CHAPTER II : SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BASIS OF MADRAS LABOUR MOVEMENT : REFORM, REVIVALISM AND MILITANCY.
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SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BASIS OF MADRAS LABOUR MOVEMENT: Reform, Revivalism and Militancy.

Urban Labour as the Instrument of Religious Revival.

The emergent nationalism in India fell far short of true nationalistic phenomena; instead of it being grown on the creed of secularism and the doctrine of unity in diversity, it was nurtured in the garden of Hindu religious revivalism. The revivalist theory asked one to believe that India was a special creation of God and the Hindus were a nation by themselves. The thought of restoring the pristine glory of India by resuscitating among her people the spiritual vitality which was dormant but not dead was always the uppermost thought in the mind of the religious nationalist. The new born Indian nationalism thus gradually assuming a decidedly Hindu character irreconcilably antagonised the Muslims' faith in "United India". Orthodoxy soared the revivalists to build up a powerful following amongst the less modernised masses. Revivalists resented the reformers and treated them as seceders and traitors. The theosophical doctrines were well adapted to please the fundamentalists. The anarchists sought to build the nationalistic upsurge on the most barbaric policy of liquidating the individual white man in the name of religion and God. The non-Brahmin movement originating as a social protest against the Brahmin oligarchy ended up with the demand for Dravidastan. The Congress symbolised the disastrous combination of radicalism and reaction compromising with a myriad of conflicting groups. The communists far from being a cohesive force remained as splinter groups with deep seated divisions; they were incapacitated to formulate appropriate strategy and tactics.
Unequivocally the aforesaid forces came to believe in the efficacy of the weapon of urban labour combination; infiltrated in their movement creating a near deluge; and brought malefiant influence on their fortunes. The study in this Chapter and the following one will be devoted to trace the genesis and growth of these conflicting forces. While the subsequent chapter will deal with the effect of their infiltration into the labour movement.

**Arahmolea : A New Phase in concerted Social Reform.**

Raja Rammohun Roy (1774-1833) 1/ hailed as the prophet of Indian nationalism and the father of modern India is said to have heralded aloft a new age of concerted social reform measures. 2/ Mr. Roy a Vaishnavite Brâhmin, founding his teachings on the Vedas and Upanishads returned to the monotheistic doctrines which had been departed from under the influence of the Purânas, and repudiated the successive corruptions which had led to idolatry and thence to atheism. He founded the Brahma-Samaj in 1828, to wage a relentless battle against polytheism, idolatry, polygamy and the abuses of caste system. With the abolition of surtee, the purging from this country of that supreme shame Roy's name is linked for all time in the history of India. The credit of putting an end to these horrors really belongs to Rammohun Roy. 3/ It is difficult to realize how completely

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1/ There is a controversy over the date of Raja Rammohun Roy's birth. Prof. S.N. Ganguli in his work *Indian Economic Thought* (New Delhi, 1977, p.29) gives the date as 1772. The date given on Rammohun's tomb is 1774. The eminent historian Prof. R.C. Majumdar accepts the date as 1774, and states, "there seems to be no adequate reason to disbelieve it".


this awful custom of Hindu widow, burning herself with her
death husband, held India in its grasp a century ago.\footnote{CHAILEY, Joseph - Administrative Problems of British India, (Macmillan Co. Ltd., London, 1910) p.158.}

Writing about this time in the far South, Abbé J.A. Dubois states: "Most Sudras, as well as Sûdras of the Siva sect, bury their dead instead of burning them, and there are several instances of widows having been buried alive with their deceased husbands. But the ceremonies in either case are nearly the same."\footnote{DUBOIS J.A. Abbé - Hindu manners, customs and ceremonies. (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968) p.351.} Abbé Dubois who happened to witness such ghastly affairs in Tanjore district vividly narrates two such incidents to 'give a good idea of what these deplorable scenes of mad fanaticism are like'.\footnote{ibid.} One incident relates to the death of a man in 1794, belonging to Komatty (Vaisya) caste in the Pudupettah village of Tanjore District; in that the widow aged thirty years decided to accompany her deceased husband to the funeral pyre. The news having rapidly spread, a large concourse of people flocked to gather from all quarters to witness the spectacle. Abbé Dubois also reports:

"The pyre was surrounded by Brahmins, each with a lighted torch in one hand and a bowl of ghee in the other. Her relatives and friends, several of whom were armed with muskets, swords, and other weapons stood closely round in a double line, and seemed to await impatiently the end of this shocking tragedy. This armed force, they told me, was intended not only to intimidate the unhappy victim in case the terror of her approaching death might induce her to run away, but also to overawe any person who might be moved by a natural feeling of compassion and sympathy, and so tempted to prevent the accomplishment of nemicidal sacrifice..... At length, the purushita Brahmin gave the fatal signal... she was cast upon the corpse of her
The husband... The Brahmins, emptying the contents of their vessels on the drywood, applied their torches, and in the twinkling of an eye the whole pile was ablaze. Three times was the unfortunate woman called by her name. But, alas! she made no answer."

In 1872, Kesab Chandra Sen (1838-84), a high caste Hindu non-Brahmin gave a new social orientation to the tenets of Brahmo Samaj. He attempted to synthesize Hinduism, Islam and Christianity into an Indian National Church. He believed that Hinduism and Islam would first coalesce and then be shaped by Christianity. He called for the harmonization of all conflicting creeds and for the fusion of East and West.  

Mr. Sen maintained that 'Brahmoism is catholic and universal', and declared that the renunciation of caste was as essential to Brahmoism as the renunciation of idolatry. He made Brahmoism a real force all over Bengal and was the first to inaugurate an all-India movement of religious and social reforms. He made a missionary tour of Bombay and Madras in 1864 and the Brahmo congregations were established in many centres in India. Thus was founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay under the leadership of Dr Amaran Pandurang later adding R.G. Chandarkar and Justice Manadeva Govinda Ranade to its ranks. The Ved Samaj, later called the Brahmo Samaj was founded in 1864, in Madras. Out of the twenty nine Samajas in the Madras Presidency eighteen bore the name Prarthana Samaj and the others called themselves Brahmo Samaj. The Samajas were mostly composed of men paying allegiance to Hinduism and Hindu society with a protest. The members observed the ceremonies of Hinduism

1/ ibid pp.362-4.
4/ FARQUHAR, J.N. - op.cit. p.7/
but only as mere ceremonies of routine, destitute of all religious significance.

Mr. Sen was largely responsible for the passing of the Civil Marriage Act III of 1872, which allowed a form of civil marriage applicable to non-Christians provided they declared themselves as not professing the Christian Religion and objecting to be married in accordance with the rites of the Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Parsee or Jew religions. The Act abolished early marriage, made polygamy penal and sanctioned widow marriages and intercaste marriages. When Sen's Bill came up for discussion there were severe criticisms from orthodox quarters of India. For instance V. Ramiengar (1826-87), a member of the Madras Legislative Council and a Trustee of the Pehaiyappa's charities, Madras sent a long letter of protest in course of which he said, "It is tantamount to telling young India, do you set a defiance to your social customs and usages and your institution of caste, and we shall be ready to stand by you and support you with all the strength of the strong arm of the law". He also deplored that western ideas and western civilization would produce a ferment in course of time but "to hasten such changes by legislation would be highly inexpedient and impolitic".

Mr. Sen further tried to raise the marriage age of girls and prepared a Bill in 1872 on the subject, which adopted 14, as the minimum age. But in 1878, his own daughter, who was then under 14 was given in marriage to the son of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. The fact became known, was denied, but was finally to be admitted; and it produced internal quarrels and schisms in Brahmo-Samaj. Sooner the

1/ Ramiengar, V. who was the municipal commissioner for the town of Madras for eight years served as Dewan of Travancore from 1880 to 1887. In 1873 at the suggestion of Lord Napier, the Governor of Madras he took a leading part in organizing and establishing the Madras Cosmopolitan Club of which he was the first Secretary.

movement fell into disrepute.¹ Bepin Chandra Pal claims that in this way, step by step, the freedom movement in modern India grew and developed becoming larger and larger under the inspiration of the Brahma Samaj.²

Arya Samaj: 'Back to the Vedas'.

Then came the Arya Samaj founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a Gujarati Brahmin. The Samaj was aggressive in its patriotic zeal, and held fast to the cult of the infallibility of the Vedas and the superiority of the Vedic culture.³ The Samaj tried to purge Hinduism, and denounced the caste system. It endeavoured to uplift the untouchables to the position of Dwijas by investing them with the sacred thread and by interdining.⁴ In 1882, Dayananda established the cow-protection associations to rouse the Hindu sentiments.⁵ The new nationalism endeared by Dayananda and his tribe was an infusion of intransigent

¹ CHAILLEY, Joseph - op.cit., p.159.
⁴ DANIEL, Argov - op.cit., p.58.
⁵ In 1897, Sir Mac Worthington, Lt.Governor of Punjab in his letter to Lord Elgin described the Samaj as the most active and the most dangerous society in Punjab. He said, 'its original purpose was the reconstruction of Hinduism in a form which would stand the light of modern criticism, but its supporters found that the subject was above the heads of the common people and so they have raised the standard of opposition to kine-killing in order to get a hearing. The Samaj has undoubtedly been responsible to a large extent for the embitterment of feeling between Hindus and Mohammedans which has sprung up late years". (Cited in KER, James Campbell - Political Trouble in India 1907-17, (Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1973) pp.348-9.
religious exclusivism.  

The Arya Samaj criticized the Brahma Samaj of Krishan Chander Sen as a confession of Hindu inferiority and as an attempt to introduce social and religious reforms, merely in order to enable English-educated Indians to be in harmony with western social behaviour.  

Dayananda did not know English and he appealed to the emotion of the masses. Thus Hinduism, formerly quiescent and unaggressive, had now in the Arya Samaj, a vigorous militant wing to proclaim Hinduism as the greatest of religions.  

Professor Max Muller in his "Biographical Essays" referring to the creed of Dayananda observes: "To him not only everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas, steam engines, railways and steamboats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the facts of the Vedas, for Vedas, he argued, means divine knowledge and how could anything have been hid from that?"  

An eminent critic Dr. H. D. Griswold observed: "Pandit Dayanand Saraswati became finally emancipated from the authority of Brahminism in some such way as Luther became emancipated from the Roman Church and the authority of tradition to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Pandit Dayanand Saraswati appealed from the Brahminical Church and the

authority of Smriti to the earliest and most sacred of Indian scriptures. The watchword of Luther was 'Back to the Bible': the watchword of Pandit Dayanand was Back to the Vedas'. With this religious watchword there emerged implicitly, if not explicitly, another watchword ‘Arya for the Aryans’ - implying India for the Hindus.

Theosophists and British Labour H.Ps.: From Occultism and Hindu Revivalism to Trade Unionism.

The Theosophical Society had been founded in New York in 1875 by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91) and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, (1832-1907) clearly incorporating the clandestine delusions and jugglery of the former. The Society, in the beginning was composed of occultists, cabbalists and Egyptologists whose task was to conduct experiments in spiritualism, mysticism and magic with a view to communicate with the spirits by means of what is known as self magnetisation. The Mysterious Madame, was a woman of most unusual temperament possessing the powers of the medium, the clairvoyant and the clairaudient.


