

VIII

CHAPTER SEVEN

Justice Party Revisited

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The Justice Party finds a place of distinction in the backward classes movement. Concerned with ameliorating the position of the non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency, the Justice Party exemplified the manner in which backward classes all over India tried to improve their economic, political and social position. Of all such attempts, the efforts of the non-Brahmin movement (the Justice Party and the Satya Shodhak Samaj) were the most successful. Its legislative programmes and activities aroused considerable interest both in India and England. Both the non-Brahmin movements viz., the Justice Party and the Satya Shodhak Samaj influenced the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms to a great extent.

The anti-Brahmin sentiment in the Madras Presidency was not a new phenomenon. It was present right "from 1885 onwards, and V.V. Saminatha Aiyar (1862-1942) devoted himself to the publication of annotated editions of early Tamil literary works, which he found in the palmleaf manuscripts in private libraries. He published many poems and collections which were known by name (Silappadikaram; Manimekalai, Jivakachinta Mani Puranamu and others) as important cultural documents and poems of high merit."¹ From the earliest times, only three major dynasties, i.e. the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas² are known in Tamil literature. The glories of the Chola, Chera and Pandya dynasties find an important place in the political mythology of Tamilnadu. Further, the work of the European scholars, such as Robert Caldwell, revealed to the world the glory of the Tamil language in the past and the richness of its literature. "Brahmanical domination over Tamil culture for long centuries had several important consequences for the development of the Tamil language and literature. Through the tradition of a Brahmin, a heavy increment of Sanskrit was introduced into Tamil, such that by 1900 an estimated fifty percent of the words in the written language were Sanskritically influenced."³ "Finally, the work of Caldwell and Nallaswami Pillai on the origins and nature of "Dravidian Civilization" had met with a large, and growing, leadership among first generation college educated non-Brahmin caste Hindus", but, as stated by Eugene Irshick himself, it did not influence the rise of the Justice Party; otherwise the Justice Party would have been established twenty years earlier than 1916. The various publications and efforts made since 1885 by V.V. Swaminatha

Aiyar show that the anti-Brahmin sentiment was certainly not a new phenomenon in Madras. "In the 1880's and even to a greater extent in 1890's non-Brahmins in many different capacities voiced their concern about the growing number of Brahmins in the public service, in the Indian National Congress, and on the District Boards, and about Brahmins in general as the dominant group in the religious and social life of south India, but it was not until 1916 that a non-Brahman organization came into existence."⁵ It came into existence in 1916, because of the influence of the Satya Shodhak Samaj and Shri Shahu's efforts in Deccan India. The British rule in India set in motion those forces which brought the whole Southern India into a great unity of the non-Brahmins. Right since the early period of the British Rule, the lowest castes appreciated the British sense of justice, but were not in a position to take advantage of any opportunities. The Satya Shodhak Samaj right since 1873, i.e. during the Jotiba Phuley era (1873 to 1890's) had started training the poor masses to fight for their equal share, and break the shackles of the Brahmin dominance. It was the Satya Shodhak Samaj which first came out to train the people (especially through education) and take advantage of the opportunities that were available. These forces, which were set in motion and popularized by Shri Shahu resulted in establishing the non-Brahmin platform in the Madras Presidency on the lines of the Satya Shodhak Samaj under the South Indian Liberal Federation with Dr. T.M. Nair, and Sir P.T. Chettiar as leaders and Shri Shahu's close associates. At this juncture a question may be posed as to why it was not called the "Dravidian Association". This query itself indicates as to why the 'Justice Party' and its leaders, formed an association with a different lable. It also suggests that the 'Dravidian' phase of the movement was not the only basis on which the 'Justice Party' came to be organised. "Most importantly, with the non-Brahmin movement came a new sense of Dravidian self-consciousness and cultural pride."⁶ A proper assessment of the Dravidian movement can be done by dividing the Dravidian movement into three main phases: The First Phase (the Justice Phase) — 1916 to 1925. The Second Phase 1925 to 1949 and Third Phase from 1949 to 1967. Each one of these three phases was led by different groups and different leaders. The Justice Phase was led by Dr. T.M. Nair, P.T. Chettiar, Raja of Panagal, and Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar. The Second phase was led by Periyar E.V.R. Naicker who established the Dravida Kazagam, which actually led to the third phase spearheaded by C.N. Annadurai.

The Justice Phase of the Dravidian Movement : (1916 to 1925)

The Justice phase of the non-Brahmin movement was the first

phase, which emerged "when the time had come, when an attempt was to be made to define the attitude of the several important non-Brahmin Indian communities", not only in Madras presidency but also in the Bombay presidency towards what was then called "The Indian Home Rule Movement". "The Justice Party since 1916 grew largely due to the great volume of public opinion already created in the South," by H.H. Shri Shahu of Kolhapur. "The Justice Party was born in this political climate to express the views of the 'Non-Brahmin Castes' in Madras about the constitutional reforms. During this period it shared much with the Bombay presidency in launching a non-Brahmin Movement." It was under the impact of Satya Shodhak Samaj that "the basic ideologies of the party' which governed its policies while in power, were largely determined during the years of its formation between 1916 and 1920."

