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THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT

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ROBERT L. HARDGRAVE, JR.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE TRANSFORMATION
OF PRIMORDIAL SENTIMENT

IN 1947, as the time approached the transfer of power from the British Raj to an independent India, communal strife permeated the subcontinent. The decision for a separate Islamic State of Pakistan had spread bitterness and dissatisfaction among the elements of both Muslim and Hindu society, and within the Hindu society itself fissiparous tendencies of regional nationalism were asserting themselves to the detriment of Indian unity. On the eve of independence, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, leader of the newly formed Dravida Kazaghram in Madras, called upon the Dravidian peoples of South India "to guard against a transfer of power from the British to the Aryans."¹ Fearing Brahmin dominance under Aryan "imperialism," Naicker called for the formation of a separate South Indian State, Dravidasthan, enjoining his followers to sign a pledge of support for complete separation from the Indian Union.

Less than eight years later, Naicker rallied his black-shirted followers to the support of a newly formed Congress Ministry under Kamaraj Nadar and declared opposition to the Dravida Munnetra Kazaghram, an offshoot of the DK which had captured the forefront of the movement for Dravidasthan. As the Congress Party of Madras became increasingly "Tamilized" in the years following 1954, the issue of Dravidasthan became a symbol of a growing specificity of regional demands on the part of the DMK and began to recede as a realistic aspiration in the minds of even the most nationalistic of Tamilians. In the General Elections of 1962, the DMK emerged as the strongest Opposition ever to challenge the entrenched Congress Party in Madras: it captured fifty seats in the Legislative Assembly and seven in the Lok Sabha (the Union Parliament). The DMK had campaigned on the issues of bread-and-butter politics, and its election manifesto reflected an immediate economic concern which all but

¹ *Hindu*, February 11, 1946.

forgot the aspiration for a separate and independent Dravidasthan. At the height of its power, the movement for Dravidasthan was virtually dead. It had been transformed, under the impact of social mobilization and accommodation by the government, from a secessionist movement, based on the glories of a resurrected past and a vague and impossible hope for the future, to a political party representing an increasing specificity of interests and a germinal acceptance of basic democratic, electoral and parliamentary values and practices.

Confronted by a continuing barrage of primordial demands, from the Muslim League to the Jan Sangh, the Jharkhand, and the DMK, Prime Minister Nehru long decried the "tribal mentality" of the Indian communities. Loyalties to the family, clan, caste, tribe, or village have remained seemingly fixed in time. India, however, is not unique. The newly emergent states of Africa and Asia are mosaics of a multitudinous variety of communities—racial, religious, ethnic, and linguistic. With what often seem no more than the formal trappings of modern statehood, each of these countries is confronted with the necessity of creating a nation, a single people, with a common identity and aspiration, out of the uncongealed plurality of its society. Indonesia comprises some two thousand islands, each clinging to its own "little tradition", and stretching across an ocean area equal to the distance between New York and San Francisco. Malaya is confronted with a multi-racial population and a precariously even balance between the native Malay and the immigrant Chinese. In Burma, diverse tribal minorities forming more than one-third of the population live in the isolated hills above the Irrawaddi Valley. The people of East and West Pakistan, united by Islam, are separated by cultural tradition and one thousand miles of Indian territory. In Iraq, Islam is divided by the Sunni and Shi'i sects, while Lebanon is confessionally fragmented into seven major Muslim and Christian sects. Nigeria, Tanganyika, and most of the African states south of the Sahara are divided regionally by tribal kingdoms which pay little regard to the political boundaries of the modern state.

India, perhaps the supreme example, evidences the fissures of virtually every known societal division: six major religions—Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the faith of the Parsis; two major language families—Aryan and

Dravidian, of which there are fourteen major languages and innumerable dialects and tribal tongues; racial varieties of the Aryan, the Dravidian, and the proto-Australoid; and two thousand castes, endogamous, occupational, and hierarchially ranked. Complex India, in its rich tradition, diversity, experience under the colonial rule and subsequent independence, reflects many of the problems and processes of political change which are being experienced throughout the non-Western world. India poses, perhaps all too clearly, the question of whether a multinational society can sustain a viable democracy.

The diversity in the national composition of the New States has posed a fundamental threat to the process of political development and nation-building, but it is a threat which is not unique to the areas of Africa and Asia. Every plural society has had in some way to accommodate its minorities. The state must, as Clifford Geertz has suggested, "reconcile them with the unfolding civil order by divesting them of their legitimizing force with respect to governmental authority, by neutralizing the apparatus of the State in relationship to them, and by channeling discontent arising out of their dislocation into properly political rather than para-political forms of expression."² The process of integration has perhaps never been wholly successful even in the highly developed modern states of Europe and North America, but the integrative achievement of bilingual Canada and Switzerland, if only partial, has led to the creation and operation of viable democracies. The United States has, through the "ethnic ladder" and "balanced ticket," been able to draw its substantial minorities into the political life of the nation through the structure of its party system.

A minority may, on the other hand, be represented by a political party of its own creation. Such a party may, as pointed out by Duverger, assume the role of an arbiter and acquire considerable influence, either electorally or in parliament. Holding the crucial balance, the party may be able to shift its position in such a way as to make or break governments. Duverger indicates, however, that "if a party is clearly in a minority in the

² Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in *Old Societies and New States*. New York: Free Press, 1963.

country as a whole but in a majority in certain districts its attitude becomes autonomist or even secessionist, which may imperil the unity of the country."³ As examples, he points out the Alsatian party in Germany and the Sudeten German party in Czechoslovakia. He could have also added the Dravidian Movement.

The New States, with their minorities representing regional areas of racial, ethnic, or linguistic dominance, fall within Duverger's second category. Religious minorities also tend toward regional concentration, although they may be dispersed over the country, as in Lebanon. The sizable and multitudinous minorities of the non-Western world represent an insular separateness in which the community becomes codeterminous with the world, reinforcing the fissiparous tendencies of autonomy and secession.

These states, determined to modernize and to take an equal place in the world of nations, are primarily traditional peasant societies. The universe for 80 to 90 per cent of these people is virtually limited to a 30-mile radius of the village community. The identity horizon of the individual is circumscribed by the personal contact of face-to-face relations, and loyalties are expressed in terms of the basic primary ascriptive affiliations of family, clan, lineage, caste, tribe, or village. Political activity, fundamentally limited to the issues of village life, is expressed largely in factionalism or clan groups, reflecting the divisions of the village in terms of primary identifications. Political behaviour is largely determined by the social status of the individual and his personal ties. This condition, according to Lucian Pye,

places severe limits on the effectiveness of any who come from the outside to perform a political role, be it that of an administrative agent of the national government or of a representative of a national party. Indeed, the success of such agents generally depends more on the manner in which they relate themselves to the social structure of the community than on the substance of their political views.

³ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (London: Methuen & Co., 1954), p. 294.

Thus, the fundamental framework of non-Western politics is a communal one, and all political behaviour is strongly colored by considerations of communal identification.⁴

Beyond the village, however, the urban areas of the New States are islands of change, centres of technical and intellectual innovation, from which political leaders seek to mobilize the population. Social mobilization denotes, in the words of Karl Deutsch, "a concept which brackets together a number of more specific processes of change, such as changes of residence, of occupation, of social setting, of face-to-face associates, of institutions, roles, and ways of acting, of experiences and expectations, and finally of personal memories, habits, and needs, including the need for new patterns of group affiliation and new images of personal identity."⁵ Defined more succinctly, it is "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour."⁶

Through social mobilization, under the impact of the interacting variables of industrialization, urbanization, communication, and literacy, which act both as agents and as index of change, the individual is drawn from the traditional into the participant society of the modern state. It is within the "heterogenetic" city,⁷ where the traditional culture gradually disintegrates with the formation of new economic and cultural values and the acquisition of new social roles and action patterns, that the identity horizon of the migrant from the traditional village is expanded from the kin group and village to a sense of identity with religion, language, or nationality, and ultimately with class and state. Daniel Lerner, in *The Passing of Traditional Society*, sees this identity expansion as basic to modern society, which he characterizes as industrial, urban, literate, and participant. "Empathy," the combination of projection and introjection, is the inner mechanism by which the individual's identity horizon

⁴ Lucian Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building: Burma's Search for Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 16-17.

⁵ Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review*, LV, No. 3 (September, 1961), p. 493.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁷ Milton Singer and Robert Redfield, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Culture Change*, III, No. 1 (1954), pp. 53-73.

is enlarged and which enables the newly mobile person to operate efficiently in a changing world.⁸

This process may be considered as a transformation of primordial sentiment. Primordial sentiment refers to the terminal identification of an individual or group to communal structure. The primordial bond, as Clifford Geertz states, stems from the assumed "givens" of social existence.⁹ This ascriptive and particularistic tie of the traditional village is expressed in terms of the primary affiliations of kin, caste, and tribe. But under the impact of social mobilization and its accompanying psychic mechanism, empathy, primordial identity is expanded and transformed to include the "givens" of language, race, religion, culture, or nationality.