4/The mysterious woman was born in Russia on the 12th August, 1831 of German parents. She had been a medium from her childhood days constantly experimenting in spiritual phenomena. In 1848, she was married to N.V. Blavatsky, a Russian official, but left him after three months. She travelled a great deal in many countries: lived in Tibet for seven years from 1851; started spiritualist show in Cairo, in 1872; shifting to New York, in July 1873, lived by spiritualist writing; met Olcott in October, 1874 and sustained her living with the help of his Miracle Club. In the intervening years, she had extra-marital relations with one Petrovich and became known as Madame Petrovich for a considerable time. In 1875 she married in Philadelphia an Armenian, a Russian subject named Michael Battalay. It was a case of bigamy, because there had been no divorce from Mr. N.V. Blavatsky, who was still alive. Ironically Mr. Battalay obtained a divorce from her in May 1878 on the ground of desertion. (See Farquhar, J. N. op.cit.), p.211-6.
She told the Americans that she was in occult communication with the disembodied spirit, 'Johnking' - the Master of her dreams ever since 1860.\(^{1}\) Ironically on her arrival in India in 1979 along with Col. Olcott, an elaborate myth was created to the effect that she had been in occult communication with the living Mahatmas of Tibet since 1851. The completed myth had gone thus:\(^{2}\)

The planet earth is governed by a great official, the King Infinite who represents the Logos. He is in absolute control of all the evolution taking place here on earth. From him emanates all human races and religions. He comes himself or sends one of His pupils from the Great Brotherhood of Adepts to found the races and religions at different periods of time. Thus all the religions at the time of their first presentation to the world contained a definite statement of truth. A large number of men who have gone beyond death and transmigration have attained the Adepthood; have become members of the hierarchy which governs this world; and live in Great White Brotherhood in their lodge in Tibet. They are called Mahatmas. A few of these Mahatmas accept as disciples for initiating to Adepthood, those dedicated to the service of humanity. These Mahatmas are known as Masters. Mahatma Morya and Mahatma Koot Hoomi have selected Madame Blavatsky from the whole of the human race in our times to enter on the Path of Discipleship. They only have revealed the doctrine of Theosophy to her. Hence the object of every Theosophist should be to raise himself to the honour of being accepted as a disciple of one of the Masters.

\(^{1}\) ibid p.220.

\(^{2}\) The details furnished here are based on the work of LEADBEBATER, C.W. - A Textbook of Theosophy (Theosophist office, Adyar, Madras, 1912).
When after these pronouncements, the two travelled a great deal in various parts of India, the Hindus received them with great acclamation. Wherever they went, they talked of the occult phenomena which enabled them to receive letters and telegrams from the Mahatmas. They talked of miracles: lost articles were found and new things appeared in unheard of ways. H.H. Num. hosted a grand dinner in their honour at Simla, where the Madame recovered a brooch which Mrs. Num. lost some time back. In December, 1882, the headquarters of the society were moved to Adyar, Madras. Soon they projected Theosophy as a blend of Hinduism and Buddhism. By 1884, the Society had attained great proportions. There were a hundred branches in India, and the great mass of members were drawn by the theosophic defence of Hinduism. They condemned Christian missionaries as impudent and ignorant intruders, who dared to criticise Hinduism and Buddhism.

1/ An year back in 1878 they wrote to Dayananda Saraswati suggesting a union of the two movements Arya Samaj and Theosophical Society, on the ground that their aim was the same; and Dayananda accepted the proposal. And when the two came, the Arya Samajists gave them red carpet welcome in India. The strange union continued until 1881, when it was broken off, both parties feeling bitter and aggrieved. (FARQUHAR, J.N. - op.cit., p.110)

Also see GOMP, Dr. S. - *British Policy in India 1898-1905* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1905) p.193.

See ABINASH CHAUDRA GHOSH - op.cit., p.191.

2/ Telegrams came tumbling through the air - precipitated in theosophic phrase - but, strangely enough, bearing the stamp of the British Telegraph office. (F.ROUHAR, J.N. - op.cit. p.220).

3/ The fraud involved in the brooch story was soon unmasked by journalists. It was disclosed that the Madame had made most careful arrangements beforehand to deceive her hosts. (Ibid pp.226-230)

4/ The Theosophical Society, in the judgment of B.C.PAL, was allied to the Hindu Revival Movement from the day it came to India. However according to him the Buddha and Mahatmas of Oicott and Blavatsky had no reference to Indian religious life or traditions. (PAL, B.C. - *Mrs.Besant* - A Psychological Study, (Madras, 1913) p.103.)
The Adyar Lodge had a shrine where the portrait of the Master Koot Hoomi was placed. The doors of the shrine were occasionally thrown open to Theosophists. Hindus prostrated and burned incense before the shrine. The followers were accustomed to submit their requests in the form of letters. The doors of the shrine would then be shut; and, when it was re-opened, a reply from the Master would be found within it. Even this well-planned arrangement was soon exposed as complete fraud. It was discovered that there were sliding panels in the back of the shrine with a hole in the wall behind it, which enabled the access to letters surreptitiously from Madame Blavatsky's adjoining room, to concoct the occult phenomena.\footnote{\textit{i}id \textit{pp.}233-252.}

In the autumn of the same year, while in Germany Madame Blavatsky, also a bigamist announced that she was a spotless virgin, who had been selected by her Master to unveil Isis. The ancient belief was that the Egyptian goddess Isis lifted her veil only to those who have lived the lives of perfect chastity. In 1888, she created the Esoteric Section - a society within the Theosophical Society to initiate young theosophists of at least two years standing into the practice of occultism. Such persons were to take two vows: (i) to defend and advance the cause of Theosophy and (ii) to preserve the secrecy of the proceedings. In 1889 the "notorious" Madame created another myth. This time it was the Lord Maitreya - unheard of in world scriptures.
arriving on earth as the World Teacher using the vehicle of a human body. She maintained that the Lord Maitreya had twice taken possession of human body in order to bring to the world a new teaching, - the first that the Lord Krishna in the Fourth century B.C. and then that of Jesus. She said that in the meantime, he too lived in Tibet in a body of the Celtic race. She declared that the real purpose of establishing the society was to prepare humanity for the reception of the World Teacher when he appeared again on earth.1/

Before her death in 1891, the Madame initiated Mrs. Annie Besant in 1888 to Theosophy and later to Esoteric Section, which was a sudden leap for Mrs. Besant, from atheism to Theosophy.2/ She founded the Central Hindu College in Benares in 1898, the first of its kind modelled on a Christian missionary college. Under her impulse and direction handbooks of Hinduism had been prepared and published to serve as textbooks in schools and colleges. She also


2/ Mrs. ANNIE BESANT (1847-1933) - the daughter of William Pagewood was married to Clergyman Rev. Frank Besant in 1867. She had a son and a daughter. Having lost faith in Christianity she became an atheist in 1873. The same year she was divorced from her husband with the guardianship of her daughter. Later in a legal battle she had lost her daughter to the custody of Mr. Frank Besant. She met Charles Bradlaugh in 1874; and became his private secretary, disciple and collaborator for several years. She was appointed Vice-President of the National Secular Society of which Bradlaugh was the President. She met Bernard Shaw in 1884, and became a Fabian. Her interest now shifted to Socialist propaganda and Trade unions. Her conversion to Theosophy startled Bradlaugh and surprised Bernard Shaw. She came to Tuticorin on the 16th November 1893. Thereafter for the next forty years until her death her personal association with Indian affairs continued in several spheres.
helped to revive the Sanskrit studies. She became the self appointed high priestess preaching Hinduism, to the Hindus. She made it pointblank that India's salvation lied not in politics but in her success in reviving Hinduism to the days of Vedas - Back to the Vedas, became her cry. After the death of Col.Olcott, she became the President of the Society in June 1907. Then she turned her attention to occultism, reorganised the Esoteric Section along with her close associate Charles Webster Leadbeater (1847-1934) systematized the instruction, carried on a long series of occult investigations and published the results. Leadbeater on one occasion, on consulting the record of his occult observations came to the startling conclusions, that Jesus and Christ were two distinct persons; that both were men, neither being the Logos, or the Son of God; that Jesus was born in 105 B.C.; that Christ was the great Master; that Jesus, merely yielded up his body for Christ to use; that the twelve apostles never lived; and that there was scarcely a scrap of historical matter in the Gospels. The teaching now was that one ego

1/ MACNicol, Nicol - op.cit., p.45.

2/ He joined the Society in England in 1883 and met Madame Blavatsky in 1884. In 1890 he met Mrs.Besant in a Theosophic convention. In 1895, in England he along with Mrs.Besant made occult investigations. Master Koot Hoomi was his master. He was a writer, speaker, clairvoyant and teacher. All through his life he was found in the company of young boys - which involved him in several scandals. In 1906 two young boys - sons of influential leaders of Theosophical Society in America, confessed that Leadbeater encouraged them in some personal abilities. There were several cases in which details are given. He had to resign to save the society from disgrace on 16 May 1906. But at the end of 1908, he was however again admitted into the Society. (MARY Lutyens - op.cit.) pp.12-16.
was incarnated at a very early date as Hermes, again as Zoroaster, then as Orphens, finally as Gautama the Buddha. Another ego was Christ. He used the body of Jesus as his vehicle. Jesus was born in 105 B.C., and was again incarnated as Appollonius of Tyana.\[1\]

In 1908, Mrs. Besant declared at a public lecture at Chicago that the World Teacher - the earlier invention of Madame Blavatsky had already arrived in the person of a boy of thirteen, Hubert-Van-Hook, son of Dr. Nelder van Hook of Chicago, the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in the U.S. This boy had been originally picked out by C.W. Leadbeater, while on a lecture tour of the U.S. a few years before and brought to England for special training under him for the boy's marvellous destiny.\[2\] But the boy Hubert was soon dropped in early 1910, for C.W. Leadbeater had already found another vehicle acceptable to his Master Koot Hoomi for the arrival of the World Teacher, this time in the person of Jiddu Krishnamurti,\[3\] named in occult phenomena as Alcyone.


Their occultism also revealed that in 13,500 B.C. "Jesus" was the wife of an emperor of Southern India, while in 12,800 B.C. he was the brother of Madame Marie-Louise Kleb, and the father of Mrs. S. Maudeshwarpe (General Secretary, English Section of the Theosophical Society), of Julius Caesar, and of T. Subba Rao, the Theinlama being at that time his daughter. (ibid. p.273).

2/ MARY Lutyens - op. cit., p.12.

3/ Jiddu Krishnamurti, an Andhra Brahmin was born on the 11th May 1895. He lost his mother while he was hardly ten. His father Jiddu Narajesh, a theosophist since 1881; moved to the precincts of the Theosophical Society, Adyar with his four sons and a nephew on 23rd January, 1909. A year next, when Krishnamurti came under the various influence of C.W. Leadbeater, he was undernourished, scrawny and dirty; his ribs showed through his skin and he had a persistent cough; his teeth were crooked and he wore his hair in the customary Brahmin fashion of South India, shaved in front to the crown and falling to below his knees in a pigtail at the back; more over his vacant expression gave him an almost moronic look. (ibid. p.1, 7, 22).
C.W. Leadbeater reported in April 1910, that his clairvoyant investigations had revealed him the past thirty lives of Jiddu Krishnamurti, the Alcyone which ranged from 22,662 B.C. to 624 A.D. Alcyone was a female in eleven of them. Mrs. Besant appeared in them throughout as Heracles, Leadbeater as Sirius, Krishnamurti's brother, Nitya as Mizar, Krishna's mother as Omega, his father as Antares, Hubert Van Hook as Orion and George S.Arundale was Fides. In December, 1910 the book entitled, 'At the Feet of the Master', claimed to have been written by Krishnamurti was published.

