CHAPTER III : POLITICAL ECONOMY AND LABOUR MOVEMENT.
CHAPTER - III.

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND LABOUR MOVEMENT.

Mrs. Besant's Political Philosophy and Involvement in Labour Movement.

As already hinted Mrs. Besant took the plunge headlong into national politics at the outbreak of the First War in Europe. She understood that there was a lull in the political activity in view of the fact that India's outstanding leaders and most of the extremists were either languishing in jail or living in exile. She announced that her sister Morya had directed her to work for India's political salvation.\(^1\) She made her maiden appearance in the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress in 1914. She followed it to the next Congress in Bombay, in 1915. She conceived her "Home Rule League" at Madras on 25th September 1915\(^2\) and later christened it, the All India Home Rule League in 1917. The power of the Moderates in the Congress had already been on the wane. Being a supermaster in the art of manœuvre, she contrived a strategy to woo the Congress Extremists.\(^3\) Tilak's approval of her Home

\(^1\) MARY LUTYENS op.cit., p.91

\(^2\) In 1915, she wrote:"... from the "Hindu Revival" was born the National Movement of Modern India, as from a similar revival was born the Maratha confederacy.. India is continuum, and her Aryan civilization an unbroken whole, ... she is always India; always Aryan, the Mother Imperishable ... She did without England for millennia, and flourished amazingly; she could do without England for millennia to come... India desires to be linked with England... on a footing of perfect equality".


\(^3\) Dr. S. GOPAL in his work, British Policy in India: 1858-1905 regards her as the only Theosophist leader who was not wholly a charlatan (op. cit., p.193).

ROY, M.N. would consider that her cry for Home Rule saved India for the Empire (India in Transition (Geneva, 1922) p.231.
Rule scheme, in 1916, brought instantaneous support to her movement from unexpected quarters. For instance the Madras Brahmins, who were till now her bitterest enemies endorsed her demand for Home Rule.

But the non-Brahmins still continued to oppose her and her new movement. The English Weekly, "The Non-Brahmin" wrote: "She (Mrs. Besant) cannot resist the temptation of looking upon the people of India as mere children ready and willing to suckle her breast. She has no doubt in her petticoat the Brahmin leaders of this town but... she can never hope to make tools of our Non-Brahmin leaders."

Addressing a largely attended public meeting on the 14th March, 1917 at Victoria Public Hall, Madras, Dr. T. M. Nair said: "We have on paper a record of what her opinions were on the question of India demanding self-Government. ... In a speech in 1905, she said: 'Geography has a determining influence on nationality. No two nations can exist on the same soil. A nation must have a national territory and we cannot have a Hindu nation and a Musalman nation in India. We must have one Indian nation from the Himalayas to the Cape Comarin, from Bengal to Kathiawar. No such nation has ever existed in India. India has always been and still is a mere geographical expression. No sane man or woman for that matter would propose to grant Home Rule to a geographical

1/ Notable among her brahmin supporters including the new finds were: Kasturi Ranga Aiyangar and A. Rangaswami Aiyangar of - The Hindu, G. A. Natasa Aiyar, S. Ramaswami Aiyar, Justice Sir Subramania Aiyar, Justice Sadasiva Aiyar, P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir P. Sivaswami Aiyar.


expression. Now, passing from 1905 and coming to 1911, the lady says again, 'English Rule is just; let the Indian first learn to stand and walk before he asks to rule and govern'... In 1915, only four years after... (this)... she comes out as leader of the Home Rule Movement... How did it come about that this lady in such a short time snatched the political initiative from the Congress, spread a propaganda of her own, captured a good many in the Congress and now began to lead them instead of following them? How did it come about? 1/

On the 15 June 1917 Mrs. Besant and two of her lieutenants B.P. Wadia and G.S. Arundale were arrested and interned at Ooty for three months by the Government of Madras 2/

The internment of Mrs. Besant was the origin of the movement for her election as the President of the Indian National Congress during its Calcutta Sessions in 1917. In fact the first visible sign of division in the Congress after its Lucknow session in 1916, was the formation of the Home Rule League and the second was the movement for the election of Mrs. Besant as the Congress President. 3/ Also it was during

1/ A full Text of Dr. T. M. Nair's above speech has been published under the caption: "Our Immediate political outlook", The Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir, (Madras, 1968) pp.105-120.

2/ "Notes on the Recent Madras Internments" The Modern Review, July 1917, pp.80-83;

On the eve of her internment she announced, "unless the Government can muzzle the whole Indian Press as well as Reuter, the news of my internment will run round the world"—(The New India, Madras, dated 15 June 1917);

The Madras Mahajana Sabha sent a cable gram to the Secretary of State, London on 26 June 1917, strongly protesting against the internments.


this period that Mrs. Besant turned her attention to labour movement, when her theosophist followers formed several labour unions to involve them in political work.¹ Mrs. Besant in her Presidential Address declared: "The strength of the Home Rule movement was rendered ten-fold greater by the adhesion to it of a large number of women who brought to its helping the uncalculating heroism, the endurance, the self sacrifice, of the feminine nature. Home Rule has become so intertwined with Religion, by the prayers offered up in the great Southern Temples - sacred places of pilgrimage - and spreading from them to village temples, and also by its being preached up and down the country by Sadhus and Sanyasins".² Sir K.V. Reddi Naidu in his evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee set up in 1919 in connection with the Government of India Bill testified that the Home Rule agitation of Mrs. Besant was bogus.³

Her short sojourn in politics did not deter her work regarding the coming of World Teacher. On 14 January 1927, she issued a statement to the Associated Press of America from Ojai Valley in America, which read: "The Divine Spirit has

¹ "Epistles - Brief and Frank", Indian Labour Journal, Nagpur dated 1 December, 1935, p.6 commented that the Labour Movement in India was one of the Theosophical Society's precious gifts to India.

² Cited in SITARAMAYYA, Dr. B. Pattabhi - op. cit., Vol. I, p. 130

Moreover Mrs. Besant emphasised the conception of her being the President of the Congress throughout the year. Eversince this high precedent had received full support at the hands of her numerous successors. (Ibid.) p. 607

³ Cited in IRSCHICK, E.F. - op. cit., p. 150.
descended once more on a man, Krishnamurti, one who in his life is literally perfect, as those know him can testify. The World Teacher is here. She also declared herself as Krishnamurti's disciple. Mrs. Besant had sponsored a new divining personality in 1928 – the World Mother, as she called the Virgin Mary. Mrs. Rukmani Arundale was proclaimed as the human vehicle chosen by the world Mother. Mundius Vult decipi, "the world wants to be deceived" as the ancient Roman rightly said: Mrs. Besant and her chelas made followers by thousands even after their myths were exploded on several occasions.


Dr. T. M. Nair, Sir Pitti Theagaroya Chetty and Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar along with others of the non-Brahmin genre met in Madras on 20 November 1916 and founded a joint stock company, South Indian Peoples' Association, for conducting the dailies, the Justice in English, the Dravidan in Tamil and the Andhra prakasika in Telugu to awaken and promote the non-Brahmin-consciousness among the people of Madras.

1/ Cited in MARY Lutyens. op.cit., p.259.
2/ ibid. p.276.

Annoyed at this new invention J. Krishnamurti wrote to Leadbeater that it was the outcome of the fertile brain of George S. Arundale. Later schisms developed in Adyar which led to J. Krishnamurti's ultimate resignation from the Theosophical Society in 1930.
Presidency. Also a political association namely 'The South Indian Liberal Federation', which later came to be known as Justice Party had been formed along with it. The leaders later issued a statement, entitled, "The Non-Brahmin Manifesto", which was published in 'The Hindu' and Mrs. Besant's 'New India' on 20 December, 1916. The manifesto stated how a small rigidly exclusive caste, the Brahmins constituting a mere fraction of 3% of the population of the Presidency swamped in all spheres of activity especially monopolising the highest positions in political, social and educational bodies and in public service.

1/ Soon many other periodicals for instance, THE NON-BRAHMIN, TAMILIAN, KERALA SAICHARI, KERALODYAM, KISTNA PATHRIKA were added by others in support of the non-Brahmin movement.

The Justice Party owed its origin to an organisation called the 'Madras United League' which had been founded among others by Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar in 1912. Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon, Editor of 'The Standard' and Raja Kamaraya Ningar later known as Raja of Panagal were its prominent members. The name of the organisation was changed to Dravidian Association of Madras in 1913. The membership rose to 500 in the same year and on the occasion of its first anniversary Dr. T.M. Nair and Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty till then adversaries in public life appeared on the same platform which marked the beginning of a new approach to non-Brahmin problems. The Madras Standard as far back as on 30 July 1900, reported that the non-Brahmin issue had become the burning question in every place throughout Madurai. (TNA - Confidential Native Newspaper Report No. 14 of 1900), p. 208.