This new self-image of membership in a larger community gives rise to an articulation of primordial sentiment and the formulation of particularistic political demands. The accommodation of primordial demands by the government provides the foundation for a second transformation of the identity horizon, from identity with nationality and language to an identity expressed in terms of class and associational interests. Whether the individual will make the final transition will depend upon the access afforded the primordial sentiment by the political system and the governmental response to the primordial demand. As access is widened in the accommodation of primordial sentiment, however, the political process will be "traditionalized" to a corresponding degree. In the removal of the felt-threat to its existence, the primordial party, in identifying with increasingly larger communities, thus undergoes a dynamic transformation through a dialectical process.

The expanding base of primordial sentiment in formulating a cultural nationalism, while regarded with horror by many who see it as the seed of separation and destruction, may be in fact the most effective vehicle in the transference of loyalty from the primary village and kinship groups to that of the larger community. Primordial sentiment thus acts, as in Lloyd Rudolph's description of India's caste associations, as a link between the mass electorate and "the new democratic political

⁸ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), pp. 49-50.

⁹ Geertz, *op. cit.*

processes and makes them comprehensible in traditional terms to a population still largely politically illiterate." ¹⁰ Its expanding base is the vehicle of political socialization and recruitment into the political culture. It is at the same time the agent of "traditionalization," which has given rise to a growth of cultural nationalism throughout the New States of Asia and Africa. It is reflected in the "Arabization" of the Egyptian government, the "Sinhalesation" of the Ceylonese government, and the "Tamilization" of Madras State in India. It is the means by which the forms and processes of modern government become culturally acceptable, psychologically satisfactory, and politically meaningful to the people.

While the concept of the transformation of primordial sentiment is only an initial step—hopefully in the right direction—toward the formation of a theory of national political integration, it does suggest, in barest outline, a process in operation throughout the New Nations. This process is revealed in the growth and development of the Dravidian Movement from its inception to the present day. An analysis of the primordial dynamics of Tamil politics provides empirical flesh to the skeletal concept.

¹⁰ Lloyd and Susanne H. Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Associations," *Pacific Affairs*, xxxiii, No. 1 (March, 1960), pp. 21-2.

CHAPTER II

FOUNDATIONS OF THE DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT

THE vast Indian subcontinent, in five thousand years of history, has nourished the growth of a great civilization, vitalized through cross-cultural contact, and characterized by the diversities of cultural and racial differences, caste, religion, and language. The major division of India is between the Aryan North and the Dravidian South. The Dravidian peoples today, represented linguistically, dominate South India below an irregular line starting south of Goa on the western coast, running roughly northeast to skirt the eastern side of Berar, and then about east-southeast to the Bay of Bengal—an area corresponding to the present States of Madras, Kerala, Mysore, and Andhra.¹

The South, having been only lightly touched by the influence of Islam during the period of Mogul Rule in the North and representing today a bastion of traditional Hinduism, is, within the wider context of the Great Tradition of Indian Civilization, culturally distinct from the areas to the north. These two basic cultural regions are divided, not only by language, but by the food eaten, the style of dress, and the general pattern of life. Indeed, a South Indian visiting Delhi, for example, may feel the differences so acutely that he will look upon the North as "foreign." The people of each region look upon the other with suspicion and often contempt, giving rigidity to the differences which do exist, and folk sayings and stories give attributes of regional character: "The North Indian sharpens his sword while the South Indian sharpens his wits."

The differences between the North and South are real, yet much of the antipathy which has arisen between the two regions is more the product of historical myth than of reality. European historians and philologists, such as Sir John Marshall and Robert Caldwell, have in their research and hypotheses provided

¹ W. Norman Brown, *The United States and India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 26-7.

the foundations for regional historical myths, which harken back to the days of former power and glory. The Dravidian nationalists, particularly the Tamils, have reconstructed a history from scanty sources and conjecture which recalls an antiquity dating from the Indus Civilization to the powerful Tamil kingdoms of the South, out of which blossomed 2000 years ago the richness of Tamil literature.

The origin of the Dravidian people lies in question, but it is generally accepted that they are not indigenous to the sub-continent. It has been suggested that they are the descendents of the Lost Tribes of Israel, that they peopled the area of South India through migrations by sea from North Africa and West Asia. More plausible is the view that the Dravidians' entrance into India was through the northwest, antedating the Aryan "invasions" by as much as 1500 years. The basic Dravidian racial type is proto-Mediterranean, with the Tamilian evidencing Armenoid characteristics, which would suggest an origin in the Iranian plateau.² This construct, together with archaeological remains at Harappa and Mohenjodaro such as the great tanks and objects of phallic worship which bear affinity to similar culture traits of South India today, indicate that the civilization of the Indus Valley may well have been Dravidian. This view is supported by the existence of a remnant of the Dravidian language family, Brahui, in an isolated pocket in the hills of Baluchistan. Father H. Heras, in his attempt to read the script of Harappa, claimed that the language was a primitive form of Tamil,³ but as K. A. N. Sastri points out, the script of the Indus Valley seals has not yet been deciphered and, until that time, a shadow of doubt must remain over the culture of pre-Aryan India.⁴

As the Aryans pushed down into India, beginning about 2000 B.C., the Dravidians moved South, mixing with the dark proto-Australoid peoples, who evidence a human antiquity in India dating back about 500,000 years and exist today as the tribal people of South India. As the Aryans expanded to the South beginning about 1000 B.C., racial and cultural assimilation

² K. A. N. Sastri, *A History of South India* (Madras: Oxford, 1958), pp. 57-8.

³ A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. 25.

⁴ Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-8.

between the Aryan and the Dravidian followed. Although *The Ramayana* stresses the hostility to the introduction of Aryan religion, early Tamil literature, the oldest evidence extant in the South, indicates that the new influences were welcomed and embraced with alacrity, and that the changes were affected peacefully and in an orderly manner.⁵ Undoubtedly many of the sources are the work of Brahmins, but it seems fairly well established that the Tamil kings invited Brahmin priests into their court for the performance of sacred rites.

The process of Aryanization began as Sanskritic elements were introduced into the Tamil language. Local customs were incorporated into the formation of a new social order, and the Dravidian deities were given Sanskritic labels and were placed in the elastic pantheon of Brahmanical religion.⁶ This Aryan-Dravidian fusion is probably the foundation of Hinduism as a popular religion. Archaeological discoveries indicate, for example, that the worship of Durga and Siva has a greater antiquity than the Aryan era. While Hinduism cannot be considered, as some Tamil nationalists would suggest, "un-Dravidian," Sanskritic religion was nevertheless a tool of social control in the hands of the Brahmins.

The position afforded the Brahmin by Tamil kings and the increasing use of Sanskritic forms provided the base for the introduction of the hierarchial organization of caste into Tamil society. Dravidian social organization was divided into seven principal classes, but caste (*varna*) was unknown until the advent of Aryanization. The process was slow and not altogether effective. The ruling kings were admitted into the Kshatriya caste, and in some instances, certain princes were integrated into the Brahmin community itself.⁷ Though the occupational "super-guild" system of caste brought other groups into the hierarchy, the vast majority of the people remained outside the pale of caste. As the Tamil historian, P. T. Srinivas Ayengar, points out:

When the Brahmanas settled in Southern India, and the ancient Tamil Rajahs desiring to secure the benefit of the yagas accorded to the fire priests the supreme position in

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ B. N. Nair, *The Dynamic Brahmin* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1959), p. 45.

society, the Brahmans naturally tried to introduce their socio-religious organization into the Tamil Society. But a religious oligarchy and a social democracy could not very well mix with each other. Hence the Brahmanas did not succeed in arranging the people of Southern India as members of the four varnas as they did in Northern India. . . .

. . . the scheme of the four Varnas . . . only led to the confusion of caste and the prevalence of social jealousies that have characterized the life of South India for a thousand five hundred years.⁸

These "social jealousies" came to manifest themselves primarily in the relationship between the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin in the South. The Brahmin of South India often socially and psychologically aloof, has retained an exclusiveness of caste orthodoxy. Often combining economic power derived from land ownership with religious authority, the Brahmin further separated himself from the lower castes and increased his control over them. With the modern period, the Brahmin, as the indigenous element of high ascriptive status, was the first to respond to Westernization. The literary tradition of the Brahmin gave him the initial advantage in Western education, and with the command of English, he entered the colonial administration, gaining a new criterion of status in addition to the old, together with new political and economic advantages—further widening the gap between the *élite* and the mass.⁹

The position of the Brahmin engendered suspicion, if not hatred, in the mind of the non-Brahmin, and in many areas of South India, the sight of a Brahmin was considered ill omen. Several communities even observe pollution from the visit of a Brahmin to their village, and *Parpane Nambakoodatu* (Trust Not the Brahmin) has become a saying widespread among the villagers of Tamilnad.¹⁰

Without education, economic power or political influence, the non-Brahmin of Tamilnad felt the yoke of oppression and exploitation. Among the urban non-Brahmin classes, however,

⁸ P. T. Srinivas Iyengar, *Pre-Aryan Tamil Culture* (Madras: Universal Press, 1930), p. 20.