Meanwhile a most urgent propaganda was launched on the near coming of the World Teacher and most careful preparations were made to keep the world community ready to receive him when he appears on the earth. New organisations and institutions were set up for the purpose. Thus George S. Arundale who later became the President of Madras Labour Union invented the idea of organising the Order of the Rising Sun, to bring together those in India who believed in the near coming of the World Teacher. Later the idea was taken up by Mrs. Besant and C.W. Leadbeater who under the new name Order of the Star in the East set up an international organisation. Officers were appointed for each country consisting of a National Representative and an Organising Secretary. Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater were made Protectors of the new Order of which Alcyone was the Head, C.S. Arundale, Private Secretary to the Head, and A.E. Wodehouse (Elder brother of P.G. Wodehouse) Organising Secretary. Each member was to receive a certificate of membership and to be allowed to wear the badge of the Order, a silver five pointed star.

On one occasion Mrs. Besant created the legend of her previous birth as a pure brahmin pandit in the North-West province of India. This was as a reply to her sanatanist critics who doubted her ability to interpret the Vedas, Sashtras and the Sanskrit verses. (PAL, B.C. - Mrs. Besant - A Psychological Study, op.cit.,)
National Representative and other high officials were to wear gold stars. In England many politicians, for instance George Lansbury, the Labour M.P., Major David Graham Pole, and Peter Freudman, M.P., joined the Order. In India some Brahmins, Buddhists, Parsis, Christians, Rajput princes, marwaris, merchants, grey haired men, women and children prostrated themselves before the Aleyone. But these outrageous actions enraged numerous followers of the Society in India and Europe.

The Congress Extremists and many Brahmins of Madras became the bitterest enemies during this period. The Hindu on the 16th July 1912 wrote: "only fools or mad men could believe in this 20th century that the boy J.Krishnamurc is an incarnation of divinity. We have abundant evidence to show that the boy is very much a human being and no more and no less" and warned Mrs.Besant that if the sons were not peacefully restored to his father J.Narianiah the law courts would form the theatre where an interesting page of theosophical history would be unfolded to the public. On the 24th October 1912, J.Narianiah filed a suit against Mrs.Besant in the District Court of Chingleput seeking restoration of his boys to his own custody. Later the case was transferred to the High Court of Madras. In the original plaint Narianiah alleged that he had witnessed with his own eyes an act of sodomy involving his son

1/ MARY Lutyens - op.cit., p.49.

2/ PARTHASARATHY Rangaswami - A Hundred years of the Hindu - The Epic Story of Indian Nationalism (Kasturi & Sons, Madras, 1978) p.207.

3/ ibid.

4/ ibid. On the 6th March 1910 Mrs.Besant got a document signed by Narianiah transferring the legal guardianship of the boys to herself (ibid)
Krishnamurti and C.N. Leadbeater, an immoral man. But later Narianiah modified this charge and stated that he had come to know of a disgusting crime committed upon his son in April 1910. He also objected to Krishnamurti being deified by Mrs. Besant's announcement that he was to be the World Teacher, with the result that a number of respectable persons had prostrated before him. Moreover knowing the boy intimately as he did, he did not believe he was capable of having written the work: 'At the Feet of the Master'. The Madras High Court in its judgment on the 11th April 1913 ordered that the boys were to be the wards of the court and directed Mrs. Besant to hand over the boys to the custody of J. Narianiah on or before the 26th May 1913. At this time the Hindu urged the government to order Leadbeater to leave the country. Subsequently Mrs. Besant was granted stay of execution of the court's decision, pending appeal.

In May 1913 different defamation cases were instituted by Mrs. Besant against Dr. T. M. Nair and The Hindu. Dr. Nair was sued for his earlier article entitled "Psychopathia Sexualis in a Mahatma" published in 1910, in his medical journal the Antiseptic, attacking Leadbeater and suggesting he had been Onan in a previous incarnation. The Hindu was sued for publishing Dr. Nair's article and elaborating it. The court in Madras dismissed these cases holding that Mrs. Besant had supported the unnatural practices of Leadbeater, which formed the defamatory part of the article. The Hindu

1/ MARY Lutyens - op.cit., p.88
2/ ibid., p.88.
4/ The boys were not available in India at this time.
Mrs. Besant had already sent them on the 19th January 1912 to England for their education. The boys actually returned to India only on the 3rd December, 1921.
MARY Lutyens - op.cit., p.70; PARTHASARATHY, Rangaswami - op.cit., p.208.
said that in the course of the case instead of being the complainant Mrs. Besant had to assume the position of having to defend herself against the charge of supporting Leadbeater in his practices. On the 29th October, 1913, the Appeal Court upheld the earlier judgment of the Madras High Court directing Mrs. Besant to restore the boys to Narianiah. Thereupon Mrs. Besant appealed to the Privy Council in London on the 1st December 1913. The hearing came up on the 27th January 1914 before the Privy Council presided over by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Haldane, who was a friend of Mrs. Besant. On the 25th May 1914 the Privy Council in its judgment dismissed the Madras High Court's order on the ground that the two minors, inspite of being of the age of discretion to express their opinion were not consulted. On 20th February 1914, C.W. Leadbeater left Adyar for Australia and never to return to India. Mrs. Besant by now decided to end the impasse by trying her luck in Indian politics and Madras labour movement.

Ranakrishna, Vivekananda Movements in Madras: Aggressive Hinduism.

Ranakrishna Paramahansa, the founder of the new Vedantism and his youthful disciple Swami Vivekananda who imbued Hinduism with fresh light and contemporary interpretations brought the revivalism of Hinduism to colossal proportions. Their new Vedantism was allegorised on the austere principles of Upanishads. But they did not denounce idolatry and caste.

1/ Ibid. p.209
2/ MARY Lutyens - op.cit., p.80.
Vivekananda established monasteries named in Madras and elsewhere after his guru to train young men who had become monks to act as custodians of their new philosophy of aggressive Hinduism. \textsuperscript{1} Vivekananda was always emphatic in his defence of Hindu religion. He said, "Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us religion is the only ground through which we can move. The English man can understand religion even through politics. Perhaps the American can understand religion even through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand even politics when it is given through religion. Sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the rest are the variations in the national life-music." \textsuperscript{2}

Swami Vivekananda warned the upper castes in India to be aware of the fact that the peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other lower classes of India had much greater capacity for work and self reliance than them. He said, "they have been silently working through long ages and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of complaint. Very soon they will get above you in position. Gradually capital is drifting into their hands and they are not so much troubled with wants as you are. Modern education has changed your fashion, but new avenues

\textsuperscript{1} In 1892, it was his Madras friends and admirers who proposed that Vivekananda should be sent to The Parliament of Religions in Chicago to represent Hinduism. Funds were collected, and he travelled to America by way of Japan. Vivekananda made a great impression at the Chicago gathering, partly by his eloquence, partly by his striking figure and picturesque dress, but mainly by his new, unheard - of presentation of Hinduism. (PARQUHAR, J.N. - op.cit.,) p.201. 

\textsuperscript{2} VIVEKANANDA in a Speech delivered in Calcutta in 1897- cited in KER, JAMES Campbell - op.cit.,) pp.217-8.
of wealth lie yet undiscovered for want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these forbearing masses; now is the time for their retribution. And you will become extinct in your vain search for employment, making this the be-all and end-all of your life!"1/


The element of religious grievance found its expression, even in the earliest political activity in Madras. Uzalu Lakshminarasu Chetty (1806-88) the originator of enquiry into almost every abuse and defects which formerly marked Indian administration,2/ the foremost of the Indian publicists of Madras and a Trustee of the Pachaiyappa's charities, for instance, founded the English journal 'Crescent' on the 2nd October, 1844, with the object of ameliorating the conditions of the Hindus, and of exposing the vagaries of Christian missionaries who sat about proselytizing. Feating a proposed law, under the provisions of which Hindu Youth might become converts, to Christianity without prejudice to their rights to inherit property owned by their Hindu parents, the Hindus resented and Mr. Chetty in a meeting on the 9th April 1845, of the natives of Madras drew up a memorial addressed to the Supreme Government in London, protesting against the abrogation of the social and religious usages of the natives. This ultimately resulted in the expunction of the obnoxious provisions in the enactment. On the 7th of October 1846, he convened a public meeting of the Hindus at the Pachaiyappa's institution, where it was resolved to draw up a memorial addressed to the Honourable the Court of

Directors denouncing the missionaries, and criticizing the Government for unscrupulously violating religious neutrality through the policy of hand and glove with the Church and the policy of recruiting converts to Government service. Notwithstanding the intervention of the Sheriff of Madras more than twelve thousand people signed the memorial.\(^1\)

So also, there were attempts to introduce the Bible as textbook in Government schools, but they were promptly thwarted by Mr. Chetty, with the help of doughty George Norton and John Bruce Norton.\(^2\)

Mr. Chetty established the Madras Native Association, considered to be the earliest political body by Indians, along with a group of English educated Indians on 26th February 1852, with a view to ventilate the pitiable condition of the middle and lower middle classes to the members of Parliament, through memorials and petitions.\(^3\)

The Association in a petition drawn up on 21st May 1853 stated about the undue favours shown to the converts to Christianity, complained that the judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature of Madras exercised their powers and authority in high-handed manner to the detriment of the Hindus, and referred to the judges affected by religious bias which induced them to carry their peculiar creed to the bench of justice.\(^4\)

\(^1\) PARAMESWARAN PILLAI, G. - op.cit., pp.151-153.


\(^3\) PARAMESWARAN PILLAI, G. - op.cit., p.147;

was sent to Parliament on behalf of the Native Association
and other Native inhabitants of the Presidency protesting
against the decision of Her Majesty's Ministry to refer
back the petition to the local Government in Madras. Further,
the petition referring to the growing poverty and wretchedness
of the ryots, called for the appointment of a Royal
Commission, to make a thorough and impartial investigation
into the real state of India, and to study, the existence
of the many and heavy grievances, of which they had earlier
complained as regards the Presidency of Madras. 1/ Also due
to the strenuous efforts of the Association, 'The Torture
Commission of 1854' was constituted by the Madras Government,
to investigate and report on the cases of torture by the
revenue officials. 2/ The Commission while admitting the
existence of torture concluded in its report that the
practice of torture was entirely the fault of the lower
Hindu officials, while the European servants of the
Government had always, however unsuccessfully, done their
best to prevent it. In answer to this assertion, the
Madras Native Association presented in January, 1856, a
petition to Parliament, complaining of the torture investiga-
tion. Karl Marx had himself refuted the assertion of the
Commission in an article and approved of the association's
action. 3/ In 1855 Mr. Chetty sent a petition to the House
of Lords signed by 14,000 persons praying that the

1/ ibid.

2/ SKRINIVASACHARI, Rao Sahib, C.S. - History of the City of
Madras: Written for the Tercentenary Celebration Committee,

3/ MARX Karl - "Investigation of Tortures in India" -
(New York Daily Tribune, No. 5120, September 17, 1857) -
This Article can be found in Marx Engels - The First
Indian War of Independence 1857-1859 (Progress Publishers:
administration of the British Territories in India be transferred from the East India Company to the Crown.