Dr. Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar presiding over the First All India Non-Brahmin Conference held at Belgaum in 1924 said that although there had been simmerings of deep discontent as far as back as the year 1893, it burst forth with all the terrible force of volcanic eruption in 1916, when the memorandum of Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty and Dr. T. M. Nair was published at the Lucknow Congress of 1916. (Cited in JAYAKAR, M.R. - The Story of My Life - Vol. II 1922-1925. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959) p. 515
The Reform Schemes brought in 1919 and thereafter subsequently at various stages by the British Rule tended to foster communal feeling not only between the Hindus and Muhammadans, but also among the Hindus themselves as Brahmans and non-Brahmins. Different communities were out to claim that the legislature was to represent not regions, but religions; not areas or interests, but castes and creeds. Thus the schemes offered the greatest possible surface to religious friction. 1/ The Montagu-Chemford Reforms of 1919 proposed for the provinces a dyarchical government in which there were two halves, one Reserved half in the charge of Executive councillors responsible to the Governor and the other, the "Transferred" half, operated by elected ministers responsible to the Legislature. Mahatma Gandhi, declined to work the above reformed constitution, but the liberals in the Congress forming a separate party, Swarajists' Party in 1923 under the leadership of C.R.Das worked the constitution. The Swarajists nevertheless claimed that their decision in favour of Council entry was to wreck the constitution from within. 2/ M.Singaravelu Chetty, (hereafter Singaravelu) termed

1/ "India is not a single nation but a conglomeration of peoples separated from one another by caste, creed, language, history and inherited antipathies. They have nothing in common except submission to a common political power. The disruptive factors of caste and religion have not ceased to exercise their pernicious influence on the progress of India. ... By reiterating features of Hindu Society which are so remotely related to real national feeling, the educated classes deluded both the Government and the masses into the belief that India is fit for immediate Home Rule... Our community is agreed that Indian Nationality would be a chimera and autonomy under British Suzerainty an impossibility, unless India advances along communal lines. Communal representation must be the chief instrument for improving the condition of the people, and the necessary preliminary of any possible union and co-operation". (M.Ravy.PANDIT GANAPAL RAMAMURTHY GARU, Chief whip of The All-India Visvakarmam Liberal Federation in his Letter to the Reforms Enquiry Commitee, 1924. op.cit.,)pp.70-74.

2/ REPORT OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION, op.cit., p.204
the Swarajist Party as the Party of petty bourgeois origin.\(^1\)

This was in view of the fact that the six million people constituting the Indian electorate, out of a population of three hundred and twenty million, belonged to the propertied upper classes, rich intellectuals and peasant proprietors closely related to the landlords, those seeking election could not but commit themselves unequivocally to the defence of the interests of these elements.\(^2\)

The Justice Party raised the slogan, 'Don't vote for a Brahmin', which found most favour with the non-Brahmin bulk of the masses and the possibility of dislodging the Brahmin from his citadel was a prospect most alluring by itself. Thus it happened that when the results of the first elections were announced it took one's breath away to find the Brahmins who hitherto monopolised political situations in the Madras Presidency were swept clean off the boards and out of the total electorate strength in the general electorate of 65 barely 15 were Brahmins, most of them hailing from the Circars, the stronghold of extremism in the Presidency. To these must be added representatives from the special constituencies and the communal electorates nearly all of whom returned non-Brahmins. The leaders of the Justice Party did not run any candidate but they were astute enough to make their party label sufficiently elastic to apply to all who came victorious at the polls, if he was not a Brahmin. The Governor of Madras immediately invited the leader of the Party, Sir Pitti Theagaraya Chetty to form the Government of the transferred half. But Mr. Chetty while declining the offer himself, ventured to choose others of the Party for the job. Accordingly A.Subbarayalu Reddiar, P.Ramarayanagar and K.Venkata Reddi Nayudu were sworn in as ministers on 17 December 1920. Mr.Subbarayalu Reddiar resigned on health.

grounds in July 1921, whereupon Raja of Panagal P. Ramarayan-ningar succeeded him. Mr. A. P. Patro was now included in the ministry. When the party came to power hostile critics and the indifferent party men were soon jostling with each other in swearing allegiance to the party. The ministry had the solid phalanx of one hundred members at its back.

The Justice Party functioned as a political party and adopted constitutional methods for the orderly peaceful evolution of Self Government. Its Leaders said that they would work the reforms granted however imperfect they might be, prepare the people for further Self Government, carry on constitutional struggle with the British and get freedom by successive stages. 1/ The said: "By sagaciously working the constitution, we the Justicites promise democracy. With a spirit of political bravado of wrecking the constitution the Congressites are courting autocracy. It is like courting the plague, because you dislike the inoculation needle." 2/ Nearly all the members who opposed the Justice Party in the Council were Brahmins. 3/ The Justice ministries accepted the principle of joint responsibility and acknowledged the leadership of a "Chief Minister", though the existence of such a post was not contemplated in the reforms. 4/

1/ ANNADURAI, Arignar Dr. C. N., the late lamented Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in his Speech, "Vote for the Party of workers, Not for Wreckers", Justice, 3 February 1937, p.8; Mr. A. N. Sattanathan, who later became the Chairman of the Backward Classes Commission, Tamil Nadu, in his article, "Reaction to Brahminism: D. M. K's heritage - I" published in the Indian Express dated 24th August 1967 stated that the Justice Party was the first real political party to function as a constitutional party in India.
2/ ANNADURAI, Arignar Dr. C. N. - ibid.
3/ REPORT OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION, op. cit., p.203
4/ ibid.
The term of office of the First Ministry expired on the 19th November 1923 and on the same day, as a result of the Second elections a new ministry consisting of P. Ramaraya Ningar (1866-1928) A.P. Patro, and T. N. Sivagnanam Pillai succeeded in office. They held office till the 31st December 1926. From 1921 to 1926, important legislations concerned also the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act, State Aid to Industries Act, Compulsory Elementary Education Act and the Madras University Amendment Act. A Labour Commissioner was appointed especially to ameliorate the depressed classes. In a bid to increase the proportion of posts in government offices held by non-Brahmins to a justifiable level, the Justice Party forced the Madras Government to issue the Communal G.O.s within two years of its office.\(^1\) The Communal G.O. was the forebear of the Madras Public Services Commission, formed in 1929 as the first Provincial Public Services Commission in India. Its establishment was a direct result of Justice Party activity and illustrates more than any other single element the importance of the Justice Party not only for provincial affairs but also in terms of the Backward classes movement in India generally.\(^2\)

In the 1926 elections the Justice Party was defeated. Dr. P. Subbaroyan leaving the Justice Party, formed the

\(^1\) There were two communal G.O.s issued on different occasions. They were: 1. First Communal G.O. - TNA Public, Ordinary Series, G.O. 613, September 15, 1921.


ministry with the help of the Swarajists. He had two of his colleagues representing the Swarajists who resigned protesting Dr. Subbaroyan's decision to receive the Simon Commission. In their place two others were appointed with the help of the Justice Party. Of them the Minister S. Muthiah Mudaliar succeeded in issuing another communal G.O. which reiterated the provisions of the earlier orders also incorporating new measures for reservation of jobs departmentwise. In the elections of 1930, the Justice Party was returned with a huge majority. Mr. B. Muniswami Naidu of the Party formed the ministry with Mr. P. T. Rajan and S. Kumaraswami Reddiar as other ministers. After two years due to schisms in the Party Mr. Muniswami Naidu was replaced by Raja of Bobbili, who continued in office till April 1937. In the 1937 elections the Justice Party was defeated and the Congress at the behest of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari formed the Ministry. With the advent of the new reforms under the Government of India Act 1935, full provincial autonomy was established in all provinces in India with effect from 1 April 1937.

E. F. Ischick observes: "perhaps the most important contribution of the Justice Party to South Indian life was its popularisation of the greatness and validity of the Dravidian past. Basing its attempts on the work of many scholars of Tamil over the previous seventy-five years, the Justice Party

1/ "Dr. Subbaroyan was weaned away from the Justice Party overnight and was chosen as Chief Minister. The Congressmen cocongratulated themselves on their clever move. They did not know that cleverness without character is worse than useless and often proves dangerous. ... The Swarajists did not realise that they had caught a tartar in Dr. Subbaroyan. They expected him to dance to their tune, but they were sorely disappointed soon. ... This was the beginning of the crossing of the floor in a legislature" (RAJAN, P. T.- "Justice Party Golden Jubilee Celebration", The Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir, op. cit., p. (xxii)).
and its many auxiliary organisations sought to revive the fallen conditions of the Dravidians. Dravidians, it was said, had been conquered by a Brahminical invasion from the north. The culture and society of the Tamils was thereby destroyed and supplanted by the caste system and puranic religion. Brahmins, said the Justicites, thereby were able to ensnance themselves at the head of the religious and social hierarchy as hereditary priests. Thus it can be seen that the conflict between Brahmin and non-Brahmin communities led to the development of a radical political ideology and a Dravidian political identity.

The Conflict of Untouchables with Caste Hindus.

The largest of the people who constituted the majority community within the heterogeneous Hindu communities were the untouchables. They had been tenaciously clinging to the Hindu religion for nearly two thousand years in spite of the oppression and suppression they had been subjected to. The Justice Party fought for the social privileges and political rights of the Adi-Dravida in the beginning when it was founded. Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, one of the Founders of the Justice Party, in a speech in the Madras Legislative Council in 1932 declared: "One can easily find out which is the majority community within the Hindu Communities. It is the Adi-Dravida Community; that is the only community which consists of several millions of people and of all the many small communities of Hindu community that is the largest one. And to that community we do not want to give all the privileges they deserve. It is the duty of all of us, Hindus, to go about and tell the high caste people that all these people

1/ IRSCHICK, Eugene F - "The Significance of the Justice Party", The Justice Party Golden Jubilee Souvenir, op.cit., p.70

belong to our religion, one and the same religion, and that they should have the same privileges as ourselves... Our Party creed was 'Give them political status'. Other self-respect and other privileges will automatically go to them'.

The Raja of Panagal, the leader of the Justice Party was stated to have once said: 'Call a man Haridas - that is a servant of God - he will not be honoured by our society and you will not allow him to approach you even within ten yards of your house. But if he becomes a Christian, a Jacob or a Joseph, then surely you will call him to sit in your own table because he assumes the religion of the rulers. Political power gave him that right.' Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar citing the above speech of Raja of Panagal said: "If an Izhava was being oppressed by the other communities in a certain locality, make an Izhava a Judge or Collector in that locality, surely the Izhava will be better treated thereafter". But before long in 1923, M.C. Rajah, the most prominent untouchable leader in the Justice Party, withdrew, taking a number of untouchable leaders with him. They alleged that the Justice Party had done nothing for the Adi Dravidas and that it had been fast becoming the party of the caste Hindus.