It is this aspect which has to be further examined and also the role of the Justice Party in the first phase as well, on the basis of which we can determine the influence of the Satya Shodhak Samaj, if any. It can be observed here that the Justice Party was free from the anti-Brahmin sentiments and also from the Dravidian ideology, and this can be well confirmed by examining the non-Brahmin movement's (Justice and Satya Shodhak's) policy towards Brahmins. The Justice movement was not a movement of hatred towards the Brahmins; but it had a different purpose altogether and its motto was "Social reconstruction of the society". The Satya Shodhak Samaj, right since the date of its establishment in 1873, had provided a social reformist plank for the non-Brahmins. Shri Shahu made use of the same for spreading the ideology throughout South India. It also became the forum from which the Justice Party worked. Certainly there is a vast difference between the Justice Party's policy when compared to the latter phase of the Dravidian movement; so one can clearly assert that the non-Brahmin movement prepared the ground for the Dravidian movement of Madras. It is worthwhile to examine the nature of the present movement, i.e., the D.M.K. movement, having in mind the outlook of the Justice Party and its policy. It is on this background that the Dravida Kazagam and Dravida Munnetra Kazagam have emerged.

The Justice Party and its Outlook Towards the Brahmins

Dr. T.M. Nair, the principal leader of the movement, never fostered communalism. He felt that his critics actually did it, in the sense that they attempted to perpetuate the social, electoral and administrative privileges they had enjoyed all along at the expenses of other communities. He was not against Brahmins individually. He enjoyed the friendship of many liberal minded Brahmins. But

he was out to overthrow Brahmin domination over other sections. He said "Brahmin predominance in the Councils of the country and in the public service was in the ascendancy and his opinion was endorsed by thousands in Madras and other provinces as it was proved by their personal experience. He admitted certain virtues, and qualities of Brahmins, but Dr. Nair protested that others were kept down, that their voice was not always heard by those in power. He was hauled over the goals by a great many for countering the advance of the Indian National Congress and the Home Rule League. Really he and the Justice Party were as earnest about self-government as anybody else, but they felt that self-government could endure, without getting twisted and narrowed into the rule by a section, only when caste supremacy was rooted out. The Justice Party strove to instill self-government, courage and pride into the lower castes and the downtrodden and to create a sense of equality in all, as the true and lasting basis of freedom and democracy."¹⁰ The Satya Shodhak Samaj also advocated the same ever since its inception on September 24, 1873. The aims of the Satya Shodhak Samaj, were (a) to emancipate the Shudras from the slavery of the Brahmins; (b) to free the Shudras from the religious rituals enunciated in the faked books of the Brahmins and (c) to enable them to understand their rights through advice and education."¹¹ Shri Shahu further carried on the Satya Shodhak ideals since 1912. While addressing the All-India Depressed Classes Conference at Nagpur he expressed his typical thoughts on the vexed question of caste system and its bearing on the national movement. "That is a fundamental one", pointed out his highness and stated, "we who are Indian fellow subjects, no matter to what caste or religion we belong, must never forget that we are all Indians." In the same speech he condemned the absurd doctrine that the Brahmin is a living God on earth for whose service all other castes exist. His highness thanked the British Rule in India, and the culture for which that rule stands, has undergone a notable change. Notable Hindus, like Dr. Nair, exposed the cruelty, the inhumanity and the folly of caste in its "untouchable" aspects.¹² This shows how the two movements, besides unity among themselves, had also followed a uniform policy and a uniform approach. Further, Dr. Nair's thoughts on these lines can be again examined from the speech which Dr. Nair delivered at the Dravidian Association on 26th November, 1916. Never before had the non-Brahmins in such large numbers come together for purposes of corporate action. Dr. Nair, in his address declared that "education had been denied to the Shudras and only menial duties were assigned to them. The Shudras were also the last of the four castes into which Manu had divided the Hindu Society. (It is noteworthy that Dr. T.M. Nair