On the 15th July 1859, the Madras Native Association sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India through the local Government complaining against missionaries and Lord Harris, the Governor. The Association appealed to the Government to prohibit Government officials from taking part in the Missionary proceedings and to maintain religious neutrality.\(^1\) The Madras Native Association lingered on until Chetty’s death in 1868. Then it languished.\(^2\) There was practically no political association, in Madras, till the Madras Mahajana Sabha was formed, on the 16th May 1884.\(^3\) Eminent men like Rai Bahadur Salem Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, P. Rangiah Naidu, G. Subramania Aiyar, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao and Gooty P. Kesava Pillai assisted at the birth of the Mahajana Sabha and the Sabha, very soon emerged as the nucleus of political activity both for the reformers and revivalists.

**Eminent Reformists and Revivalists of Madras.**

During the nineteenth century in the South, Saiva sects and Vaishnava sects revived their cults and organised vigorous movements towards theism within Hinduism as a counter to the spread of Christianity.\(^4\) Religious festivals were conducted to rouse the religious instincts and spiritualism in the masses. Folk songs, folk dances and

1/ TNA, Public Department - No.1-4 of 1859. p.11.
2/ SEAL, Anil - op.cit., p.200.
4/ From 1876 to 1879 the South India suffered from an appalling famine. Everywhere missionaries threw themselves into the work of saving life and alleviating distress; and this piece of disinterested service brought its reward. From 1880 onwards great masses of the outcastes of South India passed into the Church of Christ. (FAIRQUHAR, J.N. - op.cit.,) p.24.
street dramas, which were popular with the people of all walks of life, had their religious appeal. Sequences drawn on the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata were keeping the people conservative and religious minded. Arumuga Navalar (1823-70), a staunch Saiva, issued reliable editions of many standard religious works in Tamil from his printing press in Madras. Mahavidwan Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai (1815-76) a profound scholar and voluminous writer of Tamil verse dedicated all his writings to propagate Saivaite philosophy. Swami Ramalinga Vallalar (1823-74), whose work Tiruvarutpa was a marvellous collection of nearly one thousand devotional hymns, exhorted the people to transcend caste and other distinctions. He founded the Sathia Gana Sabha and the Sathia Dharmasala to spread his message. At Vadalur, near Madras, he built a shrine in which the flame of an oil lamp was the only object of worship.

Thezhuvur Velayuthananar (1832-89), Poondi Ranganatha Mudaliar, P. Sundaram Pillai (1855-97), Swami Sankaradoss, Pamnal Sambanda Mudaliar (1873-1964), Swami Sachidananda, U.V. Swaminatha Aiyar, P.V. Manickanaicker (1871-1931), Vidwan K. Namachivaya Mudaliar (1876-1937), V.O. Chidambaram Pillai (1872-1936), C. Subramania Bharati (1882-1921), Thiru Vi-Ka (1883-1953) and numerous others revived Hindu cult among the Tamils through their speeches and writings during their life time.

Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao (1828-91), a Mahratta Brahmin born at Kumbakonam, who became a Dewan of Travancore (1857-72), Indore (1873-74) and Baroda (1875-82) belonged to the conservative school of Hindu reformers. He held the view that the Government should adhere to the principle of

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religious neutrality and that the laws must not entrench upon the domain of religion. He advocated female education and was opposed to early marriage.\textsuperscript{1} C.V. Ranganada Sastri (1819-91), a Trustee of the Pachaiyappa's Charities was a staunch Hindu social reformer who attributed the backward condition of the Hindus to the evils of the Hindu customs. He worked whole heartedly to efface those evils. He was a great believer in female education. He was the first among the native Brahmans to wear boots and trousers. Yet he was a staunch Hindu. He was well versed in the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran, and held the belief that Hinduism was superior to all other religions. Through his exertions, he reconverted a Brahmin boy from Christianity.\textsuperscript{2} Sir T. Muthuswamy Aiyar (1832-95) a Judge of the Madras High Court, held a decided opinion that religion was indispensable to man and offered pujas just as any ordinary orthodox Brahmin would do. He supported a Vedas Patasala for the revival of the Shastras and Vedas. He was highly scrupulous in observing several rites and ceremonies ordained by the Hindu religion and was an ardent well wisher of its revival in its true puraform.\textsuperscript{3}

Rai Bahadur Pundi Ranganatha Mudaliar (1847-93), a former Professor of Mathematics of the Madras Presidency College was the Sheriff of Madras, in 1892. A versatile genius he was, that he served ably as a member of the Education Commission along with Justice Tulang of Bombay. He was an ardent Hindu, sang verses in praise of the Lord Ekambaranathar of Kancheepuram Temple and entitled it as 'Kachikalampakam'. He held the view that the social and religious changes that the educated few might be ripe for had to be postponed till the masses are ready to accept them.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} PARAMESWARAN PILLAI, G - op.cit., p.46.
\textsuperscript{2} ibid. p.88
\textsuperscript{3} SUNTHARALINGAM, R - Politics and Nationalist Awakening in South India, 1852-91, (Arizona, 1974), pp.81-2;
\textsuperscript{4} CHINTAMANI, C.Y. (ed), Indian Social Reform, (Madras, 1901)
\textsuperscript{4} PARAMESWARAN PILLAI, G - op.cit., p.114. p.290.
\textsuperscript{4} ibid. p.139.
Rai Bahadur S. Ramasamy Mudaliar (1852-1892) founder and Chief Editor of the Law Journal, and a Trustee of the Pachaiyappa's Charities, stirred by the Ilbert Bill agitation entered public life. He was later sent to England to plead the cause of Indians before the English voters at the General Election of 1885. According to Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai, the Editor of Madras Standard, Mr. Mudaliar was a model of a Hindu public man, who went abroad a Hindu and came back a Hindu; he took a Hindu cook with him, and declined to attend meat dinners.\(^1\) Both Ranganatha Mudaliar and Ramaswamy Mudaliar were the recognized leaders of Hindu society during the latter part of their career.\(^2\) G. Subramania Aiyar (1855-1916) founder Editor of 'The Hindu' had a boundless zeal for reform that he married his daughter a widow at the age of 13, to a Brahmin boy of his choice in Bombay in 1889 much against the resentment of his friends and family members. While a Brahmin friend M. Veeraraghavachari parted company with him on this, there appeared a letter in The Hindu from an unknown reader questioning whether G. Subramania Aiyar would have given his daughter to a non-Brahmin boy and thus going beyond caste barriers.\(^3\)

Leading social reformers of India who came to attend the Third Congress held in December, 1887 in Madras had organized themselves and had met in the city immediately after the Congress for the first time, in the National Social Conference, with Sir T. Madhava Rao presiding and Justice M.G. Ranade guiding. While Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, the ex-premier of Indore played the most prominent role. There the leaders decided to hold social conferences in future every year immediately after the close of the annual sessions of the Congress, at the same place and in the

\(^1\) Ibid. pp. 176-8.
\(^2\) Ibid. p.X.
\(^3\) PARTHASARATHY Rangaswami - op. cit., pp. 68-70.
same pavilion to deal with specific social reform schemes. With few exceptions, the majority who attended the conferences were Hindus; and the whole policy of the reform movement tended to be Hindu in its affinities and interests.\textsuperscript{1/}

The Indian Social Reformer, a twelve page weekly in English edited by the eminent social reformer K. Natarajan began to be published from its Bombay office in 1890.\textsuperscript{2/} G. Parameswaran Pillai, another notable reformer, was championing the cause of social reform through his English paper, Madras Standard\textsuperscript{3/}

The Age of Consent Bill which became law in 1891, proposed to raise the age of consent from ten to twelve years.\textsuperscript{4/} Dewan Bahadur Ragunathrao Rao strongly opposed the Bill, while the rest of the Madras reformers supported it. The controversy over the bill later culminated into the founding of 'The Madras Hindu Social Reform Association' in August 1892, by the breakaway group which included G. Subramania Aiyar and K. Natarajan.\textsuperscript{5/}


In his presidential Address to the Second Congress, held in 1886, at Calcutta, the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, the author of the book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India\textsuperscript{6/} laid down the maxim that the Congress was a

\textsuperscript{1/} FARQUHAR - op.cit., - p.391. For instance, the discussions in such conferences generally ranged over the following issues: Widow marriage, raising of the age of consent, female education, abolition of Devadasi system (Nautch-parties), re-admission of converts, and also the uplift of untouchables.
\textsuperscript{2/} FARQUHAR, J.N. - op.cit., p.395.
\textsuperscript{3/} BIMANDEHARI MAJUMDAR - op.cit., p.4.\textsuperscript{4/} HEIMSATH, C.H. - Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, (Princeton, 1964), pp.159-61.
\textsuperscript{5/} SUNCHARALINGAM, R - op.cit., pp.327-8.
\textsuperscript{6/} NAOROJI, Dadabhai - Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, (New Delhi, 1962).
purely political organisation and while he was himself profoundly alive to the necessity of social and economic reforms, (especially the need to increase per capita income) he held that the Congress should deal only with political matters, on which Indians were united, and not with other questions on which they were necessarily divided and on which no common action was therefore possible. Each community had its own social needs, and those of one were not those of another. But they had common political needs, and common political ideas and aspirations, and could unite on a common political platform.\(^1\) On the eve of Poona Congress, in 1895 Tilak opposed the convening of the Social Conference, as part of the Congress, and upholding the system of Varnashrama Dharma, he warned that social and religious reforms would jeopardize the structural coherence of Hindu Society and weaken its opposition to Government. Thereupon to avert a split in the Congress it was decided not to hold the social conference in the Congress pavilion.\(^2\)

**Spurt in the Growth of Religious Propaganda: The Founder of India's Modern Trade Union Movement propagating Saiva Cult.**

The Sri-vaishnavas, the majority of whom Brahmins, nevertheless divided into a pair of very hostile sub-sects, called Vadagalais and Then-galais were holding a very striking position among the Hindus of the South. They owned many of the greatest and wealthiest temples. A group of Sri-vaishnavas in Madras formed in 1914 a society namely the Sri Visishtadvaita Siddhanta Sangam to encourage religious education in Tamil among the young people and labourers of their sect, so that they might not lose their

\(^1\) ARGOV, Daniel - op.cit., p.70.
\(^2\) ibid. p.71.
religion. The Saiva Sabha of Palamcottah was founded in 1886, with the object of propagating the principles of the Saiva Siddhanta among Saivas and others; the supervision of religious institutions, when funds are mismanaged; the cultivation of Dravidian languages and the betterment of social conditions in South India. In 1900, J.M. Nallaswami Pillai and others started an English monthly "The Siddhanta Dipika" and Saivaite commentaries were published in it. At the same time G.U. Pope published an English translation of Manikkavachakar's Tiruvachakam. Since 1906, the sect held annual conferences, known as Saiva Siddhanta Mahasamajam at various towns in the Tamil country. Since 1909, the Saiva Sabha of Palamcottah held annual Conferences in southern districts of the Tamil country.\(^1\) An Annual Conference of the Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam was held at Sivagnana Gramani Gardens, Madras, in 1916 for three days. On the concluding day of the Conference Sir P. Theagaraya Chetty spoke on the plight of Non-Brahmins at the hands of Brahmins, and exhorted the non-Brahmins not to believe in the Congress and the Swarajist Party.\(^2\)

Thiru Vi.Ka (1883-1953), the founder of modern Trade Union movement in India, was all through his life a Saivaite and preached Saiva cult. At Royapettah, Madras he founded the Young Men Educational Society, in 1902, a debating society, but later the next year, he changed the very character of the society. Now a forum for Saivite discourses in Tamil and the society bore the name of Sri Balasubramania Bakta Jana Sabha. Though in his usual inimitable style he declined to hold any office of the Sabha himself, he was compelled to hold the presidencieship of the Sabha for four years from 1934 when he was also the President of the Madras Labour Union. Thiru Vi.Ka delivered a continuous religious