Mahatma Jotirao Govindarao Phule founded the Satya Shodak Samaj in 1873 with a view to challenge the Brahminical supremacy; to prove from Hindu scriptures the equality of mankind, while denying the need for priestly mediation between man and God; and to dispense with the services of Brahmins at religious rituals. Phule's writings gave 'a vivid

2/ ibid, cited in Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar's speech.
3/ ibid.
4/ MARQUETTE ROSS BARNETT - op. cit., p.41;
picture of the mental slavery imposed by the sacerdotal class which began by subjugating the original inhabitants of the country... and then by means of mythological stories, religious teachings, literary fabrications and the rest, strengthened their hold upon the people who now became either Sudras (menials) or Atisudras (super-menials or the so-called untouchable classes). British rule, according to Phule, was a divine dispensation: 'Christ raised the British people from a very barbarous state, and sent them to India to deliver the crippled Sudras from the cunning Aryan Brahmins.' In 1889, he called upon the non-Brahmins to condemn Congress as an engine of Brahminical despotism. Phule declared, 'If the Aryans hold not one but a hundred Congresses, no sensible Sudra or Atisudra would become its members. I can confidently state that if Sudras do join, our beneficent rulers will be disgusted with them. The non-Brahmins and the untouchables throughout India looked on Phule as a prophet. Dr. Ambedkar considered him one of his three gurus, along with Buddha and Kabir.

In Madras Mr. P. V. Soobramaniam Pillay established the All India Dravida Mahajana Sabha in 1892 and began making periodical recommendations to the Government regarding the

1/ LATTHE, N. S. - Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur, (Bombay, 1924) Vol. I, pp. 322-3
   Cited in SEAL, Anil, ibid.

2/ Cited in SEAL, Anil - ibid.

3/ ibid.

4/ ibid.

   Dr. Ambedkar described Mahatma Phule, as "the Greatest Shudra of Modern India who made lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule".
   (AMBEDKAR, B. R. - Who were the Shudras?, op.cit.,) p.(v)
protection of the interests of the untouchables.¹/ In 1919, Dr. Ambedkar vividly described the plight of the untouchables: "Socio-religious disabilities have dehumanised the untouchables... The untouchables are so socialized as never to complain of their low estate... The exact description of the treatment cannot be attempted. The word untouchable is an epitome of their ills and sufferings. Not only has untouchability arrested the growth of their personality but it comes in the way of their material well-being. It has also deprived them of certain civil rights.... The principal modes of acquiring wealth are trade, industry, or service. The untouchables can engage in none of these because of their untouchability.²/

Dr. Ambedkar sincerely felt that the conscience of the Hindu Society had thus become moribund as well as morbid.³/

The untouchables would not trust the Congress for that was composed of social conservatives. Neither would they


In 1935, Dr. Ambedkar addressing the members of his community at Nasik said, "Choose any religion which gives you equality of status and treatment. I had the misfortune of being born with the stigma of untouchability but it is not my fault. I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power". (ILLAMI MARGAZ (Ed) What Gandhiji has done for India?? (Lahore, 1946), p.100

accept caste Hindus, however sympathetic they might be. Hence they promoted the concept of representation of untouchables, by untouchables and for untouchables'.¹ Sixteen of the eighteen Depressed Classes' Associations pleaded before the Simon Commission for 'separate electorate' for their class. While Bahishkirta Hitakorini Sabha founded in 1924 by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar demanded 'Joint electorate with reservation of seats'. Dr. Ambedkar in his memorandum said: 'Free election in general constituencies is, in the opinion of the Sabha, out of the question so far as the Depressed classes are concerned. On the other hand, the Sabha does not wish to ask for communal electorates. In its opinion, it would be sufficient if the depressed classes are provided with reserved seats in the general constituencies'.² Whereas the Madras Central Adi Dravida Mahajana Sabha led by Dewan Bahadur R. Srinivasan demanded nomination of depressed classes representations in the Council. Both Dr. Ambedkar and Dewan Bahadur R. Srinivasan who held different views from that of the other sixteen associations were selected by the Government to represent the depressed classes at the Round Table Conference, where the both modified their stands and pleaded for separate electorate.

The Prime Minister Ramsay Mac-Donald gave two different awards for the depressed classes: one for the Madras Presidency and another for the Presidencies other than Madras. For Presidencies other than Madras he recommended separate electorate in selected areas, but in Madras he

¹/ "Homogeneous people are willing to be governed by majorities, provided that the majorities have sufficient sense to govern at all. Heterogeneous people are not willing to be governed by such majorities, or if not in a numerical majority has some other extraordinary advantage which they feel sure will give it full control over the others". CRADDOCK, Sir Reginald. - The Dilemma in India (Constable & Co. Ltd., London, 1929), p. 272

recommended separate electorate on territorial basis. 1

This proposal for separate electorate on territorial basis
was not acceptable to many - who under the leadership of
M.C.Rajah demanded joint electorate with reservation of seats.
M.C.Rajah even made a pact with Dr. Mookerjee, the then President
of the Hindu Maha Sabha for joint electorate.

At that time the Justice Party also pleaded for joint
electorate with reservation of seats. The Justice Party
explained that in the separate electorate the minority
community among the depressed classes such as Arunthuthiars,
Medicas, Pallas, etc., would not get representation. 2 Dr. C.
Natesa Mudaliar one of the three founder leaders of the Justice
Party, while vehemently supporting a resolution seeking temple
entry for depressed classes moved by Dr.P.Subbarayan in the
Madras Legislative Council on 1 November, 1932 declared:

"The whole question now centres round joint electorate or

Constitutional Proposals of the Sapru Committee (1945)

Report - Note by Mr.J.Sivashanmugham Pillai, (Padma Publica-

The separate electorate on territorial basis was also
impracticable as far as the depressed classes were concerned,
because such constituencies would be spread over whole of the
Province of Madras covering four or five general constituencies
in between which meant huge spending on elections by the
candidates belonging to depressed classes.

Mahatma Gandhi entered upon a fast unto death as a protest
against the provision of separate electorates which in his
opinion was calculated to separate the depressed classes from
the general body of Hindu community. The fast was broken
upon the signing on 25 September, 1932, of what was known as
the Poona Pact between Dr.Ambedkar and Mr.Gandhi and the pact
itself was accepted by England in the place of its own Award.
Accordingly 148 seats in the Provincial Legislatures and 18%
of the seats allotted to the general electorate in the Central
Legislature were reserved for depressed classes.

ibid. The All India Arundhateya Central Sabha in its
memorandum submitted to the Indian Franchise committee
expressed the same opinion (Report of the Indian Franchise
Committee (1932): Selections from Memoranda and Oral Evidence
(Government of India, Calcutta,) p.92.
separate electorate. I was for separate electorate. I am now thinking whether separate electorate will do them (depressed classes) any good at this stage. If they are to have a joint electorate, the high caste Hindus will have to go and beg of them for votes. We will take care of their interest both in this Council and outside. I am very glad to find that they are going to have joint electorate.\(^1\)

The non-Brahmins of the National Congress.

As a counter to the Justice Party, the Congress at the instance of Mrs.Bosant and Sir C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar started the Madras Presidency Association in September, 1917, as an adjunct of the Congress, exclusively for the non-Brahmins.\(^2\) Dewan Bahadur P.Kesava Pillai was made its first President. Periyar E.V.Ramasami (hereafter Periyar E.V.R.), Loll Govinda Doss, Salla Gurusamy Chetty, Nagapattinam Pakirisami Pillai, S.Chidambaramanatha Mudaliar, T.Srinivasa Pillai and George Joseph became its Vice-Presidents. T.V.G.palasami Mudaliar, Guruswami Naidu, Dr.P.Varadarajulu Naidu, Chakkarai Chetty and Thiru Vi.Ka were made its Secretaries.\(^3\) The Association’s first Conference was held in Madras on 22 December 1917. At its Tanjore Conference held in April 1918, Dewan Bahadur V.Karunakara Menon, the Editor of "Indian Patriot" presided; Thiru Vi.Ka piloted a resolution in the Conference that the Tamils shall speak only in Tamil at the public meetings.\(^4\) The Association had been vociferous much against the chagrin


2/ ANAIMUTHU, V - Communal G.O. (Viduthalai Publications, Madras, 1970), p.3; Also See TN. Local and Municipal Department, G.O.122 dated 17 October, 1919.


of Brahmins for about three years and thereafter it went into oblivion.¹/

Emergence of Periyar and his Socio-economic Philosophy of Self Respect.

Periyar E.V.R. served the Tamil Nadu Congress from 1919, in various capacities as President and Secretary. In its conferences held at various centres, namely Trichy (1919), Tirunelveli (1920), Tanjore (1921), Tirupur (1922) Madurai (1923) and Tiruvannamalai (1924) Periyar exhorted Brahmin bosses in the Congress to render retributive justice to non-Brahmins on the basis of communal representation in all matters.²/ In 1924 presiding over the First All India non-Brahmin Conference held at Belgaum, Dr.Sir.A.Ramaswami Mudaliar assured that the non-Brahmin movement was not a reactionary movement; it was not a movement of hatred; its goal was not the suppression of forward communities.³/ He said, "We have the courage of our convictions and that in fact we are not in league with opponents, of our country's progress, nor for a mess of potage are we selling our rights. Conscious of our

¹/ ibid. p.263.

Doworn Bahadur P.Kesava Pillai contested a seat to the Legislative Council in the first elections; he relied on Brahmin support but lost badly to a Brahmin, B.Shiva Rao, the theosophist and labour leader. Kesava Pillai had since made bitter complaints of the deceitful treatment to him by Brahmins who had promised him support... and also of the manner in which Brahmin officials worked against him. (TNA Local and Municipal (Legislative) Miscellaneous Series, G.0.122, October 17 1919, Note by Lionel Davidson, dated 18 September 1919 - Cited in IRSCHICK, E.F. op. cit.,) pp.160-161

So also V.Chakkarai Chetti in a letter to The Hindu (Weekly edition, 19 February 1920), expressed his resentment at the growing Brahmin intransigence over the question of granting legitimate number of seats to non-Brahmins. (IRSCHICK, E.F., ibid.) p.163.