spoke in the context of India as a whole and not in the Dravidian context only.). Though these divisions are disappearing, the Brahmin and non-Brahmin division persists. On political and educational grounds, it was necessary for the non-Brahmins to sink all their differences and work as one man for their advancement. The speaker was sure that, but for British rule over India, the non-Brahmins would have continued to remain in a state of veritable intellectual thralldom. Dr. Nair went on to say that it was indeed a deep debt of gratitude which the non-Brahmin owed to the British Raj. He further pointed out that the non-Brahmins did not, of course, want to find fault with other communities. Further Dr. Nair pointed out "to promote education (and the non-Brahmin cause) it should be seen that their own (non-Brahmin) landed aristocracy should be given opportunities of leading them. The non-Brahmin landed aristocracy occupied an important position in the country. They owed a good many large estates and possessed great ability for the management of their affairs."¹³ On the other hand, when Shri Shahu spoke in Nagpur, he said : "The non-Brahmin movement felt that it was essential to abolish the very basis of the caste system. The abolition of the caste, be felt, as a creed capable of no compromise and of no delay. Who had asked the Maharaja of Kolhapur, to begin the work of abolition? The work must mainly fall on the shoulder of those who are at the top of the social structure."¹⁴ So both Dr. T.M. Nair and Shri Shahu shared the same thoughts in policy matters of the movement. The non-Brahmin movement in both the presidencies neither fought against, nor pursued a hatecampaign against the Brahmins. What they wanted was that the non-Brahmins should be treated equally in economic, social and political fields. It was not even regional its approach. Instead, it was a movement with an all-India perspectives. The first phase of the Justice Party was not characterised by any "Dravidian outlook". Only its off-shoots the D.K. and the D.M.K. have adopted such a stance. Right from its inception, for example, the non-Brahmin Manifesto, the Justice Party was not at all a communal body, but it was out to play a social-reformist role. Perhaps because of its association with the Satya Shodhak Samaj since its establishment, the Justice Party lacked a political ideology befitting the Tamilian thought, because of which it had developed much disunity among itself; especially Dr. Natesan Mudaliar. Right from 1916 to 1925, especially up to the Amaroti Session in 1925, the non-Brahmin movement was not against the Brahmins, and it was closely following the Satya Shodhak Samaj's policy. Perhaps this tendency in the Justice Party's outlook might be a factor because of which there were a large number of organisations of the non-Brahmins for advocating the non-Brahmin cause for e.g.

the Madras Presidency Association advocated the cause of the non-Brahmins on a different platform, other than the Justice Party. It was a pro-Congress non-Brahmin Association.

The Justice Party, despite all these weakness and disunity within itself, enjoyed a majority position and came to power "with 81 seats in 1920, and 61 seats in 1923, in the Madras Legislative Council."¹⁵ In the first general elections in 1920, under the Government of India Act, 1919, the members of the federation formed a single majority party and this enabled them to form a stable ministry; and demand for the reservation of seats for non-Brahmin Hindus was conceded. It was during this period that Lord Willingdon was transferred from Bombay presidency to Madras presidency to popularise and remedy the defects of the non-Brahmin movement in Madras presidency. Perhaps Lord Willingdon had played his best part in the Bombay presidency. This fact can also be noted from the other side of the picture, by which it can be pointed out as to how the British also helped, in a way, to spread the non-Brahmin movement from the Bombay presidency to the Madras presidency. It becomes amply clear that the Justice Phase had a great impact on the non-Brahmin movement of the Bombay presidency or the Satya Shodhak Samaj. On the one hand it was the British politics, on the other hand Shri Shahu Maharaja's rise and association with the British and the Indian leaders like Dr. T.M. Nair, that mainly influenced the Justice Party and its outlook. So it was a political reform as far as the British politics was concerned, and it was a social reform movement so as the non-Brahmins were concerned. But it was not at all a Dravidian movement.

During the First Phase of the Dravidian Movement (the Justice Party) the achievements of the Justice Party such as Madras University Bill, Andhra University Bill, Hindu Religious Endowments Bill, Government Order, the Communal G.O., were not unique to the Madras Presidency alone. "The Raja of Panagal was closely following the same principles as guided by the Maharaja of Kolhapur".¹⁶ of Bombay presidency. In the Bombay presidency also much was achieved. In August 1919, H.H. Shri Shahu Maharaja by a Huzur Order directed that educational institutions are to be free to the 'untouchables' as to the touchables. "Any untouchable student joining any state-aided or helped educational institution should be treated respectfully like a gentleman and taken into school rooms. If any man on the state educational staff has any objection to his doing so, he must send in his resignation within 6 weeks from the receipt of this order." So was the case with regard to the state hospitals "any patient when he goes to the Residential Quarters (of Doctors) should be treated respectfully like a gentleman,

taken into the house, be examined carefully and than be sent to the hospital for treatment and not turned out like an animal or beast. If any man on the Medical staff has any objection to his doing so, he must send in his resignation within six weeks from the receipt of the order. These orders reveal the depths to which the untouchable degradation had gone in Kolhapur."¹⁷ In Maharashtra the non-Brahmins had legislated upon matters like The Joshi Bill, The Illegitimate Succession Bill, The Civil Marriage Bill - all of them introduced by distinguished non-Brahmin members of the Legislature."¹⁸ The Government of Bombay in furtherance of their policy of securing a fair representation to all castes and communities in public services had prescribed a minimum percentage of recruitment from members of Backward Classes in all Departments in the presidency proper. The schedule attached shows against each locality the classes which are considered by Government to be advanced within that locality and the prescribed minimum percentage of recruitment to the clerical staff from the members of communities other than those mentioned. The appointments are to be made to secure a minimum of recruitment of 'at least' percentage shown in the final column."¹⁹