\(^1\) FARQUHAR, J.M. - op.cit., p.299.
discourses on Periya Puranam on all Sundays for seven years from 1908 to 1915 at the Triplicane Saiva Sabha. He was also the founder president of the Sri Siva Subramania Bakti Jan Sabha at Pudupet, Madras in 1915 and which post he resigned after some years, resenting the presence of Justice Party pressure group in the Sabha. He became a front line leader of the Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam; he had the privilege to preside over several of its conferences, and he was the main speaker in many others. He himself opined that more than 90% of the Saiva Sabhas in the Tamil country thronged to listen to him through his life time. 1/

In 1886 a movement named Sadharana Dharma arose in Madras, professing to establish unity in variety throughout the different cults and sects of India, and by and by of the whole world. 2/ The Hindu Tract Society, the most important and influential of the associations set up to inflame popular fanaticism against the Christian missionaries, was established in Madras city in April, 1887. 3/ While it was, at least in part, an outcome of the rapid growth in nationalist feeling and the Hindu revivialist and Theosophical movements, the immediate occasion for its organisation was a sudden change in Christian missionary tactics, including the increased emphasis on highly aggressive open air preaching in 1886 and 1887. 4/ Its activities, which prompted the formation of numerous branch associations throughout the mofussil, included the publication and distribution of anti-Christian literature, the sending out of rival street preachers, the

1/ ibid., Vol II, pp.588-606.
ODDIE, G.W. - Social Protest in India, (Manohar, New Delhi, 1979) p.73.
4/ ibid.
disruption of missionary meetings, attempts to dissuade pupils from attending mission schools, the establishment of rival institutions and support for movements favouring the re-admission of Hindu apostates. 1/

The Advaïta Sabha of Kumbakonam was started in 1895 with a view to defend Sankaracharya's interpretation of the Vedanta which recognized all the Gods of the Hindu pantheon, and strictly adhered to the rules and regulations prescribed in the Smritis and Dharmasastras. An annual Conference of Brahmin Pandits of this school of thought was usually held at Kumbakonam in the month of July. Advocating a sort of militant orthodoxy of Hinduism Prof. K. Sundararaman 2/ of the Sabha believed that the whole of the ritualistic system of Hinduism came from God, that every details of it was right, that the publications of all its rules would bring health, strength and prosperity to the Indian people, and that the decline of India during the last two thousand years was the direct outcome of the neglect of these rules by large masses of the population. 3/ In one of his letters to the Press, he observed: "The consequences of rebellion against ritualistic Hinduism are writ plainly on the face of the history of India for two thousand years and more. Buddha began the first revolt, and since then he has had many successors and imitators. The unity and might of the once glorious fabric of Hindu society and civilization have been shattered, but not beyond hope of recovery. That recovery must be effected not by further doses of 'protestant' revolt, but by the persistent and patient endeavour to observe the injunctions and precepts of the ancient Dharma in its entirety". 4/

On this Dr. R.C. Majumdar remarks: "So this Professor of

1/ ibid.
3/ ibid.
4/ ibid.
History looked upon the whole course of Indian history from an altogether different angle, and would fain replace Hinduism on its old pedestal by wiping off the traces of all changes introduced since the days of Buddha. This may be called Hindu revivalism in excelsis.\(^1\) In 1909 the Sadharana Dharma organisation was merged with the Vedic mission. The new organisation had two divisions, Vedic Dharma and Sadharana Dharma, the former purely Hindu, the latter for everybody and anybody. For sometime this new body was affiliated to the Bharata Dharma Mahamandal, but it severed its connections soon owing to the Mandal’s stiff orthodoxy. The Vedic mission announced: “Our Mission has nothing to do with so called Hindu Orthodoxy and priest-hood. Nothing short of thorough religious reform based on Vedic monotheism will satisfy us. We do not want to please those orthodox people that may be indifferent or opposed to the spread of Sanskrit and Religious Education as well as the right kind of spiritual knowledge among the non-Brahmin castes and the depressed classes."\(^2\) The Mission had established a Vedic Mission college for training preachers and teachers.

Bhajana-muttas were established throughout the Tamil country by Tyagaraja (1757-1847) during his time and the Bhajana cult was propagated by organising congregational singing of divine praise in these mutts. Especially during the Tamil month of Margazhi (December-January), parties of devotees got up early, bathed despite the chill and went round the local temples and the tanks singing devotional songs. “These Bhajan parties stopped at important places to sing elaborate songs, there were namavali or simple strings of God’s names and epithets which they uttered as they moved on and which the accompanying congregation took

\(^1\) MAJUMDAR, R.C. (Ed) - op.cit., p.137
up in chorus. As each song or namavali was finished, the leader pronounced what is called a pandarika, an expression of devotion to God like 'Namah Parvati pataye' or 'Sita-Kantasmaram', to which the whole party responded with formulas like 'Hara Hara Mahadeva' and 'Jaya Jaya Rama'. This bhajana was conducted in a more organised manner, within the precincts of bhajana mutts'. 1/ In a far more elaborate manner, a whole bhajana session was conducted for several days once or twice a year, when Bhagavatas would recite religious stories emphasizing devotion to God as the only means of salvation. 2/ Harikathe or kathakalaksepas became prominent in the earlier years of the present century in Southern India. Milton Singer views that the Radhakrishna bhajanas in Madras city reduced tensions between Brahmins and non-Brahmins especially during the hey days of Justice Party. 3/ Also between 1900 and 1920 many organisations bearing various names such as Varnashrama Dharmic Protection Sangams, Sanatanist Dharmic Sangam, Hindu Sanatanistic Sangam were established at village levels throughout the Tamil country for the protection and perpetuation of Hindu Orthodoxy and untouchability. Puranic superstitions were perpetuated through festivals and religious discourses. 4/ In Madras mutts or religious institutions of an itinerary character were

1/ BHATTACHARYYA Haridas (Ed) - op.cit., pp.512-3.
2/ ibid.
engaged in disseminating religious knowledge to the public, while the temples were used as the places of worship. Though it must be admitted that the mutts were places of profound scholarship where a study of religious literature of a very high order was fostered and that during their peregrinations the potentates attached to them delivered very instructive lectures to large concourse of disciples, it could not also be denied that they were at the same time the breeding places of bigotry, corruption and extravagance and by no means sought to promote solidarity or social service. In the first place their cults knew of no conciliation and not only did they regard their tenets unassailable and unsusceptible of improvement but entertained very exaggerated notions of their own infallibility and self importance. Secondly, the ever increasing financial prosperity of these institutions inevitably led them to a woeful state of corruption. One of the marked abuses of the finances of these institutions was the expensive paraphernalia attached to them which in some instances far excelled those of Oriental princes. They maintained a large body of domestic servants with their families, costly animal and mechanical transports and palanquins and such other establishments as musical bands, etc., to add to their grandeur and to serve as an advertising agency.

So also temples had been converted into veritable markets where the Brahmin priests preyed upon the ignorant worshippers extorting as much money as they could at every suitable opportunity in the name of God. Eleemosynary as temples were supposed to be they confined their benevolence to one section of community. The religious services and

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2/ ibid.
festivals in Hindu temples were but a series of tamashas and kaleidoscopic fairs were temptations of the worst kind confronting the devotees. Apart from all these, the systems of philosophy embraced by Hinduism were not only multifarious but in the conflicting nature of their tenets rendered themselves obfuscating to the laymen who constituted the bulk of the population. Temples and mutts thus became the places of partisanship and asylums for the indolent.

In 1923, the Raja of Panagal, the Leader of the Justice Party introduced in the Madras Legislative Council the most controversial and the most far-reaching piece of legislation — the Hindu Religious Endowment Bill which sought to place the control of funds and the management of the temples and mutts under a Board of Commissioners analogous to the Charity Commissioners in England. Trustees and committees were placed on a broader elective franchise. Provision also was made for the diversion of funds for purposes for which the Endowments were not originally intended.\(^1\) Vested interests raised the cry of "Religion in Danger" and the Bill had to pass through vicissitudes before it was finally passed by the newly constituted Second Council in 1925.\(^2\)

In 1902, an all India Hindu Sanatanist Sabha known as Bharata Dharma Mahamandala with headquarters at Benares was started. The objects of the Association were to promote Hindu religious education in accordance with the Sanatan Dharma, to diffuse the knowledge of the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas and other Hindu shastras. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the leading personality of the Sabha founded the Banaras Hindu University. There were 600 branches of the Sabha and another 400 institutions had become affiliated. Numerous

\(^1\) Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee, 1924 - Written Evidence - Appendix No.1 - Evidence of E. Periyar Devakam (Govt. of India Press, Simla, 1924) pp.9-10.

ruling princes and sectarian pontiffs supported the Sabha. In 1907, the United Bengal Hindu Movement was formed comprising more moderate Hindus, who were in disagreement with the Aurobindo group. At the same time the Punjab Hindu Sabha became the spearhead of the movement which ultimately led to the establishment of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha.

Emergence of Religious Militancy: Tilak Introducing Shivaji Festival.

Tilak was the first to use religious fervour to buttress political agitation against the British. He defended the child-marriage and organised the cow-protection Society. To give a spiritual orientation to the nationalist impulse, Tilak revived the Ganesh festival, sacred to the elephant-headed deity popular in the Deccan and side by side the cult of Shivaji, the brave Maratha Chieftain who fought the Mughal power and carved out a Hindu Kingdom in the Western Ghats. Through the former he sought to inject social and political content into a purely religious celebration. The latter, he thought, served as a rallying cry for nationalism.

2/ PETER WORSLEY - op. cit., p. 61.

It was ridiculous to see the Chitpavan Brahmin, Tilak harbouring on the supremacy of Shivaji to rouse a mass upsurge in Maharashtra. Shivaji having established a Hindu independent Kingdom in the Western ghats wanted to proclaim himself a Hindu King after performing coronation ceremony according to Vedic rites. Brahmins considered that he was a Shudra and that he was not entitled to have his coronation performed as it was a right which belonged to The Kshatriya only. Shivaji had overcome these difficulties and on 6th June 1674, got one Gagabhat, a Benares Brahmin to do the coronation according to Vedic rites, after performing Vratya Stoma and Upanayana. Most other Brahmins predicted all sorts of evils to happen in view of the coronation having been performed with Vedic rites. Unfortunately these evils did take place and Shivaji who undoubtedly was superstitious had another coronation performed according to non-vedic rites done in the case of the Shudras. (AMBEDKAR, B.R. - Who Were the Shudras? (Thacker, Bombay, 1970 (Reprint) pp. 290-45.)
first Shivaji festival was attended by the leading chiefs of the Maharashtra States and also by the leading jagirdars and the Inamdars of the Deccan. Street processions and para-military training marked the occasion. Participating in the Shivaji memorial meeting held in Poona in December, 1895, Surendranath Banerjee said, "Shivaji fought with the Mohammedans, and had recourse to arms. Our methods are different altogether. We do not fight with the Mohammedans. We seek to be united with them upon the solid ground of common national interests. We do not appeal to the sword; the pen is our weapon. We appeal to the methods of constitutional agitation". ¹/ In 1897 for publishing a few verses - an imaginary message of Shivaji, and for a speech in the Shivaji festival, Tilak was arrested and sentenced to 18 months' R.I. for sedition. He was released in about a year's time as a result of an application signed by Prof. Max Muller, Sir William Hunter, Sir Richard Garth, Mr. William Caine, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt. ²/

At one of his reception meetings in Calcutta in June 1906, Tilak declared: "The Shivaji festival is an inspiring political festival which must spread all over India. The Goddess Kali is the presiding Goddess in Bengal, the same Goddess was the protector of Shivaji. We cannot conceive of Shivaji without Bhavani". His intention of uniting the political agitation in Bengal and Maharashtra on the same terrain of religious fanaticism was made clear in such pronouncements. The Bengal leader B.C. Pal also held the view that national movement in India was essentially a spiritual movement, ³/ while V.D. Savarkar went steps ahead of them and said, "We the Hindus are a nation by ourselves." ⁴/

¹/ Cited in ARGOV, Daniel - op.cit., p.72.
²/ SITARAMAYYA, B. Pattabhi - op.cit., p.95.
Lajpat Rai had held the view that the Congress should be a bold Hindu political organisation, instead of posing as an all-embracing body which jeopardized the chance of creating a united front of Hindus. He asserted that the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Christians constituted different religious nationality and argued that the attempt to unify them within the Indian National Congress, was not only futile but at the expense of unifying and strengthening the Hindus as a religious nationality. 