²/ In all the important walks of life where freedom of movement is necessary, the non-Brahmin finds himself bound in a "iron frame work" of prejudice and misconception". His call, therefore is for a larger share of freedom in the life of the community, commensurate with the numerical and other importance of his class' JAYAKAR, M.R. - The Story of My Life Vol. II

³/ Cited in JAYAKAR, M.R. - ibid. p.516, op.cit., p.120.
righteous cause, we have been anxious to work quietly, to
avoid the limelight of publicity and to discard the parapher-
nalia of the brass band and the bugle.\textsuperscript{1} Reiterating the
demand for communal justice he further said "Development of
one limb of a body at the expense of the other is pathological,
as much as the progress of one community at the expense of the
other would be. We do not want a political elephantiasis
on the one side and a shrunken shrivelled vestige of a human
limb on the other. It is on this fundamental truth that our
cry for communal representation is made".\textsuperscript{2}

The same year Periyar E.V.R. and his wife Mrs. Nagamma
led the Satyagraha campaign at Vykom in Kerala. This was as a
sequel to an incident in which an untouchable Izhava lawyer
was prohibited from using a road outside the Travancore Raja's
temple. Periyar E.V.R. stood firm to the last against heavy
opposition and was arrested twice and underwent rigorous
imprisonment.\textsuperscript{3} He returned to his home town Erode, as the
great Hero of Vykom.

During this time, V.V.S. Aiyar, the one time terrorist
who master minded Ashe's murder, was now running some training
institutions at Shemadavi, Tirunelveli District to produce
future freedom fighters and nationalists. These institutions
named Bala Bharati, Gurugula and Bharatwaj Ashram were run by
him, out of the funds raised from the public and given by the
Congress committee. Not all was well with these institutions,

\textsuperscript{1} ibid.
\textsuperscript{2} ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Periyar E.V.R. said on untouchability: "Our country has the
monopoly for see-me-notisms and touch-me-not-isms. A country
where there is a class of people who are not entitled to walk
in public streets, who are not allowed to worship God in their
own temples, who are prevented from using the common wells and
tanks - such a country may as well be destroyed by an earth-
quake, burnt out by a volcano, or submerged by the ocean. If
God is All-Merciful, He should have obliterated our country
to aspire for Swraj, Dominion status or complete independence?"
(\textit{Revolt Periyar's Speech. Vol.I. No.6, dated 12 December 1928,
Erode}).
for separate dining and drinking water arrangements were provided for the children of the sudras and they were not allowed to mingle with the brahmin boys. Very much annoyed at this news, Periyar stopped the Congress funds and strongly condemned the organisers. All the so called Nationalist Brahmins joined hands in opposing Periyar and they expected him to have a blind eye to these affairs. The notable among those Brahmin leaders were Kasturi Ranga Aiyangar of "The Hindu", Rangaswami Aiyangar of "Swadesamitran", S. Srinivasa Aiyangar, S. Satyamurthy Aiyar, C. Vijayaraghavachari, K. Santhanam, N. S. Varadachari, C. Rajagopalachari and Dr. T. S. S. Rajen. Periyar E. V. R. was supported by Thiru Vi. Ka, C. P. Ramasami Reddiar, S. Ramanathan and Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu. When the matter went to Mahatma Gandhi he advised inter-dining but employment of Brahmin cooks. 1/ The non-Brahmins were further enraged at the attitude of the Mahatma.

Had only Periyar E. V. R. then compromised with the brahmins, they would have flattered him as Bhagavan Ramaswamy reincarnation of Rama and made him another mahatma. But he could not be cowed down by brahmin machinations. For, even as early as 1922 he advocated the burning of Manu Dharma Shastra and Ramayana. Speaking at a public meeting at Salem, he said that they must settle the Brahmin question even while the British supremacy lasted, otherwise they would have to suffer

1/ PARTHASARATHI, Rangaswami - op. cit., p.337.

After the Gurukulam issue, Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu formed an association to promote and foster the growth of a United Tamil Indian Nation (IRSCHICK, E. F. - op. cit.,) p.348.

Leaders like M. R. Jayakar felt that the non-Brahmin claims were absolutely just and right and that the non-Brahmin should be made to feel that his interests were safe in the hands of his Brahmin associates otherwise he would act as a drag in all national efforts.

(JAYAKAR, M. R. - op. cit., ) p.121.
under the tyranny of the Brahminocracy.\(^1\) He prepared within the Congress for the final battle with the Brahmins at the State Conference of the Congress held at Conjeevaram on 22 November 1925. His resolution demanding communal representation in all matters was disallowed by the President of the Conference Thiru VI.Ka. who yielded to Brahmin clique which advised him to reject it under the guise that the Congress was a non-communal organisation. This acted as the catalyst for Periyar E.V.R's exit from the Congress in 1925. Leaving the Congress, he said, "closing one's eyes to the prevailing Brahmin, non-Brahmin controversy is like covering up a canker in the body and allowing it to rot".\(^2\) He established the 'Self-Respect Movement' the same year and started his Tamil weekly publication "Kudiarasu" on 2 May 1925. It may be noted that "Kudiarasu" was born a day after May day which symbolises the unity of the working class. The object of the Self-Respect Movement was to take up the task of social reconstruction, to secure liberty, equality and justice for the individual.\(^3\) The movement advocated the abolition of

1/ PARTHASARATHI Rangasami - ibid. p.337.

"The controversy was one of the contributing factors for Periyar E.V.Ramaswami drifting away from the Congress and later forming an organisation of his own whose avowed objective was to eliminate Brahmins and Brahmin influence in Tamil Nadu which it wanted to secede from India" (ibid)

MARGUERITE ROSS BARNETT considers that the earlier Gurukula affair was a catalyst setting off a predictable chain of events that ended with Periyar outside the Congress.(op.cit.)


priesthood, encouraged widow marriages and inter-caste marriages. Periyar E.V.R. presided over the labour conference at Alapuzha on the 20th June 1926. At the Nagapatnam Labour Conference held on 25 June, 1926 he exhorted the labour to strengthen their movement. In 1927, he supported the Railway strike at Nagapatnam. In 1928 Periyar issued a statement to the Press, stating that the proportionate communal representation in all matters was still the creed of the non-Brahmin party; and the case for separate electorate which was negatived by the Joint Parliamentary Committee in 1919 should be revived, in the light of anomalies created by the Reforms of 1919.¹ In 1930 he welcomed the Simon Commission.

He went on a World tour leaving India on 13 December 1931, and returned to India on 8 November 1932. He was in the U.S.S.R. between 13 February 1932 and 19 May 1932. Immediately after his return to India, he itinerated the entire Tamil country propagating communist ideals. M.Singaravelu had by then established connections with Periyar E.V.R. and his Self-Respect Movement by regularly contributing leading articles on Socialism, Atheism and Materialism to Periyar's paper, 'Kudi Arasu'. In December 1932, Periyar E.V.R. and M.Singaravelu met at Erode and decided to launch a political party called the 'Self-Respect Samadharma (Socialist) Party of South India'. Among other things the proposed party stood for: complete independence of India from Imperialism and Capitalism; establishment of Indian Federation; socialisation of agricultural lands, forests, estates, waters and all means of transport; abolition of inequalities based on social, religious and caste distinctions and creation of workers' and peasants' regime in India.²

¹ Revolt - Vol.I No.1 Dated 7 December 1928, Erode.
Immediately a band of Self Respect socialists came forward to carry on a vigorous propaganda throughout the South, on the new programme of the party, also celebrating the May Day in 1933. In about a year’s time 460 Socialist Clubs and Associations were established throughout the south.\(^1\) The Congress leaders led out a virulent propaganda that Periyar E.V.R. was doing all these things in accordance with the Comintern’s directions.\(^2\) On 30 December 1933, Periyar E.V.R. was arrested and he stood accused for criticising the British in his Kudi Arasu. He was prosecuted for sedition under 124-A of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to nine month’s rigorous imprisonment.\(^3\) Periyar like Emilezola did charge the Brahmin as well as the imperial British power as the enemies of working class and the collaborators of capitalist.\(^4\) After the release in 1934, he revived his anti-Brahmin stand and extended a conditional support to the Justice Party in the Central Legislature elections held in November 1934, for the non-Brahmin victory.

2/ ibid. p.xxxv.
3/ Returning to Madras, the iconoclast (Periyar) wrote on the materialist philosophy of communism and Lenin’s views on religion. The British Indian police did not easily let go of him. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to nine months of rigorous imprisonment for the crime of propagating information about the Soviet Union. (MUKERJEE, Prof. Hiren – Dravidians' "Evoc", Viduthalai Thanthai Periyar 97 Birthday Souvenir, 1975, (Madras, 1975) p.149
4/ Periyar made the following observation in his statement submitted to Mr. C.W. Wells, I.C.S. Collector of Coimbatore District in connection with his case: “புதுக்கோட்டை வரும் வருடங்களில் பாலூடு வளாக செய்திகளையும் பிற பதிவுகளையும் குறைவான சடையின் பாதியுலக குறைவுகளையும் பெருக்குகளையும் மறு செய்வதற்கு முன்பே பெருந்துக்கொள்வதற்கு உதவுதலே பதிவுபெற்றிருப்பது. என்றாலும் பெருந்துக்கொள்வது முன்னிலையில் வேலாண்டல் பாதித்துக்கொள்வது, பெருந்துக்கொள்ளும் பாதிகள், அங்கிலேவிய நாட்டுச்சைதியின் மறைந்த விளக்கம், சரக்கு, மறைந்த கான்றிகளின் கட்டுரையை குறிப்பிட்டு பாதிக்கலாம். பெருந்துக்கொள்லை பெருந்துக்கொள்ளும் பாதிகள் மறைந்த விளக்கம் அழைக்கலாம்.”