⁹ A. P. Barnabas, "Sanskritisation," *Economic Weekly*, April 15, 1961, pp. 613-8.

¹⁰ Nair, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

there gradually emerged a counter-*élite* of those politically articulate and highly educated members of communities of lesser status and power. In reaction to the incipient nationalist movement, represented by the nineteenth century Hindu revivalism, for example, which would only increase and fortify the position of the Brahmin caste, the non-Brahmins of Madras Presidency sought to ally with the colonial regime, believing that foreign rule would protect their position and in some way neutralize power differences within the population. Conscious of the vital role of literacy as the base of the Brahmin's virtual monopoly of government offices, the non-Brahmin *élite* sought to advance their communities first through education.

In 1873, Jyotirao Phooley of Poona, a man of the Mali caste and of relatively little education, founded the Satyashodhak Samaj, with the purpose of asserting the worth and dignity of man irrespective of caste. The movement was not strictly anti-Brahmin, but it emphasized the social tyranny of the caste system and fought for its abolition.¹¹ The organization never gained power or success, but it was the beginning of a series of similar movements throughout South India.¹²

Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar in 1914, then a medical student in Madras, founded "The Dravidian Home," a hostel for non-Brahmin students. Mudaliar had found that non-Brahmins were unable to find hostel accommodations in Madras because of caste barriers. The Home functioned for only two years, but during that time, Mudaliar began The Dravidian Association, with the purpose of advancing non-Brahmin political power through "Dravidian Uplift." The Rajah of Panagal was elected President of the Association, Dr. T. M. Nair, Vice-President, and Mudaliar, Secretary. The organization sought to safeguard the political, social, and economic interests of the Dravidian people. Its declared aspiration was the establishment of a Dravidian State under the British Raj—a government of, by, and for the non-Brahmin.¹³

¹¹ G. S. Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1950), pp. 178-9.

¹² For a discussion of the early non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra, see: A. B. Latthe, *Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati, Maharaja of Kolhapur* (Bombay: Times Press, 1924), II, pp. 561-98.

¹³ G. S. Seshadri, "The Dravida Kazagham in Madras," *Indian Affairs Record*, III, No. 1 (February, 1957), p. 3. *Sunday Observer* (Madras), March 30, 1958. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1957.

The real impetus to the Dravidian Movement did not come until the formation of the South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known as the Justice Party. The Dravidian Association had not effectively gained the loyalty of non-Brahmin politicians, the two most prominent of whom were Dr. T. M. Nair and Sir P. Theagaroya Chetty. Chetty, an industrialist who had been a member of the Madras Corporation and was its first non-official president, was at complete loggerheads with Nair.¹⁴ Mudaliar attempted to bring about a rapprochement between the two leaders, and in November, 1916, Chetty and Nair came together with other leaders of the non-Brahmin community to consider what measures might be adopted to check the increasing political power of the Brahmin caste. It was resolved that an association of non-Brahmin Hindus be formed under the name of the South Indian Peoples' Association. Endowed with an original capital of 100,000 rupees from zamindar support, the Association would voice the grievances of the non-Brahmin through English and vernacular journals. In pursuance of these aims, a printing press was purchased and the first issue of *Justice*, the official organ, appeared on February 26, 1917. It was soon followed by a Tamil daily, *Dravidan*, and later by a Telegu paper, *Andhraprakaskka*.¹⁵

Soon after the formation of the South Indian Peoples' Association, in December, 1916, Chetty, as Secretary of the Association, issued "The Non-Brahmin Manifesto," surveying the conditions of the non-Brahmin community and pointing out the directions for advancement. The non-Brahmins of Madras Presidency (excluding the Scheduled Castes) outnumbered the Brahmins 22 to 1, and the Untouchables alone outnumbered them 5 to 1.¹⁶ The Brahmins, however, because of education, religious authority, economic power, political influence, and social prestige, stood as an exclusive *élite* in juxtaposition to the illiterate masses which constituted more than 95 per cent of the society.

¹⁴ R. V. Krishna Ayyar, *In the Legislature of Those Days* (Madras: Indian Publishing House, 1956), pp. 10-18.

¹⁵ Sir P. T. Chetty, Address, Non-Brahmin Confederation, December 28, 1917, published in: T. Varadarajulu Naidu, *The Justice Movement: 1917* (Madras: Justice Printing Works, 1932).

¹⁶ M. S. Vairanapillai, *Are We Two Nations?* (Lahore: Williams, 1946), p. 78.

The Manifesto discussed the overwhelming preponderance of Brahmins in public services and governmental bodies, and it recognized that the virtual monopoly of political power was due to the educational advancement of the Brahmin community.

Old established traditions, the position of the Brahmins as the highest and most sacred of the Hindu castes, the nature of their ancient calling, and the steady inculcation of the belief, both by written texts and oral teachings, that they are so many divinely-ordained intermediaries without whose active intervention and blessing the soul cannot obtain salvation, and their consequent freedom from manual toil—all these helped them to adapt themselves easily to the new conditions under British Rule, as under previous epochs, in larger numbers and far more successfully than the other castes and communities.¹⁷

The Manifesto, however, went on to ask:

Apart . . . from the question of British education, are large material stakes, traditional and inherited interests in the soil and the social prestige that goes with it, influence among the masses, quiet and peaceful occupations that tend to the steady economic development of the province, and overwhelming numerical strength itself, to count for nothing?¹⁸

The Manifesto voiced alarm at the growing Brahmin agitation for Home Rule. "We are not in favour of any measure, which, in operation, is designed, or tends completely, to undermine the influence and authority of the British Rulers, who alone in the present circumstances of India, are able to hold the scales even between creed and class. . . ." ¹⁹ Though constitutional change was deprecated, the South Indian Peoples' Association favoured "progressive political development of a well-defined policy of trust in the people, qualified by prudence, and of timely and liberal concessions in the wake of proved fitness." ²⁰ The Association stood firmly against a transfer of power from the British to a Brahmin overlordship. "We are," the Manifesto pro-

¹⁷ P. T. Chetty, "The Non-Brahmin Manifesto," in Naidu, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

claimed, "deeply devoted and loyally attached to British Rule."²¹

Chetty called upon all non-Brahmins to unite and to draw the attention of the government to the grievances voiced in the Manifesto. "Let them (the non-Brahmins) do everything needful to ensure a continued educational, social, political, and economic development as a broad and enduring basis; and, then, their future as British subjects will be brighter and more prosperous than it is today."²²

With the proclamation of the Non-Brahmin Manifesto, it was decided that an association for the political advancement of the non-Brahmin community should be formed to function alongside the South Indian Peoples' Association. In August, 1917, the South Indian Liberal Federation came into existence.²³

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Chetty, Address, Non-Brahmin Confederation, in Naidu, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER III

THE JUSTICE PARTY

WHEN a community, such as the non-Brahmins of Madras, is threatened, or feels threatened, its leaders will organize politically to preserve or to establish the identity of the group. At a low level of communication, the leaders alone are likely to be politically articulate, and the party will be *élitist* in nature, without a mass base, although the party may act in the interests of the community as a whole. Such was the case of the South Indian Liberal Federation. The leadership, financially well endowed, was drawn almost exclusively from a socially stable element of the urban population. While Chetty, Nair, Mudaliar and the early leaders of the movement spoke for the illiterate non-Brahmin masses of Madras, they in no way represented them. This leadership constituted a tightly-knit *élite*, which, while imbued with social concern, had little contact with the people as a whole. Despite its many publications, its highly articulate propaganda, and its numerous conferences, the Federation made no attempt to draw the mass following of a popular movement. With the franchise limited to but a few hundred thousand, the party made little attempt to aggregate support at any wider level. Its demands were formulated, not so much to attract a following, as to influence the official policy of the British in Madras Presidency.

Dr. Nair, in drawing up the rules and regulations of the Federation, drew not only upon the liberal British tradition, but also from French radicalism. Indeed, even the name of the party organ was adapted from Clemenceau's *Justice*. Opponents of the Federation referred to it as "the Justice Party," and the Federation itself, feeling that this somehow captured the spirit of its movement, adopted the label as its unofficial name.¹

Nair soon became the most prominent spokesman of the party, defining its object as justice for all Dravidians through the establishment of a separate state under the watchful guidance of

¹ *Sunday Observer*, July 7, 1957.