Transition from Religious Nationalism to Economic Nationalism: Boycott, Swadeshi and Swaraj.

During the period from 1895 to 1913 a frightful pentent flamed up in India, anarchism and murder inspired by the new religious nationalism. The partition of Bengal in 1905, by Lord Curzon was the 'divide and rule' - par excellence. The revolt against it, spread far beyond Bengal, culminating into the economic nationalism of 'Boycott, Swadeshi and Swaraj'. V.O.C. started the Swadeshi Movement, in Tuticorin, in September 1905. In April 1906, he planned to run Swadeshi steamers between Tuticorin and Colombo with the help of local merchants. In October 1906, the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company of his, was officially registered at Tuticorin, with a nominal capital of Rs.10 lakhs. In March 1907, he told a public meeting, in Madras city, that the swadeshi movement depended for its success on the boycott of both men and goods from Britain. He declared that the


2/ V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, popularly known as V.O.C., was the first to raise the banner of militant Swadeshism in the South.
success of the Boycott and Swadeshi movements would result in Swaraj for India.1/

By this time Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal visited Madras, on the 2nd May 1907. Mr. Pal hosted by S. N. Tirumalachari, stayed at Lodd Govinda Doss's bungalow. He told the people during a series of lectures in Madras that constitutional agitation was useless, since the people had lost faith in the generosity and justice of the British Government. He explained that the apparent power of the English in India was pure illusion or Maya and the moment all the Indians withdrew their cooperation to the British, the entire British administrative machinery would come to standstill, since India was administered after all, by the British, few with the help of the Indians multitude at the grassroot level. Hence he asked the people to kill and destroy the illusion of British power in India.2/ His speech naturally created

1/ TNA - Confidential Note on the Riots in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin in March 1908, CID, Madras.

"Since its inception the trend of Swadeshi movement was anti-imperialistic. Slowly but steadily it went on growing and perfecting its techniques until, in 1905-6, it assumed the first important shape of mass anti-imperialist action. In that period Swadeshi assumed a scope and breadth of character such as it had never acquired before. Thus the Swadeshi Movement had been closely linked with the struggle for independence ever since the close of the nineteenth century". (A. I. Levkovsky, "Beginning of Mass Liberation struggle", in M. Reisner & N. M. Goldberg (ed), Tilak and Struggle for Indian Freedom (New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1968) p.348.


V.O.C. considered that there were under 50,000 Europeans in India and that it would not be a difficult thing to drive them away by force, though force might not be necessary if Indians were determined to boycott foreign goods, Europeans would leave India on their own. (TNA - Confidential Note on the Riots in Tinnevelly & Tuticorin in March, 1908, CID, Madras).

Dr. P. Varadarajulu always regarded that V.O.C.'s name would find the first place in the history of the political struggle in South India (Indian Labour Journal, Nagpur dated 17 March, 1935) p.3.
a great amount of excitement in Madras. Mr. Pal, besides his public lectures, held secret meetings, with C. Subramania Bharati, S. Srinivasachari, S. N. Tirumalachari, Dr. Nanjunda Rao, Ladd Govindh Doss, Sankaranarayana Aiyar, M. P. Tirumalachari, Venkataramana Rao, Duraiswami Ayyar, V. Chakkarai Chetty, Ethiraja Surendranath Arya and Nilakantam Brahmachari. A secret society was to have been instituted by him, but that did not take place owing to his sudden departure from Madras on the 12th May 1907.


Meanwhile, Mr. James Keir Hardie, (1856-1915) the founder President of Independent Labour Party and a Member

1/ TNA - Judicial (Confidential) G.O. Ms. 1610 dated 7th October 1912 (Encl: (1) Nilakantam Brahmacari's Confessions Recorded by Mr. A. M. G. C. Tampe, I.C.S., (2) D.I.C's verification of the above confession. (3) Government's order on the above)

2/ First formed in 1890, by some Socialist organisations for joint Parliamentary action. In 1893, at a Conference at Bradford, where delegates from local Labour Parties, Social Democratic Federation and the Fabian Society met and formed the Independent Labour Party for the whole kingdom. The object of the Party was the foundation of an industrial commonweal based upon the socialization of land and capital. This they hoped to achieve by organizing workers industrially and politically, under the banner of Socialism for joint Parliamentary action. After the General Elections of 1906, the Labour Party was created as an amalgam of Independent Labour Party, Trade Unionists, Social Democrats & Fabians and Mr. Keir Hardy was elected President of the Party, which post he resigned in late 1907, owing to illness.


In the words of Lenin, the Independent Labour Party, was actually "an opportunist party that has always been dependent on the bourgeoisie", it was "independent" only of Socialism, but very dependent on Liberalism". (V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 494 and Vol. 18, p. 360)

But referring to Mr. Hardie's visit he said: "when Keir Hardie had the temerity to visit India and speak to the Indians of elementary democratic demands, the whole British bourgeois press was up in arms against the rebel." (Lenin's Collected Works, Vol. XV, (Moscow, 1973) pp. 183-4 in the article "Inflamable Material in World Politics", dated 5th Aug. 1908.)
of Parliament (1892-5 & 1900-15) of Great Britain spent two months in India, in 1907 and visited various presidencies and native States. He mingled with all the classes bureaucrats, native princes, rulers, judicial officers, peasants and factory workers, mohammedans and Hindus, with all on terms of equality. Mr. Hardie, the sternest champion of the working class and the one who liberated the children of labour in his country, out of bondage, toured in India with eyes as open as was his mind, and he would not leave any place till he had thoroughly understood the whole system of the country and got at the facts. When he arrived in Madras city on the 4th November 1907, a large number of students assembled to receive and hailed him with shouts of Bandonataram.

The Madras Mahajana Sabha played the host during his stay in Madras. Several prominent political agitators including Mr. G. Subramania Aiyar met him in Madras. He visited the Madras Cosmopolitan Club, some libraries, educational institutions and some swadeshi shops. He drove to Washermanpet and Periamet on the 6th November and enquired into the conditions of working class, their wages and their levels of living. While addressing the Mahajana Sabha, he said that he was speaking not merely for the united political movement in India, but also for strengthening the hands of their labour friends in Britain, who were genuinely anxious to do something to raise the people of India to a higher status. He declared

2/ ibid p. (xxi)
4/ TNA - Judicial - Letter No. 50, Confidential No. 4 at 9-1-08From C. A. Souter, I.C.S. to Home Secretary, Govt. of India.
5/ ibid, also see - Draft Annual Report of the Madras Mahajana Sabha for 1907. p. 4, item No. 7.
6/ ibid.
that the English people did not know really of their condition, since their only channel of communication was the official channel and the Anglo-Indian Press.1/ He assured on his return home to speak with thorough knowledge and with authority on the truth of India.2/

His visit to India created a storm in the tea cup. While the Government of India and the English Press greatly resented his remarks, the national agitators hailed them with great jubilation.3/ Aurobindo Ghose wrote in Bande Mataram that the hasty, hideous, indecent yell that had been raised by the whole of the English Press against Mr.Keir Hardie was because, he had dared to tell the truth about the prevalent situation in India.4/ Commenting on his visit, the Madras Standard said that Mr.Hardie and the Labour Party would certainly help India very greatly in her distress if only Indians on their part strove hard to help themselves with unity, and made bigger sacrifices.5/ The Commissioner of Police reported that Mr.Keir Hardie's visit to Madras had the effect of encouraging political agitators to continue their agitation counting upon the support of the Labour Party.6/ Thiru-Vi-Ka opined

1/ ibid.
2/ ibid.
5/ TNA - Confidential - Native Newspaper Report, 1907, p.576. No.46 of 1907 & item No.3 - "Mr.Keir Hardie's Parting Advice" - The Madras Standard, Madras, November 16th, 1907.
that Mr. Keir Hardie's short biography published then in the native Press inspired in the heart of himself. The sympathy for the working class and this culminated into his dedication, later in his life almost for four decades to the cause of labour.¹/

Surat Congress of 1907, the Split between Extremists and Moderates.

By this time, the political spectacle at the All India level was one of rivalry between the moderates headed by Surendranath Banerjee, G.K. Gokhale, Perozeshah Mehta and others, and the extremists headed by Tilak, B.C. Pal, Lajpat Rai,²/Aurobindo Ghose and others. Hectic preparations were on for a final showdown at Surat, where the Indian National Congress was to meet in 1907, for its annual sessions.

¹/ Thiru-Vi-ka's Autobiography op. cit. p.455.
²/ Cf & Cp. PARTHASARATHY Rangaswami op. cit., p.182 writes: "The Hindu accorded a right royal welcome to Mr. Hardie, when he visited Madras. A two column picture of Mr. Hardie was published on the leader page - a very unusual thing for the Hindu to do - with the following caption: "Mr. James Hardie, M.P., one of Nature's gentleman". The Report said: "it was indeed a remarkable sight to see Mr. Hardie, one of nature's gentlemen, as he had been described, with frankness, honesty and sympathy beaming out from every corner of that face, worn out indeed with all the toils of a life - both physical intellectual, but with an overhanging forehead severe as ever a philosopher carried above his shoulders ... ".

²/ LAJPAT RAI considered Swadeshi and patriotism as synonymous. See his article, "The Swadeshi Movement", The Indian Review (Madras, 1907), Vol. VIII, p.335.

Immediately on the receipt of the news of deportation of Lajpat Rai the Madras Mahajana Sabha sent the following cablegram to the Secretary of State for India in Council:

"Madras staggered at your sanctioning deportation Punjab leaders. Action un-British, partakes Russian methods justice demands formulating charges and open inquiry".

Also a public meeting to condemn the action was held in Madras on 17th May 1907. (Draft Annual Report of the Madras Mahajana Sabha for 1907, Item II (a)) p.3
Tilak appealed for more number of delegates from Madras to support his group. Responding to this call, a big contingent of delegates including the following left for Surat on the 21st December 1907: V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, V. Chakkarai Chetty, C. Subramania Bharati, Ethiraja Surundranath Arya, K. Venkataramana Rao, S. Duraiswami Aiyar, N. K. Ramaswami Aiyar, T. G. Sankaranarayana Aiyar, S. Srinivasachari and S. N. Tirumalachari. But the extremists' efforts at Surat ended in a fiasco for themselves and the Congress was captured by moderates. The extremists became desperate and decided to found secret societies. They advocated both nationalism and reaction with a burning eloquence and unscrupulous ingenuity which to the unbalanced minds suggested that murder was a patriotic duty. The doctrine preached year after year with ceaseless activity in the Press and on the platform, later perverted the impressionable youths into murderers all over India. It is said that at Surat, Tilak initiated V. O. C. to his secret society, instructed him in all the tenets of the new party and made him the leader of the Madras Nationalists.