Both in the Bombay and Madras presidencies, the non-Brahmin movement made important contributions to South Indian public life. The non-Brahmin movement during the Justice Phase in the Madras presidency played a social reformist role, but it was not communal. In this connection it is worthwhile to mention some of the observations regarding the Justice Party made by Hon. Sir Parasuramdas Patro in 1925, which point to the pros and cons of the Justice Party as far as the policy was concerned. "The original leaders of the non-Brahmin movement stood in the main for two principles which were not perhaps consciously elaborated but were implicit in all their endeavours. First of these principles was the assertion of the need for equality of opportunity to all communities and interests, and second the attacking of vested interests. The second of these principles led to widespread propaganda work in the field of social reform. The social reform aspect was soon relegated to a very obscure place in the programme of the party and it may be said to have now vanished altogether from the range of politics of the "Justice Party". The other ideal principle of wide-eyed and constructive politicians has been resolved into a real democratic movement and many real lovers of the country hold the rise and growth of the non-Brahmin movement as part of such a widespread democratic growth."

Sir Patro further pointed out that "Without taking advantage of the genuine uprush of popular sentiment which lifted the party headed by the late Dr. T.M. Nair and the late Sir Theagarya

Chetty on the crest of a popular wave, without patiently and strenuously constructing and maintaining the party plan, the later protagonists of the movement very soon laid themselves open to the suspicion of being office hunters and the successors of the Vicar of Bray that divine, who will be remembered, made it a principle of adopting any policy for the time being which would keep him as vicar in his living. With every change of Ministry his convictions also underwent profound change. It has been a reproach levelled, and not without some justification; that to the "Justice Party" it does not matter what happens and what their political outlook is, so long as a certain number of men are Ministers and so long as limited or rather unlimited number of nominations and appointments are in their gift."²⁰

The Justice Party worked on two main lines, firstly the assertion of the need for equality of opportunity to all communities and interests, and secondly to attack the vested interests, which was the main plank of the non-Brahmin Movement. But by 1925, the Justice Party was full of interest-groups, because of which Justicites had failed to agree upon any particular policy. "When the Irrigation Bill was in progress, unexpected changes took place from day-to-day. The democrat of today became the Zamindars' champion of tomorrow and when twisted with this fact, returned to the tenants camp the day after." "The late lamented Sir P. Theagaraya Chettiar in the Pulianthope disturbances manifested his sense of democracy by delicate suggestions to Lord Willingdon that the solution of the problem was the deportantion of the depressed classes from the city of Madras. Naturally when such a party is brought face to face with a mass movement like that which has been initiated and stirred up during the last few years, they find their position very awkward."²²

It is implied here that the "Justice Party" had failed to be a mass movement. During the first period it did not work with the Dravidian outlook; and hence it had very little impact on the divided groups of non-Brahmin organisations. Further the Justice Party had borrowed much from the Satya Shodhak ideology. Perhaps both grew with mutual support and deteriorated in their influence because of the 'lack of leadership : Besides the Justice Party, unlike the Satya Shodhak, had not grown in its mass base, because it was strongly supported by the British, and enjoyed office because of communal representation. Whatever may be the case it is to be noted that "the elimination of Brahmins from positions of political leadership that Justice Party governments represented did not still the anti-Brahminical impulse in Madras politics."^{*}

In the Bombay presidency also the Satya Shodhak was much affected by 1927. "In Maharashtra since the early 1920's however

many non-Brahmins were feeling nationalist impulses, and in the middle of the decade the leadership of the movement passed to a group of young radicals who mounted a severe attack on Brahmins, but at the same time defined themselves as nationalists; they argued that the basic conflict was between the Indian masses and their British rulers, but that the Brahman leaders of the national movement only betrayed the nationalist cause through their elitism and continuing attachment to caste orthodoxy which served to divide the Indian people. The leaders of the young non-Brahman radicals, Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar, had by 1926 obtained a statewide reputation. After 1927, Jedhe began to be increasingly attracted by the Indian National Congress as its Gandhian leadership appeared to offer a social reformist alternative that promised to undermine the old dominance of Maharashtra orthodox Brahmins. It was this alliance between Jedhe and Gadgil which was given primary credit for leading non-Brahmins into the Congress in 1930 civil disobedience movement and after.²³