British rule. His idealism, however, was tempered by the immediate practicalities of securing needed reforms for the betterment of the non-Brahmin community. Nair saw the movement, however, as national in character. It was his belief that every unit of Indian society should develop itself according to its own genius. Upholding the constitution, the Justice Party would support every act of government beneficial to the people and oppose any which would be injurious to their interests. Nair was critical of Congress for the adoption of "independence" as its new political faith. The Justice Party set itself against all "negative" methods of passive resistance and non-cooperation, which Nair saw as subversive to any ordered and stable government.²

Following a call to arms by Nair in a speech, "Our Immediate Political Outlook," the first conference of the party was held at Coimbatore in August, 1917. The Rajah of Panagal, previously a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, was elected as the first president.³ In the ensuing months, the Justice Party held several conferences for the clarification of the non-Brahmin political position.

In December, 1917, Chetty called a conference of non-Brahmins, and in the opening address of the first session of the Non-Brahmin Confederation—as the meeting was called—he expressed the Justice Party's views on "Progressive Political Reform." In calling for gradual reform toward representative government, Chetty made a plea for communal representation in Legislative Councils. He bitterly attacked caste and condemned it as a tool of Brahmin oppression.

It is the Aryans who have introduced this birth distinction, which they have elaborated into the system of Varnashrama Dharma with its concomitant evils. It was that civilization which brought about illiteracy in the country, the pedestal on which is erected the exclusive oligarchy of Brahmins. . . . Every successive attempt to put down the Brahmanical tyranny ended in failure, so much so that the Brahminical influence grew stronger and stronger, with the result that they elaborated

² Sir A. P. Rao Bahadur Patro, "The Justice Movement in India," *Asiatic Review*, xxxvii, No. 93 (January, 1932).

³ T. Varadarajulu Naidu, *The Justice Movement: 1917* (Madras: Justice Printing Works, 1932), p. 30.

the present system of untouchableness and pollution. Thanks to the British Government the times have changed, our Brahmin friends have given up their pious occupations and turned to worldliness. The great veneration in which the people held them for their piety, learning and austerity of life is now dying out, the great disillusionment has begun, and this is the most opportune moment for the social reformer to knock down all barriers of caste and to uplift the Depressed Classes.⁴

In a resolution, the Confederation called for the fusion of all non-Brahmin castes. Legislation was urged for the removal of legal hindrances which restricted inter-caste relationship and for the removal of all restrictions which prevent Adi-Dravidas (untouchables) and other depressed classes from the free use of public wells and tanks.⁵ In response to the latter resolution, the "Spur Tank" meeting was held in early 1918 in one of the first attempts to mobilize public opinion in Madras. Directed against "the curse of Untouchability," the meeting, attended by several thousands, was stirred into such a frenzy by Nair that following the inflammatory speeches, Brahmins were reportedly belaboured wherever they were found and Brahmin homes were violated.⁶ Mass meetings and popular agitation, however, were only secondary concerns of the Justice Party. Its primary effort was directed toward the official machinery of the government.

Following his 1917 declaration that the aim and goal of the British in India was to establish self-government in stages, E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, came to India to survey the situation. With the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, Montagu toured the country interviewing leaders on the question of further political reform. In treating the problems of the non-Brahmin in Madras, Montagu turned not to the Justice Party, but to the Madras Presidency Association. The Association, originally a cultural society of which the Tamil scholar, T. V. K. Mudaliar, was a prominent member, represented the non-Brahmin wing of Annie Besant's Home Rule Party in Madras.⁷ Under the leadership of D. P. K. Pillai, its proclaimed aims and

⁴ Chetty, Address, Non-Brahmin Confederation, in Naidu, *op. cit.*

⁵ Naidu, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8.

⁶ *Sunday Observer*, July 7, 1957.

⁷ Interview with T. P. Meenakshisundaram, Professor of Tamil Language and Literature, Annamalai University (Chicago, June 1, 1962).

objectives were essentially the same as the Justice Party. The Justice leaders, however, visualized it as a Brahminic tool to thwart the truly representative movement of the non-Brahmin masses. Outraged at Montagu's recognition of the Madras Presidency Association, Nair advised Justice Party members to boycott the enquiry altogether. Upon reconsideration, however, the Justice leaders approached the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, presenting a memorandum of grievances.⁸

In 1919, all the political parties of India sent representatives to London for the Joint Parliamentary Committee, a body appointed to submit recommendations to Parliament on the course of constitutional reform in India. T. M. Nair led the Justice delegation, but died soon after his arrival in England. In memoranda and oral testimony before the Joint Committee, the Justice Party pushed hard for the cause of communal representation, warning that "if . . . blood has to be shed, at whatever distant date it may be, such blood will be on the heads of those who oppose this resolution of Communal Representation at this critical period of our history."⁹

After deliberation and consideration of all evidence, the Joint Committee decided that in Madras Presidency, in addition to the all-India award of communal electorates for Muslims, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians, the non-Brahmin Hindus must be provided with separate representation by means of reservation of seats.¹⁰ As a compromise could not be reached between Brahmin and non-Brahmin leaders regarding the distribution of seats in the Madras Council, Sir John (later Lord) Meston made the final award: Of the total of 98 elected seats, 28 would be reserved for non-Brahmins.¹¹

The first elections under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform were held in November, 1920. The Congress Party declared its opposition to the Reform and resolved that "Swaraj" must be attained "within one year" by means of "non-violent non-co-

⁸ *Sunday Observer*, July 7, 1957.

⁹ Naidu, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-4.

¹⁰ *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons Appointed to Consider the Government of India Bill, Clause 7(c), in Government of India, India in 1919, Comp.*, L. F. R. Williams (Calcutta: Central Bureau of Information, Government of India, 1920), p. 223.

¹¹ Naidu, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

operation" with the Government.¹² Congress boycotted the elections for the new Councils. Despite the growing popularity of the Congress in Madras, particularly after the "martyrdom" of Annie Besant with her internment, the non-co-operation movement made little inroad. Voting ran high among the electorate of Madras, with more than 70 per cent voting in some urban constituencies.¹³ With high property qualifications, the electorate was small, but it returned the Justice Party by a large majority.

The significance of the election was recorded in the official review of the Government of India, *India in 1921-22*:

Indeed, a great change seems coming over all the lower castes, as well as the depressed classes. Their traditional meekness is disappearing; they are beginning to recognize and to avenge social tyranny. . . . There has been a growing tendency on their part to boycott the upper castes, and, in particular, the Brahmins, in certain parts of the country. And among all events, political as well as social, of the period under review, there is probably none of greater importance, actual and potential, than the capture of the Reformed Legislative Council of Madras by the Non-Brahmin Party. For the first time in the history of India, the lower castes of Madras have asserted themselves against the intellectual oligarchy of the upper, and have seized political power in their own hands. The significance of a revolution so momentous can scarcely be guessed; but its influence upon the progress of India toward democratic institutions must inevitably be profound. It seems scarcely too much to say that the first bulwark of caste-cominance in political matters has been stormed as a result of the recent constitutional changes. The example of Madras cannot fail to exert an increasing influence upon the efforts of the lower castes and depressed classes elsewhere in India.¹⁴

¹² W. H. Moreland and A. C. Chatterjee, *A Short History of India* (London: Longmans, 1936), p. 475.

¹³ Government of India, *India in 1920*, Comp., L. F. R. Williams (Calcutta: Central Bureau of Information, Government of India, 1921), p. 65.

¹⁴ Government of India, *India in 1921-22*, Comp., L. F. R. Williams (Calcutta: Central Bureau of Information, Government of India, 1923), p. 221.

In the Justice Party, the British Raj found a tool to undercut the growing power of the Brahmin—who as a Congress member challenged the very legitimacy of the government or as an official was beginning to rival Europeans for the highest bureaucratic positions. At the same time, the Justice victory provided an opportunity for the British to protectively nurture and advance a political party dedicated to the support of the government. Indeed, Mudaliar proclaimed that the strength of the British rested on non-Brahmin support. “It is the non-Brahmin who helped the government with men and money to fight their enemies.”¹⁵

The Governor of Madras, Lord Willingdon, upon the advice of Justice Party leaders, appointed the Rajah of Panagal as First Minister. The Madras Ministry was alone in all the provinces to enjoy the support of both government and the Legislative Council. The Congress, having boycotted the Council, gave the Justice Party a clear field for control. Forming a vast majority, the party concerned itself with little more than communal questions, including the problem of communal representation in various areas of government service, and within one year the Council had become a forum of anti-Brahmin propaganda.

As the 1923 elections for the Second Council approached, the Swarajist wing of the Congress decided to participate in the elections with the intention of “destroying the constitution from within.” The Swarajists, however, were unable to defeat the Justice Party, and in 1925—even though Congress support was growing—the Justice candidate, L. D. S. Pillai, defeated his Congress opposition in the election for President of the Legislative Council, replacing Sir P. Rajagopalachariar, a highly respected Brahmin who had been appointed by the Governor in 1921.¹⁶

Anti-Brahminism was riding high on a tide of reforms directed toward the betterment of the non-Brahmin majority of Madras. These reforms included the establishment of quotas based on caste and religion for civil service posts, ensuring the rights of non-Brahmins in seeking government office. The Justice Party was determined to advance the opportunities of the downtrodden

¹⁵ R. V. Krishna Ayyar, *In the Legislature of Those Days* (Madras: Indian Publishing House, 1956), pp. 10-18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-25.

masses and to destroy the yoke of Brahmin power. "The Justice movement is organized for the vindication of self-respect," declared Sir A. P. Rao Bahadur Patro, a Justice leader and minister.