The Founding of the Chennai Jana Sangham - prelude to Labour militancy.

On their return to Madras, a society called the 'Chennai Jana Sangham', was formed on the 11th January 1908 by V. O. C. with the help of Chakkarai Chetty, C. Subramania

1/ TNA - Judicial (Confidential) - G.O. Ms. 1610 dated 7th October, 1912 - op. cit.
"The new cult of an all-Indian nationalism owed its growth mainly to the alliance of the reactionary Brahmin oligarchy, entrenched in hereditary privilege and therefore bitterly resentful of the British levelling policy, with the Western-educated and often revolutionary-minded nationalists". (Ibid. p. 229).

Bharati, Ethiraj Surendranath Arya, K. Venkatarama Rao, S. Srinivasachari, Varadaraja Sharme, S.N. Tirumalachari, T.G. Sankaranarayana Aiyar, S. Duraiswami Aiyar and M.P. Tirumalachari. The object of the society was to work in close collusion with Tilak and strive to attain complete swaraj in ten years.\(^2\) Apart from this V.O.C., Dr. Nanjunda Rao, K.V. Rangaswami Aiyangal and S. Srinivasachari formed themselves into a secret society called Tilak society. It is interesting to note that some of the notorious extremists, namely, Chandrakant Chakravarti, Hotilal Verma, Kolhatkar, D.H. Joshi and Debiprasad Mukerji had established personal contacts with the above secret society during the months January to March, 1908.\(^3\)

Chandrakant Chakravarti, the bomb maker, who was wanted by the Police in connection with the Manikella conspiracy case in Bengal, came to Madras in the end of January 1908, stayed with C. Subramania Bharati, and afterwards proceeded to Tuticorin and thence to Cullombo.\(^4\) Hotilal Verma, who linked up many apparently isolated phases of revolutionary activity in India and abroad in those years returned to India via Tuticorin after an extensive tour of Hongkong, Shanghai, China, Paris, London and Cairo, where he went to procure arms to India. He met Tilak and Khaparde at Bombay in November 1907. He stayed in Madras during the first week of March 1908 contacting V.O.C.'s secret society.\(^5\) Kolhatkar described by the Police as a very dangerous man was also contacting the secret society during this period.\(^6\) D.H. Joshi, a notorious bomb maker, and a conspirator concerned in a plot to murder Lord Curzon, also stayed in Madras secretly contacting the Madras people.\(^7\)

\(^1\) TNA - Judicial - Confidential G.O. Ms. 1610, dated 7th October, 1912 - op. cit.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid.
Revolt in the South and Labour Portent.

At the same time, elsewhere in Tuticorin, his hometown V.O.C. formed the 'Swaraj Sangam' along with Subramania Siva to propagate his ideals vigorously. He exhorted the Hindus to revolt against foreign oppression. He aroused them, to emulate the example of Bengalis, who swore by Goddess Kali to boycott foreign goods. He said that it was a religious maxim that nothing could be accomplished without bloodshed. On the 26th February 1908, at a largely attended meeting V.O.C. told the mill labourers belonging to European mills to strike work and also to cause mischief to the machinery. V.O.C. regarded labour as an important source of strength in the struggle for Swaraj. As a direct result of their speeches the operatives of the European owned Coral Cotton Mills in Tuticorin struck work immediately and the mill was closed forthwith.

V.O.C. and Siva were prevented from holding meetings under Section 144 Cr.Pc. Braving the repression, he asked the labour to continue their strike. Municipal sweepers and jutka drivers also came out in support of the mill labourers. The punitive police arrived in Tuticorin and Tinnevelly and the atmosphere became surcharged. V.O.C. and his colleagues decided to celebrate the release of B.C.Pal from jail by holding demonstrations and public meetings in

1/ TNA - Confidential Note on the Riots in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin in March 1908 by CID, Madras - op.cit.,

2/ ibid.

3/ KER, James Campbell - op.cit., p.451
Times of India in its issue on March 7th, 1908, p.16 - reported that nearly 1000 operatives of the Coral Mills struck work and were parading in the streets till late at night with shouts of 'Bandemataram'.
(Cited in LEVKOVSKY, ...I. - "The Labour Movement and the Development of the Freedom Struggle" - article in I.M.Reisner and N.M.Goldberg, (ed) op.cit., p.457.)
Tinnevelly and Tuticorin. The authorities refused permission for this and arrested V.O.C. and two others. On the eve of the riots, the District Magistrate appealed for calm. But the anti-British feeling from the days of Swadeshi Steam Navigation and the Coral Mill strike only intensified further and people from all walks of life came out in Tinnevelly in angry demonstration. The demonstrators burned the municipal and court records and smashed up a police station. The punitive police opened fire and killed several people. Simultaneously, there was another demonstration in Tuticorin demanding Mr. Pillai's release. This was followed by a mass meeting which was dispersed by the police, who opened fire; rioting began. The mill workers came out again on strike. A state of emergency was declared in Tinnevelly and Tuticorin, and the punitive police patrolled the streets. Several arrests were made. V.O.C., Siva and Padmanabha Aiyangar were proceeded against under sections 124-A, 153-A & 505 of the I.P.C. On the 9th July 1908 V.O.C. was sentenced to transportation for life, and Siva to transportation for ten years.

A new factor in these events was the solidarity of the mill labourers with swadeshiists. With the strike of the Coral Mill labourers for political action there began a new phase in the history of the Indian Labour movement. Simultaneously, in Bombay on the conviction of Tilak, V.O.C.'s mentor, the mill labourers there became turbulent and went on

1/ TNA - Confidential Note on the Riots in Tinnevelly & Tuticorin in March 1908 - CID, Madras - op.cit.,

Nilakantam Brahmachari claimed that he was sent to Tuticorin to meet V.O.C. with a secret undisclosed letter from Dr. Nanjunda Rao. According to him, he was in Tuticorin for three weeks from 20th February 1908, waiting for a reply from V.O.C. This was the period during which the riots in Tuticorin and Tinnevelly took place.


3/ TNA - Confidential Note on the Riots in Tinnevelly & Tuticorin in March 1908, CID, Madras - op.cit.,

4/ KBR, James Campbell - p.454
a general strike. Hailing the joint political mass action of the labour as a portent of the future V.I. Lenin at that time observed thus: "The Indian masses are beginning to come out into the streets in defence of their native writers and political leaders. ... And the Indian proletariat too has already matured sufficiently to wage a class conscious and political mass struggle - and that being the case, Anglo-Russian methods in India are played out".1/ Since then, Indian workers had become active participants in all militant actions against the British Imperialism. Later, on appeal to the High Court, the sentences were reduced to six years in each case and V.O.C. was released in December, 1912. A few months before the release of V.O.C., Mr. C.C. Longden the D.I.G. of Police, based on the confessions of Nilakantam Brahmacari, an extremist sentenced to jail in Tinnevelly Collector Ashu's murder case, in a note to the Government of Madras, wrote: "Most important we must think out the best way to deal with V.O.C. Chidambaram Pillai. He has tremendous hold on people and it is in my mind most unlikely that he is going to be quiet when he comes out again. He will upset the whole of Tinnevelly again if we are not very careful.2/

2/ TNV. - Judicial - Confidential G.O. Ms.1610 dated 7th October 1912 - op. cit.

Nilakantam Brahmacari in his confession stated the following: V.O.C. conspired with the Zamindar of Panchalamkurichi, who undertook to furnish 20,000 maravas to create violence in Tuticorin and Tinnevelly, on the condition that the Ettayapuram Estate be handed over to him and he be made Raja of it. But V.O.C. abandoned all his projects subsequently because of very strong objections from his Madras friends. Nilakantam claimed that he was himself personally sent as a messenger to Tinnevelly with a secret letter from S. Srinivasa- chari for this purpose.
Religious and Labour Militancy, and Government Repression.

The cult of bullet and bomb became prominent with the extremists. From individual ruffianism leading to sporadic murders to organised terrorism and conspiracy was reported throughout India. The startling forms of violence and the cloudburst of anarchy invited the British to resort to various repressive measures. Anything said against the British was made sedition. On the basis of a Regulation of 1818, the method of deportation without trial was brought into play against the extremists. Several of the extremists were denied entry into India. Some of the extremists, decided to retract their views and refrain from political activity. Thus B.C. Pal who was arrested on the charge of sedition in 1911, for his earlier article, "The Ethology of the Bomb in Bengal", pleaded for mercy and was sentenced to one month imprisonment. He resumed political activity only in 1916. Lajpat Rai avoided political activity during 1908 to 1914 and concentrated on three issues: famine relief, the elevation of untouchables and the Hindu-Muslim conflict. On his release in 1914, Tilak was willing to co-operate with the British in the First World War and he even modified his philosophy from "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it" to "Home Rule for India within the Empire". Aurobindo Ghose

3/ Col. Josiah Wedgwood, M.P. - India's champion in English Parliament observed in Parliament that repressive measures would not increase loyalty, check sedition and stop murder. Dealing with the Deportations Act (Regulation) of 1818, declared that it was founded upon the principle of the Bastille and of the lettre de cachet under Louis XIV. (cited in St. Nihal Singh - "Character Sketch of Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, M.P.", The Modern Review, April, 1920.) p.376
4/ ARGOV, Daniel, op.cit., p.144;
5/ ibid, p.27
6/ ibid. p.148
fled to Pondicherry, in 1908 and took to spiritualism. C. Subramania Bharati began to operate from Pondicherry.

G. Subramania Aiyar was arrested on the charge of sedition on August 21, 1908 and his Swadesamitran office was searched by the police. But however, the case against him before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Madras was withdrawn by the prosecution on Government orders, in view of the undertaking given by him that he would abstain in future from public speaking or writing or from any action which might tend to excite class hatred or promote sedition or disloyalty to Government. Mr. Aiyar was released on his furnishing a bond for Rs. 5,000 and two sureties for Rs. 2,500 each to be of good behaviour for one year. 1/

Efforts of M. P. Tirumalachari and others in India and abroad to spread revolutionary movements.

Meanwhile several of the extremists wanted by the police, became notorious wandering. M. P. Tirumalachari left for England, in 1908, to join the band of terrorists in Europe namely V. D. Savarkar, Krishna Varma, Madame Cama, Veerendra Nath Chattopadhyaya, D. N. Apte, Lal Har Dayal, Madanlal Dina and V. V. S. Aiyar belonging to Abhinav Bharat Samajam. 2/ Later he moved his activities to Paris, Berlin.

2/ KER, James Campbell, op. cit., p. 442.