(ANAIMUTHU, V (Ed): Thoughts of Periyar E.V.R. – Speeches and Writings of Periyar E.V.Ramasami, op.cit., p.1687)
Periyar in the Justice Party: Birth of Dravidar Kazhagam:
Departure from Feudal Legacy.

When C. Rajagopalachari who at the head of Congress Ministry became the first Premier of Madras under the newly reformed constitution, introduced the compulsory Hindi in Madras, in 1937, Periyar launched countrywide agitation against Hindi and his government. The agitating leaders Arignar Dr. C. N. Annadurai (hereafter Arignar Anna), C. D. Nayanakam, Ezhathu Madiga, K. M. Balasubramaniam were arrested under section 117 of the Indian Penal Code. Other 1269 persons were arrested; Periyar E. V. R. himself was arrested and awarded two years of rigorous imprisonment and asked to pay a fine of Rs. 2000/-. He was moved to the 'hot' Bellary jail. While languishing in jail he was elected as the President of the Justice Party at its Madurai Conference on 29 December 1938. The language issue was portrayed as a superficial manifestation of the sinister penetration of Aryan ideas into Tamil culture through the political control of the Brahmins. Hence they raised the banner of 'Dravida Nadu for Dravidians'. Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, Sir A. T. Pannecservalam, P. T. Rajan and all others supported the move, also galvanising many sympathisers outside movement organisations. On 18 August 1938, in the Madras Legislative Assembly, Rao Bahadur Sir A. T. Pannecser Selvam strongly supported a private member's resolution seeking the Government to stop its policy of repression against the Anti-Hindi agitators, and declared: "the Tamilians believe that by the introduction of this foreign language their own language, their own civilization and their own culture will be seriously affected... When I think of Swaraj, I look forward to a Government of the Tamilians by the Tamils for the Tamils. I am not thinking of the Dravidian civilization being sacrificed for the Aryan civilization."
I do not wish for the subordination of Dravidian culture to any other culture. If you are going to drive out the British, drive them out. But then it should be only for a real Swaraj for our own people." On July 1939, the first 'Dravida Nadu Separation Day' speeches were made explaining the genesis of the demand for separation. Meanwhile the Rajagopalachari Ministry resigned on 27 October 1939. Immediately Periyar E.V.R. gave the call to stop the agitation against Hindi. In 1939 Periyar E.V.R. met Sir Stafford Cripps and demanded Dravidastan for the Dravidas. The same year at Tiruvarur, the Dravida Kazhagam passed a resolution demanding 'Dravidastan'. It exhorted the Tamils to record themselves as Dravidians while furnishing the details for the ensuing census. Arignar Anna declared at Kumbakonam, sometime during the same period, that the Hindu Law had degraded the Dravidians to the status of Sudras. Periyar met Jinnah in Bombay on 8 January 1940 to enlist his support for the Dravidastan. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was always his protagonist in these moves. On 21 February 1949, the Madras Governor passed the orders removing Hindi forthwith.

2/ MARGUERITE ROSS BARNETT, op.cit., p.53.
3/ ANNADURAI, Dr. C.N. - "Inba Dravidam" (Madras, 1961), p.77.
5/ Periyar projected the image, for the first time, of an independent Dravida Nadu which would be free of Hindi imperialism and North Indian economic domination. This campaign launched by Periyar attracted large number of the lower middle and poorer classes and a sizeable section of the student population. Out of this agitation was born the concept of a separate Tamil nationalism based on loyalty to and glorification of Tamil (SATTANATHAN, A.N. - "Reaction to Brahminism. D.M.K's heritage I", Indian Express, Madras, dated 24 August 1967).
On 13 February 1944, at the Madras Conference of the Justice Party where Arignar Anna presided, a resolution was passed requesting the ensuing state conference at Salem to rename the Justice Party as Dravidar Kazhagam. At Salem on the 27th August 1944, the historic 'Annadurai' Resolution was passed and the party was thenceforth known as the Dravidar Kazhagam. In the process Periyar E.V.R. and Arignar Anna succeeded in wresting the Justice Party from the clutches of the Feudal legacy; they built it a revolutionary party, representative of the oppressed and the depressed classes denouncing God, religion and caste, advocating socialistic ideas and inculcating Tamil nationalistic resurgence and renaissance.1/

In 1950, Periyar E.V.R. declared: "The Dravidians have a distinct origin in society, their languages are independent and belong to a separate class. The term 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' are not my inventions. They are historical realities. They can be found in any school boy's text book. That the Ramayana is an allegoric representation of the invading Aryans and the domiciled Dravidians has been accepted by all historians including Pandit Nehru and all reformers including Swami Vivekananda. My desire is not to...

1/ ANDRE BETEILLE - "Caste and Political Group Formation in Tamilnad", RJJNI KOTHARI (Ed), op.cit., p.277; On the eve of Indian independence Periyar warned, "we must guard against a transference of power from the British to the Aryans". (The Hindu, Madras 11 February 1946) p.4 - Cited in HARRISON, Selig, S - India - the Most Dangerous Decades, (Oxford University Press, Madras, 1960), p.123.

"It was feared that in independent India the Dravidians would have to confront a new imperialism with two faces: 'a peculiar combination of the Brahmin and the Bania, of orthodoxy and avarice, of Manu and the Mammon'. (VENU, A.S. - Dravidasthan, Kelai Manram (Madras, 1954) Cited in Harrison, Selig, S - ibid.) p.124.
perpetuate this difference; but to unify the two opposing elements in society".\footnote{1} He added: "I am not a believer in the race theory as propounded by the late Nazi leader of Germany. None can divide the South Indian people into two races by means of any blood test. It is not only suicidal but most reactionary. But the fundamental difference between two different cultures Aryan and Dravidian cannot be refuted by any one who has closely studied the daily life habits and customs and literature of these two distinct elements in South India.... The Dravidian movement is not a communal organisation. It is a national movement. It is only an attempt of a great historic people to throw off their age-long social and religious bondage and to cut off the two-century chain put on its feet by a foreign bureaucracy".\footnote{2}

\textbf{Formation of the D.M.K. and the emergence of Scientific Socialism and Cultural Nationalism.}

Schisms crept in soon, culminating into the formation of a separate organisation, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam founded by Anna on 17 September 1949 along with his numerous lieutenants notable among whom were Dr. Kalignar M. Karunanidhi, Prof. K. Anbazhagan and Dr. V.R. Nedunchezhian. No sooner the D.M.K. emerged as the most powerfully organised democratic, political party of the underdogs by the underdogs and for the underdogs in the Tamil country. Rejection of the 'Aryan Illusion', non adherence to Hinduism, abolition of caste, demarcation of Dravidian Nationality on racial, historical and linguistic basis, liberation of Dravidanadu from Aryan religious subjugation and North Indian Marwari Capitalist exploitation and setting upon an egalitarian society on a basis of revolutionary scientific socialism were some of the ideals

\footnote{1}{The Hindu, Madras: Republic Day Number dated 26 January 1950, Cited in ANAIMUTHU, V. (Ed): \textit{Thoughts of Periyar E.V.R. - Speeches and Writings of Periyar E.V. Ramasami}, Vol. II, Part IX, p.(vii).}
\footnote{2}{ibid.}
and objectives of the new party. Marguerite Ross Barnett states that the founding of the D.M.K. in 1949 was a turning point in the political history of Tamil Nadu, because it ushered in the era of Tamil cultural nationalism. She observes: 'Nationalism existed before 1949, but in nascent form, encompassed and overshadowed by other political themes. In the hands of the D.M.K., Tamil nationalism became an ideology of mass mobilization, and has shaped the articulation of political demands for a generation. In fact, to analyse Tamil nationalism is to probe the very dynamics of Tamil Nadu political development'.

Ariyngar Anna later declared in India's Parliament: "I claim Sir to come from a country, a part in India now, but which I think is of a different stock, not necessarily antagonistic. I belong to the Dravidian stock. I am proud to call myself a Dravidian... I consider that the Dravidians

1/ HARRISON, Selig S - ibid. p.123.
Anna's followers hailed him as the Dravidian Mao-Tse-Tung and there was no doubt that he was the single most popular mass figure in South India.

2/ MARGURITE ROSS BARNETT - op.cit., p.3.

3/ ibid.
"Tamil/Dravidian nationalism legitimized elite non-Brahmin rise to power during the 1920s and 1930s; rationalized backward non-Brahmin mass participation and assimilation into the political elite; and facilitated the political integration of Tamil Nadu society by providing an ideological basis for unity encompassing caste". (ibid.) p.326.

have got something concrete, something distinct, something different to offer to the nation at large. Therefore it is that we want self determination. When I talk about separation, I represent the resurgent view of the South. I am pleading for separation of Dravida Nadu not because of any antagonism but because, if it is separated, it will become a small nation, compact, homogenous and united, wherein sections of people in the whole area can have a community of sentiment. Then we can make economic regeneration more effective and social regeneration more fruitful.\(^1\)

Anna edited 'Viduthalai', Dravidanadu, Kanchi, Home Rule and Home Land and wrote page after page, week after week, for over 30 years. He distilled the essence of the great Sangham literature of the Tamils in his writings; "He was a master of history. He wrote history - and made it."\(^2\) He became the greatest exponent of Dravidian glory in his times.\(^3\)


3/ 'Youngmen flocked to hear him. Eloquent, earnest and convincing he was a master in the use of innuendo, alliteration and topical illusion'. (V.N.Swami - "Anna the Man", *ibid.*), p.17.