We have begun to discourage, if not discard, caste and priestly authority. The dream of Indian nationalism will be realized fully with the passing away of caste from our land. It is a false logic to deny to every group the right to develop itself to be in a position of strength to contribute to the great national life of the country. The principle becomes dangerous only if the interests of the unit or group are placed above those of the nation and national demands. . . . The non-Brahmin movement is not a negative one; it bears no antagonism to any group or unit in India—it is a movement for self-expression.¹⁷

Despite the lofty idealism set forth, there was obviously one group which had become the scapegoat of the non-Brahmin movement: the Brahmin.

In the elections held in 1926, the Swarajists, riding the success of Rajagopalachari's salt satyagraha in Tanjore, defeated the Justice Party and gained a majority in the Third Legislative Council. The Gandhian image undoubtedly accounted for much of the Swarajist success, but its majority was attained more on the basis of extreme division on the part of their opponents. In some constituencies, there were as many as four or five candidates.¹⁸

While the Swarajists had an actual majority in the Council, the party refused to form a ministry, supporting instead an Independent Ministry under Dr. P. Subborayan. C. V. S. Narasimha Raju, a Congress leader, was elected President of the Council without opposition, but the Congress maintained an attitude of benevolent neutrality toward the Ministry. The Justice Party heaped abuse and bitter attacks on the Ministry, however, and tried to unseat it through a vote of no-confidence.

¹⁷ Patro, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Government of India, *India in 1926-27*, Comp., J. Coatman (Calcutta: Central Bureau of Information, Government of India, 1928), pp. 45-6.

The Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, again boycotted the Legislative Councils, and in the elections of 1930 the Justice Party made a clean sweep at the polls. Lacking any strong opposition, the Justice Party, which in the Third Council had been well-disciplined and closely-knit, began to weaken, marked by schism, bitterness, and mutual recrimination. Soon after he formed the Ministry in 1930, B. Muniswamy Naidu was pushed from the reigns of party leadership by the Rajah of Chettinad, former Justice whip. In 1932, the Rajah of Bobbili became First Minister.¹⁹

During the period of disintegration under the Fourth Council, the Justice Party underwent a series of chaotic attempts to salvage its last vestige of strength. It condemned the system of dyarchy it had long supported, demanded complete provincial autonomy, and even allowed its members to enter the Congress in an effort to exploit non-Brahmin feeling within the Congress. It even threw open its membership to Brahmins, but with no avail. In the 1934 elections, the Justice Party was completely defeated by the Congress, which had lifted its ban on Council entry and won every seat that it contested. The Congress did not accept office, however, and the Rajah of Bobbili continued as First Minister through an extension of the Fourth Council until the end of 1936, when provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act of 1935 came into operation.²⁰

With the Act of 1935, dyarchy in the provinces was abolished and responsible government instituted, except in certain matters over which the Governor exercised individual control. In Madras, the Act provided for a Legislative Assembly and a Legislative Council, both based on a widely extended franchise. In addition to the Justice Party and the Congress, a number of new parties came into existence to contest the elections—the Peoples' Party, the Madras Provincial Scheduled Castes Party, the Madras Presidency Muslim Progressive Party, and a revived Muslim League. In the elections of 1937, Congress won a decisive victory, securing 159 out of the 215 seats in the Assembly and 26 of the 46 seats in the Council. The Congress Party refused to form a ministry until it had assurances against the

¹⁹ Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-14. B. S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook* (Madras: Government Press, 1957), pp. 109-10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10.

misuse of the discretionary power held by the Governor. An interim ministry was formed under K. V. Reddy, but within six months the Congress Party accepted the assurances of the Viceroy and accepted office, forming a ministry under C. Rajagopalachari.²¹

The Justice Party defeat reflected the growing nationalist movement throughout India. The party was riddled with factionalism and discontent, and large numbers of disappointed claimants had drifted into the Congress fold. The Justice reforms had been highly communal in character, reinforcing caste rigidity, the very tyranny they sought to destroy. The Congress issued bitter attacks on the Justice Party for its communal orientation, accusing it of engendering and thriving upon caste conflict. The Congress appealed to the Gandhian spirit of unity and took full advantage of the power of Gandhi's charismatic personality. The Congress called the Justice Party an agent of British imperialism, and the long history of intimacy between the non-Brahmin movement and the British Raj was cited. The Justice Party countered feebly with weak cries for Swaraj. They declared Justice opposition to the "Three B's"—the British, the Brahmin, and the Bania—but the long association with the government was too much to overcome.²² The Justice Party had strangled itself on the rope it had woven: support of the British Raj had brought it to power, but with the impact of national self-consciousness and aspiration for Swaraj, its Imperial connections brought it defeat.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²² Interview with T. A. V. Nathan, former editor of *The Justice*, from 1929 until 1938 (Madras, October 17, 1960).

CHAPTER IV

THE DRAVIDA KAZAGHAM

As the Justice Party began to decline, there emerged within its ranks one of the most dynamic and colourful political leaders South India has ever produced. E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, known as Periyar (Great Sage), was born in 1879 in Erode of a respectable middle class family of artisans. He married at the age of 13, but after six years, he became a *sanyasi*, travelling as a religious mendicant over the whole of India. In his visits to pilgrim centres, he gained an intimate knowledge of the evils of popular Hinduism. Disgusted with what he saw as exploitation of the masses by the Brahmin priest, Naicker abandoned the role of a holy man. Returning to Erode, he soon became involved in local politics. His opposition to caste regulations condemned him in the eyes of the high caste, and, as an advocate of the rights of women, he defied his orthodox kinsmen by encouraging his young niece to remarry after she had lost her husband early in marriage. Naicker, outcasted by his own people, had gained the confidence of the non-Brahmin community of Erode and was soon elected as chairman of the municipality.¹

Although an ardent opponent of Brahmin power, Naicker was drawn politically toward the Congress rather than the Justice Party. Joining the Non-cooperation Movement in 1920, he campaigned vigorously for prohibition and *khadi* and served two terms of imprisonment. He was elected Secretary of the Tamilnad Congress Committee, but soon antagonized the Brahmin leadership of the Congress in Madras through his *satyagraha* at Vaikom for the opening of temples to Harijans. Naicker's protest against caste discriminations in an orphanage conducted under Congress auspices, and his advocacy of reserved seats for non-Brahmins in the Council won little favour with the leadership of the Provincial Congress Committee.² In 1922, Naicker

¹ P. D. Devanandan, *The Dravida Kazagham: A Revolt against Brahminism* (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

narrowly defeated his Brahmin opponent for the presidency of the Tamilnad Congress Committee. Before he could take office, however, another prominent Brahmin leader moved a successful vote of no-confidence.³

Naicker bolted the Congress and attacked it as a tool of Brahmin domination. In 1925, he organized the "Self-Respect Movement," designed as a Dravidian Uplift, seeking to expose the Brahmin tyranny and the deceptive methods by which they controlled all spheres of Hindu life. Naicker publicly ridiculed the *Puranas* as fairy tales, not only imaginary and irrational, but grossly immoral as well. Influenced in his religious thinking by Robert Ingersoll and having translated much of his writing into Tamil, Naicker—still bitter from his experiences as a *sanyasi*—attacked religion as the tool of Brahminical control. He carried on active propaganda in an attempt to rid the people of Puranic Hinduism and wean them away from religious ceremonies requiring the priestly service of the Brahmin. He denounced caste observances, child marriage, and enforced widowhood, and attacked the Laws of Manu, which he called the basis of the entire Hindu social fabric of caste, and described as not only essentially, but "totally inhuman." The Laws, Naicker pointed out, were designed to secure the supremacy of the Brahmin and to ensure his unquestioned authority. In order to propagate his views, he founded a Tamil journal, *Kudiarasu* (Peoples' Government), which was soon followed by others of a similar nature, *Puratchi* (Revolt), *Pakutharivu* (Dis-cernment) and *Vidudhalai* (Liberty).⁴

Naicker returned from a trip to the Soviet Union in 1931, more firmly convinced that materialism was the answer to India's problems and openly advocated mass revolution and the overthrow of the government. Tempered somewhat by imprisonment for sedition in 1933-34, he indicated a willingness to join one of the major parties on a conditional basis. He formulated a fourteen-point programme, and presented it to both the Congress and the Justice Party for their acceptance. It was wholly

³ "The Congress is a Brahman Dominated Organization—Views of an Experienced Person," *Objectives of the Dravida Kazagham* (Madras: Dravida Kazagham, 1949), p. 36, cited in Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 122.