The Abhinav Bharat Samajam was a secret society developed by the Savarkar brothers; - Korkanasth Brahmins. It aimed at building, on the model of Russian nihilists' secret societies, consisting of small circles or groups affiliated into sections, each member knowing only the members of the circle to which he belonged. The ambitious project of the society included manufacturing of bombs, and weapons, purchasing and piling up of arms in friendly neighbouring countries, training of youths secretly for war, and finally waging the war of Independence with the British. But nothing materialised excepting sporadic murders of some Europeans. And V. D. Savarkar was arrested and sentenced to transportation for life into Andaman Islands. He was released in 1924, but barred from political activity until 1937, when he rehabilitated himself as the President of the Hindu Maha Sabha.
Munich, New York and back to Berlin in 1915. In New York he was actively associated with the Ghadr Party. Of them Har Dayal, who later founded the Ghadr Party in California, openly declared in London that he was working for a Hindu India and that if the Muslims wished to remain, they could do so by worshipping the Hindu Gods. 1/ In 1919 Hardayal left the revolutionary movement discovering new virtues in the British empire. 2/ Mr. Chari had the privilege to be in a delegation which met Lenin in Moscow in May 1919. The same year moving to Soviet Turkestan, he was active in forming the Indian Revolutionary Association. The next year he was associated in founding the Communist Party of India at Tashkent. 3/ In 1925, the Government of India in a telegram to the Secretary of State for India at London stated that they had decided to issue warrants under Regulation III of 1818 for the arrest of M.P. Tirumalechari and five others in the event of their return to India, at Port of arrival. 2/ By this time Mr. Chari was in Berlin and was by now critical of the Comintern. He returned to India in 1935.

The 'India House' at High Gate in London was the Headquarters of the most dangerous organisation outside India. The extremists arranged for meetings of Indians in England, on Sunday evenings at the India House. At one of the Sunday

1/ MISRA, B.B. - The Indian Political Parties - An Historical Analysis of Political Behaviour upto 1947 (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1970), p.149
meetings on 10th April, 1910 V.V.S. Aiyar said, "that terrorism or individual assassination was only the first stage of revolution; although it should be carried on for the present with undiminished vigour they ought to keep in view of their ultimate goal, namely, a final revolution and a pitched battle with the English forces. It was necessary, therefore, to send out men to America or France for the purpose of learning the manufacture of arms and ammunition of the latest type, and of studying the essentials of military training. The only proper limitation of terrorism, or individual assassination was collective assassination of War". After a six months stay in Paris, where he was associated with Madame Camé, Mr. Aiyar came to Pondicherry in December 1910, and here he continued his revolutionary work.  

About midday on June 17th, 1911, Mr. Ashe, the District Magistrate of Tinnevelly, was shot dead in the presence of his wife in a railway carriage at Maniyachi junction in the Tinnevelly District by a young Brahmin named Vanchi Aiyar, a clerk in the Travancore Forest Department, who committed suicide a few minutes later. On the body of Vanchi Aiyar the following letter in Tamil was found, which read as "The mlechas of England having captured our country tread under foot the Sanatan Dharma of the Hindus and destroy it. Every Indian is trying to drive out the English and restore Swarajya and the Sanatan Dharma. Our Rama, Shivaji, Krishna, Guru

1/ KER, James Campbell - ibid. p.187


2/ At the end of May 1911 a leaflet in Tamil was circulated in Madurai and other places. Among other things it read: "Beat the white English Peringhi (British) you get hold of, even as you beat a dog, and kill him with a knife, a stick, a stone or even with the hand given by God". Further the name of the Abhinav Bharat Society was used in the pamphlet. It was purported to be authored by V.V.S. Aiyar. (KER, ibid.) p.201.
Gobind and Arjun ruled our land protecting all religions, but now they are preparing to crown in this land George V, a mlechcha who eats the flesh of cows. 3000 Madrasis have taken a vow to kill George V as soon as he lands in our country. To make known our intention to others, I who am the least in this company have done this deed this day. Every man in Hindustan should consider this his duty. 1/ In the course of the enquiry into Ashe’s murder it was detected that one of the most important conspirants was a young Brahmin Nilakanta Brahmachari, belonging to the Pondicherry group of revolutionaries, who used to go about disguised as an ascetic preaching Swadeshi and sedition. He was convicted under Section 121-A, I.P.C. (conspiracy to wage war against the King) and sentenced to seven years R.I. 2/

But very soon the sporadic incidents of violent uprisings were promptly quelled and undisturbed peace returned to Madras, at a time when other provinces were honeycombed with sedition. Attributing this to the predominance of religion here, Sir Valentine Chiril observed: “There is in the Hinduism of Southern India a peculiar element of conservative quietism to which lawlessness in any form seems to be repugnant. Probably also the racial cry of Arya for the Aryans’ raised in the North of India as the watchword of an anti-British movement is not calculated to rouse the blood of a purely Dravidian population, however powerful the

1/ KER, James Kampbell – ibid. p.202
2/ In the Court Nilakanta disclosed that Vanchi Aiyar was groomed into a revolutionary only by V.V.S. Aiyar and said that he himself had no knowledge of the incident. But his evidence against Mr. Aiyar was not considered sufficiently strong to justify an attempt to procure his extradition for complicity in the murder.
(KER, ibid) p.204
ties created by a common social and religious system.\footnote{CHIROL, Valentine - op.cit., p.144}

Later Phases: Labour leader Varadarajulu Naidu serving as Hindu Maha Sabha Leader.

In the next phase, which began after the end of I War, it was surprising to see many of the erstwhile extremists freed from jails, turning a new leaf in their life, and rehabilitating themselves in various capacities, as trade union leaders, theosophists, home rulers, non-cooperators, Hindu Sanghathan leaders, socialists and communists. In December 1913, the All India Hindu Maha Sabha was set up. The Sabha represented a conservative theocratic force typically Brahmanic in outlook and behaviour in relation to women and low castes.\footnote{MISRA, B.S. - op.cit., p.63.} It dreamt of the revival of a Hindu Empire. The annual sessions of the Mahasabha generally were held at the same time and in the same place as the Congress sessions, for its members were also to be members of the Congress.\footnote{BAXTER, Craig - The Jana Sangh - A Biography of an Indian Political Party. (Oxford University Press, Bombay 1971)pp.7-9.} With the formation of Hindu Mahasabha, the Party of Hindu consolidation,\footnote{REPORT OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION, Vol-I - Survey - (Government of India, Calcutta, 1930) p.257.} the religious controversy had re-emerged with a new vigour, from its latent stage during the First War only to become a permanent factor in Indian politics.

\footnote{CHIROL, Valentine - op.cit., p.144: Referring to the startling forms of violence and fiercer outbursts which manifested in India, Sir Valentine Chirol commented: "It is almost a misnomer to speak of Indian unrest. Hindu unrest would be a far more accurate term, connoting with far greater precision the forces underlying it". (Ibid.) p.6}

\footnote{MISRA, B.S. - op.cit., p.63.}

\footnote{BAXTER, Craig - The Jana Sangh - A Biography of an Indian Political Party. (Oxford University Press, Bombay 1971)pp.7-9.}

\footnote{REPORT OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION, Vol-I - Survey - (Government of India, Calcutta, 1930) p.257.}
The Meplah rebellion in the South in August, 1921 resulted in the terrible sight of large number of Hindus being forcibly converted to Islam. Sir Sankaran Nair in his book Gandhi and Anarchy wrote thus: "The results were disastrous both to the Muhammadans and the Hindus. More than 2000 Muhammadans were killed by troops according to official estimates, thousands more in other ways, larger number wounded: the number of Hindus butchered in circumstances of barbarity, skinned alive, made to dig their own graves before slaughter, running into thousands. Women, and purdha women too raped. Thousands were forcibly converted. All this directly due to the visit of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali and to the organisation of Khilafat association. The effort of the Arya Samaj to reconvert them through shuddhi - purification ceremony, resulted in various forms of violent communal clashes. The Mahasabha as well as the "Shuddi sabhas advocated the doctrine of militant defence, through sanyaathan. Muslims countered with their associations, such as the Jamiat-i-Talagh-ul-Islam. There were reported over two hundred communal riots and clashes, resulting in several killings between 1922 and 1926. Immediate issues were local and concerned with symbols - the cow, processional rights, music before religious buildings etc. The irony of it was that the bulk of Indian muslims were in fact converts from the lower orders of Hindu society economically poor and socially depressed and degraded. Thus fanatical passions on both sides had been thoroughly reoused. Arson, pillage, murder, desecration of mosques and temples had disgraced the most of the large cities in northern India.

1/ Cited in ODWYER, M.F. - op.cit., p.236.
2/ BARRIER, N.Gerald - op.cit., p.92.
3/ ibid.
4/ ibid. p.93.
5/ MISRA, E.B. - ibid. p.63
6/ ODWYER, M.F. - op.cit., p.237
V. D. Savarkar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. B. S. Moonji, M. K. Acharya, Bhai Paramanand, Dr. B. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu were some of the important leaders of the Sabha. Lala Lajpat Rai while presiding over the Mahasabha's Calcutta session, in 1925, stated that the Mahasabha should strive to reconvert Hindus who have been forcibly converted to Islam, to organise gymnasiums for the use of Hindu young men and women to represent communal interests of the Hindus in all political controversies. Dr. B. S. Moonji while recording his evidence before the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform in 1933, asserted that the Hindu Mahasabha represented the whole Hindu community of India. Mr. M. K. Acharya representing the All-India Varnashram Swarajya Sangha, founded in 1929, recorded before the committee, that the majority of the India's Hindus were having unqualified faith in the religious and socio-religious injunctions contained in sacred books known collectively as Shruti and Smriti, which injunctions had been exemplified in the lives of God-seers in every generation, and were interpreted by leaders of recognized learning and authority. He further said that the majority of the Hindus accepted the fundamentals of Sanatana Dharma as handed through the ages; they attached great importance to the performance of their Nitya or Naimittika Karmas, or purificatory ceremonies prescribed both for everyday life, and on occasions like birth, marriage or death and they wanted to follow strictly the disciplinary regulations.

1/ INDRA PRAKASH - A Review of the History and work of the Hindu Maha Sabha and the Hindu Sangathan Movement. (Akhil Bharat Hindu Maha Sabha, Delhi, 1952) p. 43

2/ Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform - "Minutes of Evidence taken on 31 July 1933 (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1933) Unrevised No. 25, p. 1194
regarding modes of worship, whether in home or in temples.  

Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu who once declined the invitation of Mr. C. R. Das to join the Swarajist Party, and the one who declined Raja of Panagal's offer to join his ministry on a coalition basis, joined the All India Hindu Mahasabha at the time of its Madurai Session in 1941 and became its General Secretary. For about five years he was the President of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Hindu Mahasabha and acted as a Vice-President of the All India Sabha for two years. He was awarded the 'Dheera Sikamani' by Hindu Dharma Maha Mandal. V. D. Savarkar regarded him as the 'Stone Chest of Hindu Nationalism'.

Dr. Naidu broke away from the Sabha only in 1945. It will be quite interesting to note that the same Mr. Naidu from the time of his founding the South Indian Railway Labour Union in 1917 at Nagapattinam was one of the most influential leaders in the labour movement till he breathed his last.

It could thus be seen from the foregoing analysis that most of the later day leaders of the Labour Movement like V. O. C., Subramania Siva, Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu and others had their moorings in the Hindu revivalist and nationalist movements. The ideas of Hindu Sanatana Dharma and Varnashrama Dharma are some of the Hindu religious factors that had much bearing on their thinking and thus gone into their making. No wonder that this Hindu ethos in them inhibited their working for class solidification.

1/ Ibid dated 2 August 1933, Unrevised No. 27 pp. 1316-17.
2/ Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu Commemoration Volume - 1955. (Published by Birthday Celebration Committee, Madras) p. 19.