"With the sweep of his career between those days of sonorous speeches, scintillating similies, Burken oration and rapturous rapport with many a young student audience in the early forties when I heard him first, and to this day when on his mortal remains there stands a column rising to the skies on the Marina sands caressed by ceaseless waves of the Bay of Bengal - Annadurai became almost a legend in his lifetime and an idol of the masses in countless contexts" (SHANMUGASUNDARAM, Dr.V. "C.N..." in JANARTHANAM, A.P. - "The Anna Commemoration Volume", (Madras, 1970), p.43.
Anna's charisma was unparalleled in the history of the Tamils.1/

In the estimate of the Tamil Brahmins: "all the non-Brahmin communities of Tamil Nadu constituted the Sudra caste of the Aryan system. Tamil is therefore, in effect, the language of the Sudras, which the Brahmins had perforce to adopt for their mundane intercourse with the Sudras amongst whom they lived. It is not that the Brahmins are so crude as to broadcast such views openly, but this is the subtle but unmistakable assumption which underlies their attitude to the Tamils and their language".2/ Thus the non-Brahmin communities without exception were identified as the Shudras, the fourth varna of the Hindu fold.3/ These developments led to a widespread phenomenon in modern India - anti-Brahminism - which reached an apex in South India.4/ To sum up, the Dravidian movement originating from the social conflict at the beginning of the present century termed the 'Brahmin-non-Brahmin' conflict, manifested into well defined racial hatred and conflict.5/


3/ MARGURITE ROSS BARNETT - op.cit., p.316.


The influence of Communists and Singaravelu, of Madras as the First Chairman of the C.P.I.

In his preliminary discussion on the Colonial Issue with Lenin at the Second Congress of the Comintern which met from 19 July to 7 August 1920, M.N.Roy maintained that Mahatma Gandhi, as a religious and cultural revivalist was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically and that the nationalist movement at his behest would be ideologically reactionary. While Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, Gandhi was a revolutionary.1/

Roy in his Draft Supplementary Colonial Theses said: "The bourgeois national democrats in the colonies strive for the establishment of a free national state, whereas the masses of workers and poor peasants are revolting, even though in many cases unconsciously, against the system, which permits such brutal exploitation. Consequently, in the colonies we have two contradictory forces; they cannot develop together. To support the colonial bourgeois democratic movements would amount to helping the growth of the national spirit which will surely obstruct the awakening of class


The First International (The International Working Men's Association) - the first international mass organisation of the proletariat was founded on 28 September 1864, at an international workers conference convened by the British and French Workers in London. Its founding crowned the persistent efforts of Marx and Engels to organise a revolutionary Party of the Working class. Though dissolved in 1876, it laid the foundation of the proletarian international struggle for socialism. Thereafter the Second International at Amsterdam came into existence, which marked the mass spread of the movement in a number of countries. But at the outbreak of the First War its leaders drifted from the Marxian Socialism and betrayed the idea of proletarian internationalism. In March 1919, at the behest of Lenin delegates from the Communist parties of 21 countries met in Moscow and founded the Third International (Communist), until its dissolution in May 1943, it promoted the consolidation of the young Communist Parties and the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement.
consciousness in the masses: whereas to encourage the
support to the revolutionary mass action through the
medium of a Communist Party of the proletarian will bring
the real revolutionary forces to action which will not
only overthrow the foreign imperialism, but lead progressively
to the development of Soviet power, thus preventing the
rise of a native capitalism in place of the vanquished
foreign capitalism, to further oppress and exploit the
people". 1/ But Roy's sectarian contraposition approach of
the worker peasant movement to the national liberation
struggle was rejected and there emerged a new formulation
in the Congress of the Communist International. (CI) 2/ After
a detailed discussion, Lenin spoke of the 'National-
Revolutionary Movement' and set the following approach:
"We, as communists, should and will support bourgeois-
liberation movements in the colonies only when they are
genuinely revolutionary and when their exponents do not
hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary
spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If
these conditions do not exist, the communists in these

1/ Cited in ADHIKARI, G. (Ed), Documents of the History of

2/ ADHIKARI, G, views that Roy's above idea, if implemented
would have led the communist parties of those countries to
their sectarian self-isolation. But fortunately Lenin
deleted the above from Roy's Theses. Though Roy accepted
the amendment, in his theses, he did not give up his
'decolonisation theory'. Later, in 1929, Roy was purged
from the Comintern (ibid pp.165-71);
HATHCOX, John Patric - Communism And Nationalism in India,

Roy's decolonisation theory explained: "A gradual advance
of the Indian bourgeoisie from the state of absolute colonial
oppression to self-government within the British Empire is
taking place. Therefore it is not necessary for them to
travel the risky path of revolution. In other words,
progressive 'decolonisation' of their economic and political
status makes the Indian bourgeoisie averse to revolution,
and will make them positively counter revolutionary".
(ROY, M.N. and KARNIK, V.B. - Our Differences (Saraswati
Library, Calcutta, 1938) pp.112-3.
countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie."\(^1\)

M.N. Roy, Abani, Mukherji, M.P. Tirumala Chari and four others founded the Communist Party of India at Tashkent on 17 October, 1920 and the party had been given affiliation to the Comintern sometime in April, 1921.\(^2\) Roy established contacts with S.N. Dange in Bombay, Muzaffar Ahmed in Calcutta, Ghulam Hussain in Lahore and Singaravelu in Madras. Roy's attempt in 1922 to call a conference of Indian communists in Berlin could not materialise for Singaravelu rejected the idea and Dange objected to the plan.\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Lenin at the Plenary session of the Congress, on 7 August 1920, Cited in Collected works of Lenin, Vol. 31, p. 242.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern, Lenin submitted his 'Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Question'. At Lenin's request M.N. Roy wrote the Supplementary theses on the National Liberation Movement in the colonies of the East. After a detailed discussion the Commission adopted unanimously the Theses of Lenin with minor changes and the Supplementary phases of Roy with corrective amendments.


The Comintern in its message to the AITUC session at Lahore in 1923 stated that the vanguard of the proletariat of fifty two countries represented at the Comintern were solidly with the Indian working class in its fight for national liberation.


Roy wrote two letters, one on 12 November 1922 and another on 6 January 1923, to Singaravelu strongly emphasising the necessity of a conference in Europe to plan for the starting of a mass party in India.\(^{\text{\(N:\text{ID} - \text{Home/Political File, 261, 1924}\)}}\) Cited in Adhikari, G. (Ed) ibid. Vol. II p. 103.

Dange wrote to Singaravelu on 29 February 1923: "I think it is a mad venture for Indians to go hunting communism in European conferences. Whatever has to be done must be done in India".

One CID officer wrote to the Government that the linkage between international activists and Indian Patriots should be prevented at all costs.\(^{\text{\(P:\text{ETRIE, David Communism in India, 1924-27, Government of India, Calcutta, 1927 p. 321.}\)}}\) Cited in Barrie, N. Gerald - op.cit., p. 96.
The First of May was celebrated for the first time in India in the city of Madras in 1923, as a proletarian holiday, due to the efforts of Singaravelu. On that occasion Singaravelu announced the formation of the 'Labour and Kisan Party of Hindustan'. He had issued printed membership cards with a synopsis of rules, aims and objects of the Party. Each member before joining had to fill a card and also sign an oath that he was prepared to sacrifice even his life to safeguard the interest of the party. The Manifesto of the Party signed by Singaravelu stated that the Party was to act as the vanguard of the Indian labour and kisans in their struggle for existence; the creed of the party was to achieve labour swaraj by non-violent means; and the party would adopt all methods and tactics for attaining its end, including non-cooperation, passive resistance, constructive programme and civil disobedience as suited to labour and kisans, and such other ways and means for the speedy attainment of swaraj. The Manifesto also stated: "Removal of untouchability by legislature will be undertaken giving the suppressed classes equal rights in all the administrative, legislative, religious bodies in the country."


M. Singaravelu (1860-1946), Madras, discarding his legal practice joined Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement in May 1921. Attended the Gaya Session of the Congress in 1922 as an AICC member, moved a resolution on complete independence. In all probability he was the first Indian communist to take part in the deliberations of the nationalist movement and address the Congress workers as 'Comrades'.


But the Party reserved the question of private property for the future. 1/ Singaravelu started 'Thozhilalan', a weekly in Tamil and 'The Labour Kisan Gazette', as a fortnightly journal of Indian communism in English towards the end of December 1923. The journal continued for 7 or 8 issues until a warrant was issued for the arrest of Singaravelu in connection with the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case.

In 1924, the British Government instituted the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy case charging Singaravelu and seven others under section 121- with conspiracy to deprive the King emperor of the sovereignty of British India. 2/ Singaravelu was arrested on 6 March 1924, and was released on bail the next day. Singaravelu petitioned the Government to transfer the case to Madras or Bombay. By that time the Government felt that its object had been attained by the successful prosecution of the four of the seven accused and that there was no need for prosecuting Singaravelu separately. The Government had withdrawn the charges against Singaravelu, though reserving the right to proceed against him whenever it so desired. 3/ Singaravelu's labour kisan party remained stay-put after the Kanpur trials. 4/

1/ Singaravelu's intention was to form a legal political party for the communists in India. Hence it is probable that he deliberately admitted the question of private property reserving it for the future, to avoid persecution at the hands of the British Government. Personally he had been for the abolition of private property. For instance in his open letter to Mahatma Gandhi published in The Hindu on 24 May 1921 he wrote, "Only Communism, that is to say, holding land and vital industries in common for the common use and benefit of all the workers of the country will bring a real measure of contentment and independence to our people."


