of the extremists in making such mis-representations and mis-statements." In spite of these relations Lord Chelmsford transferred Lord Willingdon to Madras, undeterred by the requests made by H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj. This makes amply clear as to

47 Ibid., p. 198.
48 Shahu Files, K.R.O., File No. 19, L.No. 11/1, Appendix 31.
how the British played their role in the areas where there was Brahmin hold. Lord Willingdon's services were required more in Madras Presidency than in Bombay Presidency. This also indicates as to how Non-Brahmin Movement of Maharashtra always influenced the British to assess their own outlook ever since its launching in 1873 by Jotiba Phule in treating the Non-Brahmin politics on considerations of expediency.

Shri Shahu wanted democracy minus caste-feelings. "With continuous hurdles created by the Brahminical influence he was so keen, and enthusiastic that he never gave up the struggle." Shri Shahu continued his determined efforts to fight for the cause of the depressed millions of India. On 13th, 16th and 17th February, 1922, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj presided over the Third All India Depressed Classes Conference, held at Delhi which is considered as the last conference over which he presided and spoke. He breathed his last on the 6th May, 1922. In this last speech of his, "H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj called upon the people not to stick to their hereditary professions alone.

He asked them to educate themselves and enter all professions such as pleaders, Barristers, Doctors and Merchants. He also acknowledged the services of Dr. Ambedkar, who was absent on account of his visit to England. He asked the people of the Depressed Classes to follow Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, who was another well-known leader of the Depressed Classes.

The popularity of a leader gets better recognition not when he serves the society or when one is alive but after one passes away. So was the case with Shri Shahu of Kolhapur. Shri Shahu's leadership was acknowledged by the South Indian Liberal Federation (City-Branch), Madras on 25th May 1922 at the 'Soundarya Mahal', Govindappa Naick Street, George Town, Madras. The resolution stated: "That this meeting of the Non-Brahmins of the city of Madras express their deep sense of the loss sustained by the Non-Brahmin community of this Presidency by the untimely death of Chhatrapti Maharaj of Kolhapur, and places on record its warm appreciation and gratitude for the invaluable service rendered by him in the cause of the country and especially for the progress and welfare of

51 The Eastern Mail, 21st February, 1922, Delhi.
On 30th May, 1922, the Editor of 'Justice' acknowledges the telegram addressed to Mr. Raman Pillai by His Highness Rajaram Maharaj of Kolhapur. Further, noting the sad demise, the Editor of the Justice states: "I assure your Highness that, in the death of your Highness's beloved father, the Non-Brahmins of this Presidency have lost a sincere friend and well-wisher. They hope and trust that your Highness will continue to extend the same sympathy and assistance to their movement that your Highness's father was never wearied of giving."

Mr. Ramswami Mudaliar was also closely associated with H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj. In his letter dated 25th June, 1924, from Richmond (Surrey) he said:

"The late Maharaj, whose acquaintance I had the rare privilege and honour of possessing, had set such a high standard, and had brought the House of Kolhapur so prominently before the public eye, and had done so much in social field to give hope and cheer to the depressed and backward classes, that, in the Madras Presidency, Kolhapur stands for all that is just and all that is equitable. Your Highness has pleased the

52 Shahu Files, 1922, Appendix 42.
53 Shahu Files, 1922, Appendix 43.
hearts of all people by announcing that you are prepared to follow the footsteps of your great father, and in your actions your Highness has been steadily keeping that policy in view."54

Further, it was this relation between the Non-Brahmin Movements in the two Presidencies of Bombay and Madras that resulted in the formation of 'the Non-Brahmin Congress and Confederation' which took shape under the leadership of Shri Rajaram Maharaj of Kolhapur which will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. Here a reference may be made to the London Times (Supplement) of February 12, 1925, in which a review of the book "Memoirs of H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur" by A.B Latthe appeared. The reviewer says: "H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj prepared the ground from which there sprang the Non-Brahmin revolt, particularly in Madras and the Deccan, against a spiritual tyranny which threw a dark shadow over almost every phase of life. It was natural that he should be warmly attached to the British connection, founded as it is on principles of civil and religious freedom. In efforts to counteract sedition, and in promoting the allied cause in the Great War, he was characteristically whole-hearted. When the

54 Rajaram Files, K.R.O., (Unclassified), 1924, Appendix 44.
beleagured Kutch garrison ran short of food, and the Maratha Sepoys had scruples about eating horse-flesh, he volunteered to go to Mesopotamia and to be carried to Kutch garrison by aeroplane in order to talk personally with the men.55

The Justice Party of Madras owes its origins to the efforts made by Jotiba Phule, and later Shahu Maharaj prepared the ground. In this respect the two Reformers of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Maharashtra (Jotiba Phule and Shri Shahu) anticipated the programme of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras. The measures advocated by Jotiba Phule and Shri Shahu became the main items in the programme of the Madras Non-Brahmin Movement. Thanks to the greatness of H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, specially because of his efforts special representation through mixed electorates was conceded to the Non-Brahmins in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and also for influencing the British in matters of appointments. "The pioneer reforms which he practised and preached for the untouchables half a century ago were later on to be embodied in the Constitution of free India."56 "The late Maharaj of

55 The London Times (Supplement), February 12, 1925.
56 Jadhav B.B., op.cit., p.
Kolhapur (1874-1922) played a part in the social and political evolution of India in the past thirty years which has received far too little attention in this country. This is not only the history of a movement but as well it is the history of a man. The Non-Brahmin Movement is one of "Non-Brahmin Regeneration". The Maharaj, during the twenty-six years of his rule, was ever eager for the amelioration of all classes by emancipating them from the domination of the caste system. Much of his time and energy was devoted to this end. He regarded free and compulsory education of the backward classes as "the first plank upon which to build the Non-Brahmin structure for their elevation." The founding of schools and hostels was a duty which he conscientiously performed to the end of his life. Being confident in his belief that the Non-Brahmin classes had become conscious of their present degraded condition, and naturally wished that the wide gulf between them and the Brahmins should lessen and should not, at any rate, be allowed to widen. By 1920 separate hostels had been started in the Maharaj's small capital.

57 The London Times (Supplement), February 12, 1925.
for no fewer than eleven different sections of the community, including the Indian Christians and the so-called untouchables. This was of great significance and it is a great tribute to the tireless efforts of this liberal-minded ruler of a small princely state in the erstwhile Bombay Presidency.