In the Madras presidency the non-Brahmin movement did try to alter the power balance in the Tamil society, but the economically well-off groups of castes among non-Brahmins saw the opportunity for political power hidden in the British rule. Chettiars, Vellahas Mudaliars, Naickers and others developed new caste organisations which became the basis for the social and economic advancement of their communities. It was because of such disunity that the non-Brahmin Movement (Justice Party) suffered in the first phase itself, and in 1925, the Justice Party suffered a big setback with only 22 Justice Party candidates in the Madras Council. It was after these elections to the Madras Legislative council in 1926, that the Justice Party felt the need for developing a mass-base. The Justice Party, during its first phase, was a movement which was confined only to the elites among the Tamil non-Brahmin society. The non-Brahmin movement in Madras during 1916-1925 was much concerned with the immediate results and was very much bent upon grabbing political power. This craze for power was responsible for developing some weaknesses in the Justice Party. It was after 1925 that "the British started becoming reluctant to share power with the non-Brahmins because of the rise of the Congress movement in the rest of India and the Justice Party was pushed aside for a time,"²⁴ and this is the turning point with which the first phase ends, and the Justice Party was in search of an ideology of its own. The Justice Party's responsibility fell on the shoulders of "Ramaswami Naicker who broke with the Congress in 1925 essentially as a result of his insistence on a showdown between Brahmins and non-Brahmanas. As he told the party bosses it was foolish to act as if there were no divisions between Brahman and non-Brahman."²⁵

With the arrival of Periar E.V.R. Naicker in 1925, the Justice Party departed from its original path and adopted a new ideology for the non-Brahmin movement, i.e., "Swayam Maryade" or "Self-Respect". "Although explicitly formulated by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in 1925, its seeds once again go back to the Satya Shodhak Samaj founded in 1875 by Jotiba Phuley, a leader from the Mali caste of Poona in peninsular India."²⁶ "It is this which gave the "Politics of South India (including Maharashtra but probably excluding Kerala) its distinctive character when compared with the politics of the North."²⁷

The Second Phase of the Dravidian Movement (1925 to 1949) :

The Self-Respect movement of E.V.R. Naicker was a departure from the original lines of the non-Brahmin movement. "Unlike the Justice Party, the Self-Respect movement was popular in its appeal. Though it began as a social reform movement, its effects were ultimately profoundly political."²⁸ Naicker shed his radicalism, and though there was little in common between him and the sedate, pious Justice Party leaders, co-operation among them was not entirely impossible. Even when he was a congressman, before 1924, he had frequented their company, and had been treated with some consideration."^{28a} It was with the launching of the self-respect movement that the non-Brahmin movement departed from its original policy in favour of the Dravidian movement. It is this aspect of the Justice Party's interest in developing a mass orientation that the Dravidian Movement was launched. Under E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, "the movement was pronouncedly anti-Brahmin, and encouraged non-Brahmins not to call upon Brahmin priests to perform weddings and other rituals. Its followers were required to use the Tamil language for political and other purposes and to regard themselves as Dravidians and members of a sovereign, independent state. From a social reform movement during the Justice era, the movement became "anti-Brahmin, anti-north, anti-God"²⁹. The movement became sharply anti-Brahmin. Periar E.V.R. Naicker was determined to wipe out not only the position and power which Brahmins had accumulated but the whole religious structure through which they had derived that power."³⁰ Periar E.V.R. Naicker, cutting off from the Congress, spread the gospel of social equality and the crying need for socialism through the columns of his paper about a thousand platforms by himself and his band of adherents. "Though not actually a Justice he was aligning himself unofficially and aligning his creed with that party's."³¹ His movement made attempts to get rid of the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil literature, and replace it with Tamil. In 1928 when the Simon Commission was announced and the Justices were

undecided, it was the bold Periyar that asked the party to welcome it with warmth. There were various conference's of the Self-Respect movement held at Chinglepet (1928), Erode (1930) in which he advocated abolition of the caste-system, abandoning of caste titles, eschewing priest-hood and similar other social reforms. It is worthwhile to mention here his typical thoughts on casteism.