The Foundation Conference of the Communist Party of India was held in Kanpur for three days on 25, 26 and 27 December 1925 under the Presidency of Singaravelu. On the third day, the constitution of the C.P.I. and the declaration form for membership of the party were discussed and adopted. On 28 December 1925 the Central Executive Committee met and elected the office bearers, the President, the Vice-President, the General Secretaries and the members of the Central Executive Committee in charge of various provinces. Singaravelu in his Presidential address stated that the Indian National Congress though bourgeois in origin, in scope and outlook, it was the one organisation which continually voiced the political grievances of the nation. He said that Gandhi's one year of Non-cooperation, which aimed at swaraj without defining it or much less understanding it brought the masses of India into non-violent fight against the bureaucracy, but the movement broke down under its own weight when it drifted from Swaraj to the redressal of all sorts of grievances, political, social, economic, ethics and religious, - thus

   The Central Secretariat of the undivided C.P.I. in 1958 took the unanimous decision that the date of the Kanpur conference be adopted as the date of the formation of the C.P.I. (ibid. Vol.II.) p.609.

2/ cf. SANKAR GHOSE - op.cit., p.17.

3/ Mahatma Gandhi declared: 'India is a special creation of providence, she has a spiritual heritage to transmit to the world; she has evolved a spiritual civilization like none ever witnesses before the evolution of the human race, and India can do that which no race, no nation in bondage has heretofore been able to accomplish. She can melt the stony heart of the conqueror an. win freedom by non-violence'.

hopelessly entangling in mutually contradictory ideas and actions.\(^1\) Therefore he said that it was the duty of the communists to take up the organisation of the masses, and endeavour to obtain swaraj. On the ideals and immediate aims of the Party he said: "First, our ideal is to end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries and frontiers and weld all states into one corporate commonwealth and bring about real human fraternity and freedom. This is the dream of the communist. And our immediate aim is to win swaraj for the masses in India, to prevent exploitation of the workers and peasants by suitable land and industrial legislation, to secure to the breadwinner a minimum wage by which he and his children shall have the necessaries of a decent life and to end all distinctions of caste, creed or sect in all political and economic relationships".\(^2\)

He warned of a danger ahead of the comrades thus: "The communal and religious differences which seem to destroy the harmony which once obtained among all political parties in the country during the heyday of Non-cooperation may overtake us also, for I fear that we, Indians, are so religious minded

1/ cf. At the very height of the Non-cooperation movement of 1920-22 when Gandhi stood as the leader of the United National movement and had the responsibility to make his every utterance as the leader of a united movement, he was publicly proclaiming himself 'Sanatanist Hindu':

    "I call myself a Sanatanist Hindu, because -
    1) I believe in the Vedas, the upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name Hindu scriptures, and therefore in avatars and rebirth.
    2) I believe in the Varnashrama Dharma, in a sense in my opinion strictly Vedic, but not in its present popular and crude sense.
    3) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular
    4) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship"

M.N.ROY - India in Transition, (Geneva, 1922), p.130;
and caste-ridden that the fire which is burning our neighbours' houses may also reach ours. Religion and caste have been the demons which have been swallowing our political unity from historic times. The country today is again torn asunder by these religious and communal differences. The leaders who flaunt these fripperies before us are traitors to our country and to our cause. The Hindu sabhas, sangathans, shuddis are merely bourgeois tactics of the leisured class. Let us therefore leave religion, caste and creed to individual tastes and fancies, and let us pursue our peaceful course towards swaraj, free from these nightmares.¹ At the Kanpur Conference Singaravulu announced the dissolution of his Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan with the idea of functioning the Communist Party legally. With the same intention he said in his Presidential Address that Indian communism was not Bolshevism and that they had no truck with the Russian Bolshevik party.²

Singaravulu formed a new party in Madras called the "Labour Political Party"; its object was said to be to

¹/ ibid. Vol.II. pp.642-660

²/ He said: "Bolshevism is a form of communism which the Russians have adopted in their country. We are not Russian Bolsheviks and Bolshevism may not be needed in India... We are one with the world communists but not with Bolsheviks. We hope this explanation of our position in India will clear all misapprehensions about our party and aims and method" (ibid.); MITR, (Ed) Nripendra Nath The Indian Annual Register - An Annual Digest of Public Affairs of India - 1925. Vol.II, p.371; MISRA, B.B. - Indian Political Parties, op.cit.; p.195.
safeguard the interests of the working class and to help them to put up their own candidates to capture seats in the ensuing election to the Madras Corporation. He laid special stress on the need for a Labour Party as a separate political entity. He said that it would be worked on the lines of the British Labour party and be guided by the principles laid down in the works of Phillip Snowden and Ramsay Macdonald. In March 1929 the Meerut Conspiracy Case against the communists commenced. All the most prominent leaders of the C.P.I., AITUC, and left wing Kisan Sabhas were arrested and put in prison while the trial was dragged out for four years. The trial was held before a civil servant acting as a judge and without a jury. The principal charge against them was that they had organised a subversive workers' and peasants' party, which had served as a front organisation for the Indian Communist Party and had established Trade Unions on a basis of class-struggle and opposition to British Imperialism as well as to the employing class in India. In 1930, the CPI declared that only an "Indian Federal Soviet Republic would be capable of insuring to national minorities their right to self determination, including that of complete separation".


cf. In a speech in 1925, to Communist trainees for Asian organising Stalin observed: "Now, India is talked about as one entity. But there can be hardly any doubt that in the case of a revolutionary upheaval in India, many hitherto unknown nationalities, each with its own language and its own distinctive culture, will emerge on the scene". (Cited in HARRISON, S. Selig, ibid.) p.140
The Socialist Workers' Leagues in Madras.

In March 1931, Amir Haidar Khan[^1] started the 'Young workers' League in Madras as a nucleus of Communist Party, started study circles and formed cells in the Madras Mills. The objects of the League were stated thus: The young Workers' League stands for complete independence of this country from foreign yoke, which is only possible by mobilising all the workers, peasants and other anti-imperialist forces; overthrowing British Imperialism and its allies by mass action and establishing a Workers' and Peasants' republic in India"[^2]. But certain records of the League seized in Madras by the Police on 8 May 1932, revealed that the League had contacts with the Comintern and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India; and that the C.P.I. intended to establish a provincial committee in Madras. The League sent a labourer Mr. S.V. Jayaram from the English Electric Company, Madras to Moscow to serve as a link with the Comintern and to be trained as a Bolshevik propagandist. They planned to make Madras, instead of Bombay, the Communist centre for India. They also planned to send two more members for the same purpose, but were frustrated by the arrest of Amir Haidar Khan who was prosecuted for the issue of seditious leaflets and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment on 14 November 1932, and during his incarceration the League remained inactive.

[^1]: Amir Haidar Khan, a Punjabi, earlier a member of the Ghadar Party in San Francisco, sent to Moscow for training in Communist strategy and an absconding accused in the Meerut conspiracy case returned surreptitiously to India in the guise of a seaman at the end of March 1931 and settled down in Madras where he began to fulfill the mission on which the Third International was said to have sent him to India. He gradually established himself as Communist Leader of importance and drew round him a growing circle of workers for the communist cause, among them was one D. Subba Rao whom he engaged as full time propagandist for work among the textile workers. Both the warring S.V. Deshpande's and B.T. Ranadive's groups sought his favour to win the sympathy of the communist international. [NAID: Home/Political/1934 f. 44/92- Detention of Communist Amir Haidar Khan under the provisions of Madras State Prisoner, Regulations II of 1819 - Appendix - Extract from the Book "India and Communism" - cited in SUBODH ROY - op. cit.,] pp.219-227.

dormant, though still preserving touch with the central committee of the C.P.I. in Bombay.\(^1\)

On his release on 20 July 1934 Amir Haidar Khan immediately set out to revive the League's activities in Madras. He told the members that their tactics must be changed and that while most of them should engage in open activities and try to win over other members of the Labour Party, socialist members of the Congress and the Self Respect League. Only a small number of specially trusted members should be engaged secretly in establishing contact with Communist groups in Bombay and other places and in collecting communist literature for circulation. The Madras Government had interned him on 31 August 1934, a month after his release from Salem jail on 20 July 1934 as a State Prisoner under Madras Regulation II of 1819. On direction from the Government of India, the Madras Government on 20 September 1934 had declared the Young Workers' League, Madras an unlawful association under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908.\(^2\)

\(^1\) ibid.

At this time Philip Spratt visited Madras to make enquiries about Amir Hyder Khan's case and to make it an international question. (NAID, Home/Political/1934 f.18/64 - Note on Philip Spratt dated 1-12-1934 in D.I.B. U.O.No.26/BoI/27-VIII dt. 5.12.1934 Cited in SUBODH ROY ibid., p.210

The following finding was recorded about Mr. Khan in the criminal case: "There can be no doubt from the evidence on record that he has imbued all the doctrines of the Communist International and that he came to Madras - the evidence leaves little doubt - to spread the doctrine of Communism in its worst form, having discovered here a virgin soil where he believed that the seeds would sprout with rapidity and vigour". (NAID, Home Department, F.No.7/20/34/pol & K.W op.cit., Appendix III. - Cited in SUBODH ROY) p.465.