⁴ Devanandan, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8.

unacceptable to Congress, but the Justice Party, then rapidly going downhill, gave the nod.⁵

Under the Congress Ministry of C. Rajagopalachari in 1937, Hindi was introduced to the South as a compulsory subject in schools. Taking it as an affront to Tamil culture and its rich literary tradition, Tamil patriots reacted with violent protest, and, ready to exploit the opportunity, Naicker waved black flags of rebellion in his first anti-Hindi campaign. The agitation against the imposition of Hindi brought Naicker to the forefront of attention, and inflamed the non-Brahmins against the Ministry. The campaign, which brought the death of two agitators in police firings, forced the government to change Hindi from a required to an optional subject in schools.⁶ The following year, 1938, while in jail for his anti-Hindi agitation, Naicker was elected President of the Justice Party.⁷

Naicker saw the imposition of Hindi as a subjugation of Tamil peoples which could only be avoided through the creation of a Dravidian State. In the Justice Party Convention in December, 1938, it was resolved that Tamilnad should be made a separate state, loyal to the British Raj and "directly under the Secretary of State for India."⁸ The demand soon became the fundamental issue of the Justice movement, giving a new lease of life to what had been a dying party.

In 1939, Naicker organized the "Dravidia Nadu Conference" for the advocacy of a separate and independent Dravidasthan. The demand was again reiterated the following year in response to the Lahore Resolution demanding Pakistan passed by the Muslim League.⁹ Naicker gave full support to the scheme for Pakistan and tried to enlist League support for the creation of Dravidasthan.¹⁰ The basic presupposition of the movement toward a separate state was that the Dravidian non-Brahmin peoples (Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, and Malayalam) were of a racial stock and culture which distinguished them from the Aryan Brahmin.

⁵ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, December 10, 1960).

⁶ Devanandan, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷ B. S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook* (Madras: Government Press, 1957), p. 113.

⁸ Devanandan, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

⁹ Seshadri, "The Dravida Kazhagam in Madras," *Indian Affairs Record*, III, No. 1 (February, 1957).

¹⁰ Baliga, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

The Justice Party was reorganized in 1944 under the guidance of Naicker as the Dravida Kazaghram or Dravidian Federation and, at its Salem conference, took on the character of a highly militant mass organization. Naicker, who in the 1930's had visited the Axis countries as well as the Soviet Union, declared that "members of the Kazaghram should wear black shirts whenever possible, as a symbol of the present-day downtrodden condition of the Dravidians."¹¹ Many of the more conservative Justice members, such as P. T. Rajan, left the movement, retaining the old "Justice Party" name for their new and virtually insignificant organization.

At the 1945 Conference at Tiruchirapalle, the Dravida Kazaghram adopted a constitution and took as its symbol a black flag with a red circle in the centre, the black representing the mourning for the subjected Dravidian peoples, the red for the hope of Dravidasthan. The organization of the party was to be based upon units in each village, taluq and district. The object of the DK was proclaimed to be the achievement of a sovereign independent Dravidian Republic, which would be federal in nature with four units corresponding to the linguistic divisions, each having residuary power and autonomy of internal administration.¹² It would be a "casteless society," an egalitarian Dravida Nadu to which the depressed and downtrodden could pledge allegiance. The party proclaimed its opposition to the British Raj, and Naicker called upon DK members to renounce all titles conferred by the British and to resign all offices connected with the National War Front. This action greatly enhanced the prestige of the movement, on both state and national levels. The DK could no longer be considered a handmaiden of the British, as was the Justice Party from its very inception.¹³

As in the Self-Respect Movement, one of Naicker's basic objectives was to remove all "superstitious belief" based upon religion or tradition. No member was allowed to wear the sectarian marks of faith across his forehead. Members were urged to boy-

¹¹ "Aims and Constitution of the Dravida Kazaghram," *Our Aim* (Madras: Dravida Kazaghram, 1950), cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

¹² T. S. Thiruvengadam, *The Dravidian Movement: a Retrospect* (Madras: n.n., 1955).

¹³ J. R. Chandran and M. M. Thomas, *Political Outlook in India Today* (Bangalore: Committee for Literature on Social Concerns, 1956), p. 122.

cott the use of Brahmin priests in ceremonies. He campaigned vigorously for widow remarriage and inter-caste marriage. The "reform" marriage rites of the DK gained wide acceptance among the non-Brahmins of Tamilnad. Dispensing with the priest and Hindu ritual, the couple to be married was seated and someone was selected from those attending, without consideration of caste, to preside over the function. To seal the ties of marriage, he requested the couple to exchange garlands and, in some cases, the man tied a *tali* (golden chain or yellow thread) to the bride.¹⁴

The ceremonies and rites of passage at which Brahmins officiated came to be despised by the Dravida Kazagham, and the Hindu religion was denounced as an opiate by which the Brahmins had dulled the masses so that they might be controlled. Atheism became virtually a cult among Kazagham members. "A Hindu in the present concept may be a Dravidian, but a Dravidian in the real sense of the term cannot and shall not be a Hindu."¹⁵ Pain was taken to destroy the images of sacred Hindu deities such as Rama and Ganesa, and *The Ramayana* and other Sanskrit epics were distorted to the political ends of the Dravida Kazagham.

Of the debunked epics of the classical Sanskrit tradition, the most conspicuous perversion is that of *The Ramayana*. In the Sanskrit version, the hero, Rama, is pitted against the villain king of Ceylon, Ravana. Naicker transposes the hero and villain roles, however, and concludes "that Rama and Sita are despicable characters, not worthy of imitation or admiration even by the lowest of the fourth-rate humans." Ravana, on the other hand, is depicted as a Dravidian of "excellent character." In the preface to Naicker's "True Reading" of *The Ramayana*, he states that "the veneration of the story any longer in Tamil

¹⁴ *Sunday Times* (Madras), September 25, 1960, p. 3. Lloyd Rudolph reports that "in 1953, such a marriage, contracted under the auspices of the *Purohit Maruppu Sangham* or Anti-Brahminical Priest Association, was declared illegal by the Madras High Court. Subsequently the Special Marriages Act validated such marriages among others if the participants registered according to the provisions of the Act." "Urban Life and Populist Radicalism: Dravidian Politics in Madras," *Journal of Asian Studies*, xx, No. 3 (May, 1961), p. 289.

¹⁵ A. S. Venu, *Dravidasthan* (Madras: Kalai Manram, 1954), p. 13, cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

Nad is injurious and ignominious to the self-respect of the community and of the country."¹⁶

The Ramayana and other plays were staged by DK dramatic troupes throughout Tamilnad in order to attract popular support to the movement for Dravidasthan. The presentation of plays, however, was only one part of a "cultural offensive" toward the Tamil people. It was very much a part of a larger Tamil renaissance, which witnessed the revival of Tamil literary classics, a movement in "new writing," and a de-Sanskritization of the Tamil language. Out of the resurgence of literary effort came a concern for the purity of Tamil. It was estimated that in 1900, nearly 50 per cent of the words in the written language were Sanskritically influenced. Fifty years later, its influence had been reduced to only 20 per cent.¹⁷ While many prominent Tamil scholars and leaders of the cultural renaissance had no connection with the Dravida Kazaghama, the party nevertheless exerted a tremendous influence over the flowering of Tamil literature in the twentieth century. Indeed, it was through its literary efforts that the DK found support in non-Brahmin academic centres, such as Annamalai University, with its Vice-Chancellor, Dr. S. G. Manavala Ramanujam, an ardent supporter of Naicker.¹⁸

The popularity of the Kazaghama extended beyond the scholars of Tamil literature, however. Young people, attracted to the party by powerful speakers and forceful writers, were encouraged to contribute to the cultural growth of Tamilnad. The glories of the Tamil kingdoms were hailed as peaks in the cultural history of India, and the antiquity of Dravidian civilization was pushed further back into the past with the aid of English scholars, such as Robert Caldwell. The culture of the ancient Aryans was belittled as barbarian in comparison to the splendour and richness of Dravidian tradition and Tamil culture. The past was resurrected and given a reality which far exceeded the evidence extant.

The Dravidian Movement has been instrumental in bringing the people of Tamilnad to an awareness of itself as a community.

¹⁶ E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, *The Ramayana: a True Reading* (Madras: Rationalist Publications, 1959), pp. iii-iv.

¹⁷ Interview with A. C. Chettiar, Professor of Tamil, University of Madras (Madras, October 13, 1960).

¹⁸ Devanandan, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12. *Hindu*, September 20, 1960.

The DK through its organizational units in every district and taluq in Madras brought the message of Tamil *nationality* to the masses. Through plays presented in even the most isolated village communities, through its voluminous literature and its inflammatory speeches, the movement was able to affect a self-conscious awareness of the nature of the group as a community through an expression of primordial identification. In so doing, it served to preserve the community and, at the same time, it actually brought it into being as a nationality. As Myron Weiner points out, "The creation of a new community-wide association in itself serves to strengthen loyalties to the community."¹⁹ The organization also served as a means for social mobility on the part of individual leaders, both within the community and within the larger political arena, but most important, through the Dravidian Movement, the community sought to raise its status as a whole through political activity.