Speaking at the First North Arcot District Adi-Dravidas Conference on 6th July 1937, he said that Adi-Dravidas would never advance as long as they clung to Hinduism. Even Christianity and Buddhism could not afford them any relief, as Christian and Buddhist Adi-Dravidas were treated as untouchables by their co-religionists. Islam can alone get Adi-Dravidas converted to Islam, as a 'Pariah-Muslim' he would be beaten Continuing he said that caste Hinduism would come to terms, if as an experiment, some 500 Adi-Dravidas threatened to become Muslims.³² This points to the radical thoughts of Periar E.V.R. Naicker "which in late twenties and early thirties gained a measure of popular appeal under the leadership of the non-Brahmin ex-Congressman."³³ "The Justice leadership was not anti-religion or anti-Hindu."³⁴ "The Justice Party had now become a Tamil movement, having lost its multi-lingual character with the fading out of stalwarts,"³⁵ like Dr. T.M. Nair, Sir P.T. Chettiar, the Raja of Panagal. "However as the influence of Justice Party declined, the influence of Naicker increased."³⁶ It was the protest in the 1930's against the compulsory study of Hindi which gave a new direction in Tamilnad to the political awakening of the time, but the political fading out of the Justice Party politically reflected the growing strength of the anti-British sentiment, as reflected in the slogan against the "British-Bania-Brahmin' triple Alliance. It was Rajagopalachari, a leader of the Hindi movement in the South, who tried to force Hindi schools upon the people. This forced the transformation of the Justice Party's ideals to the Dravidian ideals, and a movement was launched, which coincided with the failure of the Justice in 1936. elections, in which though Periar E.V.R. Naicker led the movement "the pragmatic Tamils gave only a limited measure of support to this radical approach and the Dravidian movement fell into disarray until C.N. Annadurai, a more pragmatic follower of Naicker, broke with him and formed the D.M.K. - Dravida Munnetra Kazaghham."³⁷ Perhaps the birth of the third phase was prior to the second phase, because "Annadurai joined the Justice Party in 1935 and is known to have played a key role in bringing about the much needed split in the Justice Party at the Salem Conference in 1944 so that Naicker could reorganise it into Dravida Kazaghham along the lines of his liking."³⁸ C.N. Annadurai's thoughts on the need for and the purpose of a political party, were expressed as early as

1937 when he spoke at Parvalipur on 2nd February, 1937. C.N. Annadurai stated that "any political party, if it is to serve the interests of the country aright, should have a definite policy, detailed programme and last but not least in importance, a method of effectively carrying out its programme. For it is easier to present paper schemes for the elections, but the duty of the voter is to make himself sure whether there is enough machinery to translate the bold promises into actual realities".³⁹ Anna, as he was popularly known, had his own views regarding a political party, exhibited a volcanic spirit which was latent in him. Annadurai, since he joined the movement, had his own distinct thoughts over every issue, he had his own approach to the Dravidian movement. Annadurai had something new to contribute whenever he spoke. When the citizens of Madras assembled at a public meeting to protest against compulsory introduction of Hindi and the Congress Ministry's move on September 5th, 1937, at Soundarya Mahal, there were various speakers for the occasion. Mr. Somasundara Bharathi, a staunch Congressman and a life member of the Hindi Prachar Sabha, who was in the chair, pointed out the defects in the Congressman programme in this regard. Mr. C.N. Annadurai speaking on this occasion said that "he doubted very much whether they would succeed if they approached the question from a detached point of view." He called upon them to look at it from the political point of view as well. C.N. Annadurai further observed that "he was not at all surprised at the policy of the Congress Ministry when it ventured to introduce Hindi as a compulsory subject, because he knew it already." He explained to the public as to how "Mr. Rajagopalachari had translated those ideas into action. It was said that there were roughly eight thousand secondary schools in the presidency. If Hindi was to be taught compulsorily in all these schools, at least eight thousand Hindi teachers would be required, and it was needless for him to say who would be those eight thousand teachers. (Voices-Brahmins). Then, the result was obvious, and it was not difficult to see what those eight thousand teachers would do for the Congress, and who would win the next election."⁴⁰ Annadurai had his own approach to different problems, and when he spoke, his power of oratory and fecility made people follow him. Even the followers of Naicker began to admire Annadurai. Consequently, within the rank and file of the Self-Respect movement as a whole, Annadurai came to be admired. Annadurai had constructive approaches to Tamilian politics. Perhaps Annadurai knew that the antics of militant anti-Brahminism such as burning of sacred books, desecrating the idols would pay little as far as the popularity of the party was concerned. These speeches show how C.N. Annadurai differed from E.V.R. Naicker's tactics.