\(^2\) NAID = Home Department - F.No.7/20/34-Pol & K.W. - Cited in ibid., p.465.
The Government of India declared in July 1934 the
C.P.I. and its committees and Branches to be unlawful bodies
under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908.\(^1\) In 1935 the
Comintern at its Seventh Congress rebuked the Indian
Communists for pursuing left sectarian errors thus alienating
themselves from the liberation struggles waged by the
National Congress. It said, "The Indian Communists should
in no case disregard work within the National Congress and
the national revolutionary and national-reformist organisa-
tions affiliated with it, maintaining at the same time their
complete political and organisational independence. Both
within and without National Congress, the Indian communists
must consolidate all the genuine anti-imperialist forces of
the country".\(^2\)

A few months after the ban on the Young Workers'
League, some communist enthusiasts notably P.Sundarayya,
A.S.K.Aiyangar, B.Srinivasa Rao, K.Satyanarayana, P.Rajavadi-
velu and P.Sanjickam formed the Madras Labour Protection
League. In February 1936 P.Jeevanandam, K.Murugesan and
Dr.M.Krishnaswamy of the Self Respect Socialist group on
counsels from M.Singaravelu broke away from Periyar E.V.R.
in view of his support to the Justice Party and formed an
independent Self Respect Samadharma Party. In November
1936, they organised the first conference of their party
at Trichy to which M.Singaravelu, S.V.Ghate, S.A.Dange and
all the activists of the Madras Labour Protection League
were invited. It was unanimously decided in the Conference
that the Self Respect Samadharma Party should be dissolved
forthwith and all its members as well as all other communists
in the Presidency should join the Congress Socialist Party

\(^1\) NAID - Home/Political/1934-5/7/8/34 dated 23 July 1934 -
Cited in SUBODH ROY - ibid., p.197.

\(^2\) Cited in SANKAR GHOSE - op.cit., p.309
and through it the National Congress. This was only in keeping with an earlier decision in January that year when Communists sought for admittance into the Congress Socialist Party in view of the prevailing ban on their own organisation.

The Congress Socialist Party at that time headed by Jaya Prakash Narayan took the historic decision in January 1936 to admit the communists into the party. The communists decision to join the C.S.P. was only a strategy and the communists never considered the C.S.P. as a real socialist party but only as a platform of left unity. Moreover the communists would never accept the 'revivalist' Gandhi and his doctrine of non-violence and class conciliation. In the middle of 1938 disillusioned with the C.S.P., Roy's group left it saying: "The Congress Socialist Party is either an organisation of the left wing in the Congress, or a genuine Marxist Socialist Party. If it is the former, then it cannot be a real Socialist Party. If it is the latter, then it must adopt the plan of action and the organisational form of a communist party. With its present programme and organisational form, the C.S.P. tends to be a reformist Social-Democratic Party. On the one hand, it does not help the organisation of...

1/ MURUGESAN, K and SUBRAMANYAM op.cit., pp.80-83.
M.K. Roy (who was arrested on his return from Germany on 21 July 1931 charged under section 121 (A) of IPC was released on 20 November 1936 from Dehra Dun Jail after the expiry of his term of six years of imprisonment. On his release he said: "Socialism or Communism is not the issue of the day. The real socialists and communists must realise that if they wish to play a prominent part in the struggle for freedom, the National independence is the immediate objective. For this purpose all the forces in the country must rally under the flag of the Indian National Congress". He added, "hence forward to facilitate my work I shall get myself formally enrolled as a member of the Congress". (Indian Labour Journal, Nagpur, dated 29 November 1936) p,11.

2/ The Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was founded in 1934 out of the efforts of such eminent men as Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Deva, Achyut Patwardhan, M.R. Masani, S.M. Joshi, Asoka Mehta, N.G. Goray and M.L. Dantwala. The Congress socialists also believed in class struggle and progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange. The CSP operated within the parent Indian National Congress."
the left wing in the Congress; and on the other hand, it hinders the growth of the Communist Party". 1/ The Communist honeymoon with the C.S.P. abruptly ended in March 1940, when the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party decided to expel the communists for disruptive tactics. But it was too late, for the communists had already held a decisive control of the organisation - for instance the organisation in the South passed enblock into the hands of the communists. 2/

Jayaprakash Narayan said: "During this united front period, the communists made big strides at the cost of the socialists with the help of the C.S.P. They managed to capture important posts in the Indian National Congress, in the AITUC, the All India Kisan Sabha and the Students' Federation. The policy of collaboration all but finished the C.S.P. The havoc was specially great in South India. The National Executive had allowed the control of party organizations in Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala to pass into the hands of communists. Those branches went over to communists enblock". 3/

The Second World War, and the Labour Movement.

When the Second War broke out, the Indian communists declared that it was an imperialist war. But later when the Soviet Russia was also involved in it they called it a people's

1/ ROY, M.N. and KARNIK, V.B. - op.cit., p.150


war against fascism and hailed the war efforts of the British Government. This led to the release of the communists from prison and the Government of India lifted the ban on the C.P.I. \(^1\) Out from prison the communists denounced the Quit India Movement launched by the National Congress in 1942. The policy of the C.P.I. now was 'national unity for national defence and national government'. \(^2\) They assured the Government of an increased production in the industries, for according to them there was to be no fear of strike so long as they supported the Government. \(^3\) Most of the Congress leaders were in prison till 1944. This greatly facilitated the Communist party to build its own mass organisations throughout India. During this period it had developed disciplined and experienced cadres in several regions of India, able to serve as a matrix around which later expansion could take place. \(^4\)

The C.P.I. formulated a multinational theory for India and supported the demand for Pakistan. In September 1942 the C.P.I. passed a resolution stating that every section of the Indian people which had a contiguous territory as its home-land, common historical tradition, common language, culture, psychological make-up and common economic life should be recognized as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian Union or Federation and would have the right to secede from it if it so desired. \(^5\)

---


4/ RALPH RETZLAFF - op.cit., p.311.

In the 1946 election campaign the C.P.I. demanded that power go not to the provisional central government headed by Nehru but to fourteen sovereign regional constituent assemblies, each empowered to decide whether or not to join the new Indian Union.  

1/ P.C. Joshi said: 'The delegates to the all-India constituent assemblies should have no more authority than that of plenipotentiaries. Full and real sovereignty shall reside in the national constituent assemblies which will enjoy the unfettered right to negotiate, formulate and finally to decide their mutual relations within an independent India on the basis of complete equality'.

2/ Nehru addressing the mill workers in Kanpur angrily protested at 'the treacherous attitude of the Indian communists'.

3/ The C.P.I. in its memorandum to the British Cabinet Mission in April 1946 stated: "The provisional government should be charged with the task of setting up a boundary commission to redraw boundaries on the basis of natural ancient homelands of every people. The people of each such unit should have the unfettered right of self determination... Delegates selected from each national unit shall decide by majority whether they will join the all-India constituent assembly to form an Indian Union, or remain out and form a separate sovereign state by themselves, or join another Indian Union".


Immediately after the independence the C.P.I. called for 'self-determination to nationalities, including the right of secession'.\(^1\) Also during this period there developed the intraparty rivalry and the bitterest conflicts in the Communist Party of India. B.T. Ranadive tried to emulate Russian Bolshevism in India. The communists in the Telugu country revolted against Ranadive who was replaced in 1950 by C. Rajeshwar Rao as General Secretary of the C.P.I. The new leadership asserted that only Mao's concept of New Democracy would usher in a communist revolution in India.

In 1948 the C.P.I. launched an armed agrarian revolution in Telengana, as a part of the grand strategy for the seizure of power on a wave of landless peasant rebellion throughout the country.\(^2\) A general offensive was let loose against the C.P.I. and the All India Trade

---

\(^1\) "Toward the democratic front to win real independence and peoples democracy", - Statement of Policy from The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, (Bombay, March 1948), p.11 - Cited in HARRISON Selby S. - Ibid. p.155.

\(^2\) C.f. The Soviet specialist on India, A.M. Diakov, in 1948, in his political tract, "The National Question and British Imperialism in India", published by the USSR State Publishing House of Political Literature stated: "By virtue of the fact that India has for two hundred years been a colony of England in the eyes of the outside world, India appears as something unified and its entire population as one people... but few know... that these people are distinguished by their individual culture, language, literature, have their own moves and customs, their national character, have passed a long road of historical development. The colonial position of India which made its peoples slaves of English imperialism has depersonalised it in the eyes of the outside world". (Ibid. p.156).

Union Congress, against the peasants' and students' organisations and against the left wing Press. In West Bengal and subsequently also in Madras, the C.P.I. was banned; in other provinces conditions of semi-illegality were imposed. Arrests and detentions or warrants for arrest reached to practically all prominent working-class leaders. Police violence inside the jails as well as outside firing on unarmed demonstrators resulted in many deaths. Repressive laws taken over from imperialism were intensified by new special legislation.¹ In Telengana Army was used to suppress the revolution. Moreover the Central Secretariat of the C.P.I. was not an united house during the phase of the struggle. No doubt that the whole episode turned out to be a costly adventurism.² During the post Stalin era, due

¹ DUTT, Rajni Palme - op.cit., p.271.

According to official figures of the new Indian Government, during the first three years of its rules, between 15 August 1947 and 1 August 1950, its police or armed forces opened fire on the people no less than 1982 times, killed 3,784 persons and wounded nearly 10,000, jailed 50,000 and shot down 82 prisoners inside jails (ibid).

In the Salem Central Jail Massacre 22 unarmed communist political prisoners were killed and over a hundred of their tribe were severely wounded by the brutless police firing. And the High Court Judge Lakshman Rao inquiring into the incident at that time justified the police action. (MURUGESAN, K. AND SUBRAMANYAM, C.S. - op.cit.,) p.56.

² OVERSTREET AND WINDMILLER, op.cit., p.302.
to Soviet compulsions the C.P.I. reversed its policy which 'scoffed at the concept of Indian unity and glorified separatism'.


cf. Mr. Sankara Narayan, a C.P.I. leader from Tamil Nadu decrying the move of the central leadership of the Party which dissociated itself from the demand for a sovereign Dravidastan in its 1951 election alliance with the Dravidar kazhagam wrote: "The unity of India is not an article of faith for us. The democratic movement in India is not uniform. A contingency may arise in the future when the democratic anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement to the South may grow so strong that it may capture political power, while unfortunately the movement in the north may be unable to reach that happy consummation. Should we on such an occasion, because of our desire to have a united India, oppose the secession of the southern region from the imperialist and monopoly finance - ridden north"? *Cross Roads*, 18 January 1952, p.10 Cited in HARRISON Selig S. ibid., p.176.