¹⁹ Myron Weiner, *Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 65.

CHAPTER V

THE DRAVIDA MUNNETRA KAZAGHAM

THE Dravida Kazaghram, in spite of its appeals to the masses, retained its quasi-military organization and its basically *élitist* character. There arose within the ranks of the movement a challenge to the virtually deified position of Naicker. This "progressive" wing of the party, upholding the principle of democratic party organization, was continually frustrated by Naicker's intransigence. The dissidents broke with the DK to form a separate party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazaghram. Through its elaborate structural organization, its broadened financial support, and through its conferences and campaigns, the new party sought a mass membership as the base for political power.

The vitality of the Dravida Kazaghram had attracted many outstanding young men, of whom one of the most talented was C. N. Annadurai. Born in Conjeevaram in 1908, he took a M.A. degree in economics from Pachaiyappa College in Madras, but abandoned further studies in favour of a career in journalism. Joining the Justice Party in 1935, Annadurai became an ardent supporter of the anti-Hindi movement and participated in Naicker's 1938 campaign. With the formation of the Dravida Kazaghram in 1944, Annadurai became one of Naicker's chief lieutenants.¹

At the time of partition, Naicker tried to secure the help of Jinnah, so that Dravidasthan might be formed simultaneously with Pakistan. Jinnah refused assistance, and the British ignored the Dravidian agitations. Outraged at the British "betrayal" of the Dravidian peoples in turning the bureaucracy over to a Brahmin oligarchy, Naicker boycotted the Independence Day celebrations.² He refused to honour the National

¹ P. D. Devanandan, *The Dravida Kazaghram: A Revolt against Brahminism* (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960), pp. 10-11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Flag, just as he later refused to recognize the Indian Constitution, seeing it only as a tool of Brahmin tyranny.

Annadurai, however, saw national independence as the accomplishment of all India, not merely the Aryan North. Naicker refused to listen, just as he ignored Annadurai's repeated demands for a democratization of leadership within the party. Naicker had no faith in democracy either in the organization or in his visualized Dravidasthan, and in the 1948 DK Conference, Annadurai led a walkout in protest against Naicker's political autocracy. Naicker utilized the Conference to condemn the "renegades," but, alarmed at the possibility of a split, he attempted a compromise by appointing Annadurai president of a conference held later that same year. He refused, however, to give in to Annadurai's demands for a democratic party organization.³

Naicker's popularity suffered a disastrous blow in 1949, when, at the age of 72, he married a 28-year old girl who had been an active member of the party. In a statement giving the reasons for his marriage, he said that, as he had no confidence in his lieutenants, he was marrying a girl in whom he had full trust and who would lead the party after his death.⁴ On the pretext that the marriage was contrary to the avowed social objectives of the Kazagham, which included the elimination of the practice of unequal marriages, Annadurai seceded from the party to form the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (The Dravidian Progressive Federation).⁵ The original leaders of the DMK included N. V. Natarajan, Karunanidhi, and E. V. K. Sampath, who, as nephew of Naicker, abandoned a considerable inheritance by leaving the DK.

In reaction against the loose structure of the DK, Annadurai sought to weld the DMK into an effective political organization. As set forth in the party constitution, the basic structural unit of the party is the ward committee in cities and the village committee in rural areas, each requiring a minimum of 25 members. There were an estimated 3,000 such branches, as of 1960, having grown from only a handful in the year of the party's formation.

³ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, December 10, 1960).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 123.

The Taluq Committee, at the next level, is made up of the respective secretaries of the basic units. The District Committee is composed of all the taluq secretaries in the district, in addition to 5 elected members from each Taluq Committee. The District Committee in turn elects 10 of its own number to the General Council. A man may be elected to the Council after three years' membership within the party. The District Secretary becomes an *ex-officio* member of the Council. The General Council, as the supreme body of the DMK, elects a Chairman and a General Secretary of the Party, a Parliamentary Board, a Treasurer, a Party Trust Board, an Appeal Committee, and an Audit Committee. The General Secretary selects a Working Committee of 20, which is to include 5 party secretaries: First Secretary, in charge of headquarters; Second Secretary, in charge of organization; Third, in charge of propaganda; Fourth, in charge of trade union activities; and Fifth, in charge of party publications.⁶

The principal source of party funds is derived from the members in the form of 50 *naye paise* membership fee (about 10 cents) for two years standing and from admission charges for district and special conferences held during the year. The ticket cost covers a wide range and is bought according to the member's ability to pay.⁷

The conferences often attract as many as 200,000 people, drawn by the spellbinding oratory of Annadurai and by the popular Tamil film stars who glamourize the party functions. Annadurai, as well as other members of the party, is intimately connected with the film industry in Madras as writer, director, and producer, and many of the films produced are openly propagandistic. Many film artists have been drawn into the movement by a desire to increase their own popularity by riding the support for the DMK. Others, however, such as Shivaji Ganesan, found that at the height of fame, association with the DMK became a serious liability. Shivaji Ganesan's acting career began with the Dravida Kazaghham, and his role of Shivaji won such great popularity that Naicker christened him with the honoured name. As one of the founding members of the DMK,

⁶ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (Madras, October 20, 1960).

⁷ *Ibid.* Phillips Talbot, "Raising a Cry for Secession," *India*, Report PT-8-'57 (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1957), p. 8.

Shivaji—rapidly becoming the most popular film star in Madras—made large contributions to the party coffers and collected money at rallies. Bitter at a lack of recognition for his efforts on behalf of the DMK and perhaps feeling that the party was no longer an asset, Shivaji attacked the DMK as a “glamour” party which exploited the Tamil film industry. He was publicly abused by DMK members, and his photographs and billings were defaced with mud and dung.⁸ Other film stars, however, have continued association with the DMK, perhaps to protect their linguistic medium or out of vengeance against the Congress-supported tax on the cinema industry. The immense popularity of the stars, such as M. G. Ramachandran, S. S. Rajendran, and K. R. Ramaswamy, has been an important influence on the highly-impressionable electorate and has won support for the DMK. The cinema, perhaps the cheapest and most effective instrument of communication for social mobilization in India, has played a vital role in the creation of a nationally self-conscious Tamil people, through the depiction of the former glory of Dravidian civilization and through its emphasis on social justice.

The DMK membership has grown yearly at accelerating rates, to its present number of about 175,000 (1960).⁹ Though a member of the upper Mudaliar caste, Annadurai oriented his movement toward the urban lower classes, the proletariat, lower middle class, and students. He appealed not so much to the prosperous non-Brahmin communities of his own caste or the Vellala landowners or industrialists who had been the foundation of Naicker's power, but rather to the masses, the lower castes of the Nadar, Maravar, and Adi-Dravida untouchables.¹⁰ The party constituency, concentrated in the age range of 20 to 40, is drawn mainly from the lower middle classes, workers, petty official, small traders, urban unemployed, and students, while its leadership is concentrated primarily among writers and journalists who utilize communications media as the catapult to political power. While DMK support has been virtually limited to urban centres and those immediately adjacent areas,

⁸ Interview with Shivaji Ganesan (Chicago: April 26, 1962).

⁹ *Sunday Times*, September 18, 1960, p. 3.

¹⁰ Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

it has, with expanding communication, begun to make inroads into the villages of interior and southern Madras.

The DMK, as a catalyst for social mobilization, has effectively exploited the identity anxiety of the transitional individual in his movement from a primordially-determined universe of family, caste and village to an urban environment. Through its appeal to basic language-nationality consciousness, the party has gained increasing support as the identity horizon of the Tamil people has expanded under the impact of the concomitant forces of communication, urbanization, and industrialization.

In the early stages of urban migration in India, before significant industrialization, there was a relative continuity in social patterns. Migration was quite often "group" in character, with an entire joint family moving into the city. More often, those of the same caste or village would live together in their new environment, maintaining close ties with their ancestral village, periodically sending for relatives, and often remitting money. With increasing industrialization, however, the traditional values and social structure were disrupted to a great extent. Economic necessity due to growing land pressure or rising indebtedness and the desire for social mobility became increasing factors in urban migration. Seeking new opportunities in industries, the individual broke his traditional ties with the accompanying loss of the stable world-orientation and high security afforded by the village community. In India, the traditional economic system of the village, the *jajmani* system, is a symbiotic relationship of occupational castes functioning according to rigidly prescribed patterns of behaviour, providing at once economic security and a clearly defined status and role pattern. The city offered no such cushion.