This further led to discussions in the Self-Respect movement. The Self-Respect movement did fail to achieve what it desired to achieve, because the movement did not grow to the required strength. Periar E.V.R. Naicker with the aim of constructing a mass-base for the non-Brahmin Justice Party, led the movement on the lines of his own policy and programmes and even by 1942, Periar E.V.R. Naicker had not gained enough confidence to contest elections on that plank. This aspect can be better appreciated by examining the delegation led by Periar E.V.R. Naicker to meet Sir S. Cripps. The note he submitted is also worthwhile to be reproduced here. The delegation consisted of Periar E.V. Ramaswami, Sir Muthiah Chettiar, Mr. N.R. Sammiappa Mudaliar, and Mr. W.P.A. Soundrapandia Nadar. The delegationists "pointed out that they represented a large proportion of the provincial population but that, owing to lack of education and of wealth and opportunity, they were unable in any election to stand up against the more wealthy and powerful Brahmin population which, though only a small percentage in number, have a great deal of power. They took the view that it would be in the interests of the population of Madras to secede from the main Union in order to have a Union of their own, in which they might then hope that the non-Brahmin Hindu would get power. But they realised that there was no possible way of achieving this non-accession either by a vote of the legislative assembly or by a plebiscite since in both cases the more powerful elements would be able to persuade the majority of the population to vote with them. The only method they could suggest was to set up immediately separate electorates on such a scale as to give them automatically the majority in the province. Sir Stafford Cripps pointed out that this was a wholly impracticable suggestion and that it would raise the whole question of communal electorates as well, and that until such time as they could persuade the people of Madras to vote in their favour it was not possible within any democratic method at all to give them that majority which they desired. They appreciated this situation but were nevertheless insistent that something should be done to assist them. I pointed out as sympathetically as possible, that in the existing circumstances there was nothing we could do."

This brings out two facts regarding the position of the Justice Party by 1942 under the leadership of Periar E.V.R. Naicker, and besides it also indicates the manner in which the British had changed their policy towards non-Brahmins who had changed their policy towards India because of the impact of the Japanese war and their victories in South East Asia early in 1942. It is clear that Periar E.V.R. Naicker could not play the pro-British role better, nor the anti-British role. It is after this interview Periar

E.V.R. Naicker came out with his concept of Dravida Nadu, which was to include the four southern regions speaking the Dravidian languages. Mr. C.N. Annadurai, who had by now become an influential member, instead pressed for a policy more in accord with the nationalist sentiment. It was the social reformist element of the Justice Party that influenced Mr. C.N. Annadurai. With this the break up in the Justice Party was inevitable. At the Salem Conference of 1944 the split in the party led to the formation of the Dravida Kazhagam. The Justice Party, during its long innings in office, had to soften its anti-Brahminism because of the influence and the sense of unity with the Bombay presidency. As Sir Parasuramdas Patro said, "they copied the programmes of other parties."⁴² Once the Justice phase came to the end, the Justice Party relied more on Periar E.V.R. Naicker who cherished the Dravidian theory. But Periar also failed with this after 1944, "to consolidate the right-hand man when Dravida Kazhagam was formed, found he could not go along with his mentor in the latter's uncompromising opposition to everything that was then taking place in the nation's politics. In 1949, the final break came between the (teacher and the disciple) when Periar decided to marry Mani Ammaiyar, who was years younger to him."⁴³

Third Phase of the Dravidian Movement (1949 to 1967) :

Annadurai felt that "Brahmin-baiting was of little use as far as the cause of the non-Brahmins was concerned. He had no desire to widen the gulf on colour lines which Periar E.V.R. Naicker exploited by pointing out that "The Ramayana" is based upon the every substance of Hindu mythology, in which Rama's march towards South, calling king Ravana - abductor of Sita - is to point Aryan triumphs - and progress over the Dravidians (inhabitants of India). To the non-Brahmins, the legions of monkey that Rama encounters in the Southern jungles appear to be none other than the Dravidians."⁴⁴ Instead Annadurai tried to project a secular image of itself without compromising its Dravidian character, whatever it meant. "The D.M.K. had to retain its Ramil Chauvinist, anti-Brahmin image but could not afford to estrange the Brahmin voter."⁴⁵ It was this aspect about which Annadurai was much worried, when he worked in the Justice campaigns as early as 1937. Speaking at young Justicities League on February 10, 1937, he had pointed out that "the party stood for communal justice and it could not be called an anti-Brahmin party."⁴⁶ Annadurai did not de-Sanskritise, but he inspired and enlightened the people to the effects of the Brahmin domination. He played the role of a Bernard Shaw, preaching the people through his stories staged in the form of dramas and films which brought about a real awakening among

the masses. His approach, as already stated, differed from that of Periar E.V.R. Naicker. He pushed his ideas through 'films' gossip which inevitably got mixed up with political gossip and Tamil news papers and magazines began devoting more and more space to the intrigue and behind-the-scene activities of the film world. The leaders for their part became involved in all this; in due course even their thinking became film-oriented.⁴⁷ In Tamilnadu the relevance of New Delhi imposing Hindi as the sole official language brought among the Tamilians the unity which they had searched for between the 1957 and 1962 elections. The D.M.K.'s main campaign was against the imposition of Hindi and in 1962, it recorded impressive gains, trebling the number of seats in Assembly and doubling its vote.⁴⁸ With Annadurai's leadership and the formation of the D.M.K. the mainstream of Tamil thought had found a political vehicle, and a more positive phase in the Dravidian Movement began which can be considered different from Periar E.V.R. Naicker's. In the eight years from its founding in 1959 to its assumption of power in 1967, the D.M.K., had to convince the Tamil electorate on two counts. First, it had to convince the electorate that in the propagation of Tamil tradition, its central concern was the common man. Annadurai's concern for the common man was soon clear and within a few years both the leaders and supporters of the D.M.K. were clearly the representatives of the Tamil masses. "C.N. Annadurai risen from the regional politics, made a considerable impact on the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi. Annadurai could have played the role of regional eminence, but he pointed that, at the end of the communality of foreign bondage, the quilt of political leadership in the different regions was bound to change its colour. He told Delhi on the Hindi issue and yet made it clear that his allegiance to the country as a whole was beyond doubt."⁴⁹ His personality had integrated the D.M.K., to such an extent, that when the 16th Amendment to the constitution of India, which made it illegal to advocate the secession of any territory from India, came up, Anna had such a hold on the D.M.K. party that, under his guidance, the D.M.K. disavowed the demand for the secession of Tamilnadu from the Indian Union, thereby dropping the secession clause from its own constitution. "C.N. Annadurai seemed to have worked out a balance between regionalism and national purpose".⁵⁰ said Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The victory of Dravida Munnetra Kazagham over the Congress in 1967 elections and the formation of the government by C.N. Annadurai in Tamilnad marked the apogee of that movement for political power and the "Dravidian uplift." It is difficult to determine the date of the beginning of the Tamil Renaissance, as Robert L. Hardgrave points, but he states that "it begins in the later part of

the nineteenth century which came considerably after the Bengal awakening."¹ But on an examination of the influence that the Satya Shodhak Samaj had in Madras presidency and the comparative analysis of the two movements in respect of the periods the social thought, and approaches of the Justice and the Satya Shodhak, especially between 1916-1925, it would be clear that the beginnings of the Tamil Renaissance were in the early part of the twentieth century. The Satya Shodhak influence in the Madras presidency during its First Phase also prepared the ground for the Self-Respect movement, which became the Dravida Kazaghram later and then 'the Dravida Munnetra Kazaghram' changing its ideology from non-Brahmin to the Tamilian interests. So in the second and third phases, the spirit of Tamil Renaissance was carried on to revive the past glory of the Dravidian culture. But as Andre Beteille observes, "it would be a mistake to minimize the role of the Justice Party, which not only prepared the ground for the induction of new social strata into political system but also created a distinctive ideology for South Indian politics."² a. The London Times of February 12, 1925, also noted that "His Highness prepared the ground from which there sprang the non-Brahmin revolt, particularly in Madras and the Deccan."³ After India's independence, "the Dravida Kazaghram and Dravida Munnetra Kazaghram depened and broadened their political appeal by linking it to themes of northern domination and Hindi hegemony."⁴ By this it becomes clear that the non-Brahmin movement had a different political history to be examined, and one has to state that the non-Brahmin movement of Madras is a part of the regeneration of the non-Brahmin movement in Southern India, which had a big impact on the areas wherever Brahmin domination was felt. The non-Brahmin movement under leaders like Jotiba Phuley, Shri Shahu Maharaj, Dr. T.M. Nair, Sri. P.T. Chettiar, Raja of Panagal, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Hon. A.P. Patro had considered social reform as the bed rock of the movement. Further the role which these leaders played in the non-Brahmin movement as social reformists had influenced C.N. Annadurai's mind, and Anna was more attracted "by the activities of Justice Party. In Madras, when he joined the Pachaiyappa's College he was encouraged by strong Justice professors like M. Vardharajan and V. Thiru Venkataswami."⁵ With these influences, he joined the self respecters, having no other alternative, because Justice Party was no longer active. But he was influenced more by the activities and objectives of the Justice Party, rather than of the Self-Respect movement of Periyar E.V.R. Naicker. He participated very actively in the Self-Respect movement as there was no alternative. But C.N. Annadurai had all the required knowledge of how Justice Party served unlike the Self-Respect

Movement which only attacked and criticised the Brahmins. Social reforms being the main work of the Justice Party during its long innings in office, he felt attacks on Hinduism such did not help social reform. With these influences and thoughts he formed the D.M.K., besides his disapproval of the marriage of E.V.R Naicker. A split within the Self-Respect was visible ever since Anna's image was growing. Perhaps C.N. Annadurai was Jotiba Phuley re-born in the South.

It is unfortunate that Shri Shahu and his contribution to the non-Brahmin movement has been neglected by many scholars, but it should be noted that it has a continuous history right from Jotiba Phuley to the present. It may be in the form of Dravida Kazagham, Dravida Munnetra Kazagham or even Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham. But one cannot deny the influence of the Satya Shodhak Samaj and its impact because of which the non-Brahmin movement spread in South India, and regenerated the non-Brahmin movement of Tamilnadu.

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