The traditional village institutions, however, did not remain unaffected by the impact of industrialization and communication. The market economy greatly reduced the autonomy of the village, and, with fluctuating prices, there was an increase in rural indebtedness; machine-made goods, of higher quality and lower price, undermined traditional cottage industries and the *jajmani* relationship between village craftsman and landowner, resulting in an economically displaced population among lower castes. Communication, through the touring dramatic groups of the DK, the popular campaigns of both the DK and DMK, through

the cinema, radio, and newspapers, inspired a discontent among the lower castes and classes which increasingly attracted them to the promise of industrial employment and equal opportunity in the city. As Bert Hoselitz indicates, it is those villagers with a higher degree of empathy that migrate from the rural into the urban areas.¹¹

The cosmopolitan environment of the city confronts the migrant with a wholly new situation of non-traditional contacts. The old criteria of status no longer defined the new relationships. With occupation based upon achievement rather than ascription, the next man on the assembly-line may be from a different region or even of another ethnic background or language. The coffee house serves all without regard to commensal restrictions, and the congested tenements bring a high degree of non-traditional social interaction. With the loss of the traditional role-orientation, the migrant finds himself increasingly frustrated and this anxiety is often intensified by a lack of economic opportunity. Even when traditional group patterns retain cohesion in the city—through close family bonds, continued association with the ancestral village, or through participation in caste associations—the conflicts between these interpersonal relations and the new industrial patterns of social interaction tend to produce stress.¹²

With expanding communication and the accompanying increase in the social value of education and the necessity of a B.A. degree in order to secure a "good job," the children of the upper class rural population are drawn into the cities for study at the university, where they are exposed to new ideas and non-traditional social relationships. With the attainment of the desired degree, they often find themselves frustrated in getting the job to meet their "new status." With expectations unfulfilled, they feel alienated from society, but rather than return to the village and unwilling to accept the "indignity" of anything less than a white-collar job, they enter the expanding ranks of the educated unemployed.

¹¹ Quoted in Daniel Lerner, "Communication Systems and Social Systems," *Mass Communication*, ed. Wilber Schramm (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 136.

¹² Bert Hoselitz, "The City, the Factory, and Economic Growth," *American Economic Review*, XLV, No. 2 (May, 1955), pp. 183-4.

These socially and economically frustrated elements of the urban population, the lower middle class, lower merchants, the uncommitted proletariat, and the educated unemployed, provide a restless mass from which the aspiring DMK draws support. In the urban setting, with the rising degree of political literacy as a result of social mobilization, the leadership of the party has manipulated the non-rational symbols of the community in such a way as to draw in an expanded base of membership and win increasing support at the polls. The DMK has sought to unite the Tamil people in terms of a broad identification base, to make them nationally self-conscious.

Using the symbols of common culture within Tamilnad, harkening back to the glories of the Dravidian past, and dwelling upon the social oppression suffered by the non-Brahmin at the hands of the Brahmin, the Bania, and the Aryan North, the party has attempted to mould the masses into a self-conscious community, where, before, there had been only the most narrowly-defined primary associations. Through its broadly-based and hierarchially structured organization, its series of anti-Hindi agitations, and through its propaganda and political campaigns, the DMK has sought power through exploitation of the symbolic paraphernalia of language and nationality which is bringing a new awareness of wider association and common interest to the formerly inert masses of Madras. The individual is no longer merely a member of the Konar caste of Kumbattai village, but also a Tamilian, one of 30 million people having a common heritage and a rich tradition.

The mobile youth, evidencing a fairly high degree of political literacy, has been a major object of DMK political recruitment. Alienated from the traditional village ties, influenced by new ideas through communications media, and frustrated in economic desires, the individual is attracted toward the party, both as an expression of his discontent with society and as a psychological substitute for the roles, status, and values provided by the traditional system. The secondary association thus functionally replaces the primary affiliation. Lloyd Rudolph suggests that the advance of the DMK among youth may be an expression of generational conflict.

It may well be that the stresses and strains involved in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, when accompanied by the deterioration of the traditional society, express themselves partly in political radicalism. Politics is one way of handling a generational conflict and radicalism offers an alternative set of values and source of authority to the traditional family. DMK leaders (said) that their militants were often expelled from their families and it may be that at some level of consciousness this is the intention. These cultural and psychological dimensions may be as important, perhaps more so, than the materialist explanation generally offered.¹³

The party fills a felt-need, and the DMK ideology, vague though it may be, reinforces the newly-acquired orientation and provides an all-encompassing viewpoint. The DMK, in exploiting anxiety among non-Brahmin youth, has won widespread support from college students. It has been estimated that from 25 to 30 per cent of all university students in Madras State are active members of the DMK-sponsored Dravidian Students Progressive Federation, and at least another 30 per cent support the movement.¹⁴ Student support for the DMK has provided a vitality and dynamism, reflected in political agitation and campaign for public office.

Through its organization and conferences, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, at its inception, had aimed at building a mass party. Manipulating the symbols of Tamil nationalism, the DMK exploited the anxiety of the urban mass, mobilizing them to political consciousness and action. Soon after the formation of the DMK, however, the party was faced with India's First General Elections. The ensuing five years, with the emergence of Congress Chief Minister Kamaraj Nadar, was to greatly change the character of the DMK and the Dravidian Movement as a whole.

¹³ Lloyd Rudolph, "Urban Life and Radical Politics in Madras," Unpublished ms., Cambridge, April, 1960, p. 6.

¹⁴ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, December 10, 1960).

CHAPTER VI

DRAVIDIAN POLITICS AND THE FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS

IN the First General Elections of 1951-52, the Congress Party in Madras captured 133 of the 190 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Neither the Dravida Kazaghham nor the Dravida Munnetra Kazaghham contested the elections. The DMK supported Independent candidates and two opposition parties, the Tamilnad Toilers' Party and the Commonweal Party. Both parties represented the Vanniyar caste, a lower agricultural caste concentrated in the districts of North and South Arcot, Chingleput, and Salem. Through its caste association, the Vanniya Kula Kshatrya Sangham, the community was drawn into politics in an effort to gain political power commensurate to its numbers. The caste *sabhas* of North and South Arcot were unable to come to an agreement, and the originally-created Tamilnad Toilers split. The Toilers, under the leadership of S. S. Ramaswami Padayachi, remained strong in South Arcot and Salem, while the "rebel" Commonweal Party under N. A. Manikkavelu Naicker gained support of the Vanniyars of North Arcot and Chingleput. With DMK backing, the non-Brahmin caste parties appealed to the electorate almost solely on a communal basis. In the final election count, the Commonweal Party won 6 seats in the Assembly, while the Tamilnad Toilers, with a vaguely socialist platform, won 19 seats.¹

While supporting opposition candidates to Congress, the DMK, in a resolution passed at its 1951 Conference, stated that since the Communists did not support Dravidasthan, the DMK would not support CPI candidates. Annadurai declared the DMK to be "genuinely communist" in its ideals, but that the DMK would never ally with the Communists until they signed a pledge

¹ Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Associations," *Pacific Affairs*, xxxiii, No. 1 (March, 1960), pp. 15-8.

of support for Dravidasthan.² Naicker's DK, on the other hand, extended support to the Communist Party, actively backing 16 of its 50 candidates. The power of the Dravida Kazaghram was revealed in the fact that while 13 of those supported by the DK were successful, only 2 other Communists were able to win in all Madras. The 16 DK-supported candidates polled an average of 37 per cent of the votes in their constituencies, while the 34 others received only 18.4 per cent. Fifty-seven Independent candidates backed by the DMK were strong enough to average 45.1 per cent at the polls.³

The Dravida Kazaghram-Communist alliance was based, according to the CPI organ *Crossroads*, on the following points of agreements: (1) the Dravida Kazaghram stands for replacing the Congress Raj; (2) it is a fighter for civil liberties; (3) it supports workers' and peasants' struggles; (4) it is a friend of the USSR, Peoples' China and the Liberation Movement in Asia. The two parties differed, however, by Communist diagnosis, because the CPI was opposed to the anti-Brahminism of the DK and it did not agree with the goal of Dravidasthan.⁴

It was the hope of the Communist Party that, in the alliance, it might be able to gradually infiltrate the leadership of the Dravidian Movement, which ultimately would enable the Communists to rid the DK of those features undesirable from the Communist point of view. Communist leader S. A. Dange—himself a Brahmin—said, "On this question of anti-Brahminism and Dravidasthan, we don't agree with the Dravida Kazaghram. But our alliance will bring to it the proletarian leadership which will ultimately change those features for the good of both parties and the people as a whole."⁵ Ajoy Ghosh, General Secretary of the CPI, feeling it necessary to justify the alliance to leftists critical of Communist association with a communal party, emphasized that the CPI would never make truce with communal parties such as the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, or the Jan Sangh, but that the DK was essentially a progressive rather than a communal party.⁶

² Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, December 10, 1960). Richard L. Park and S. V. Kogekar, *Reports on the Indian General Elections, 1951-52* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1956), pp. 89-90, 95-6.

³ Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 183.

⁴ *Crossroads* (Bombay), December 28, 1951.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

Naicker too felt called upon to justify the alliance of the two unavoidable rivals, saying that "my enemy's enemy is my friend." He likened the alliance to a railway travel friendship.

Passengers travelling in a compartment become friends, their friendship lasts until they reach their destinations. Each passenger gets down at his particular way station and goes his own way. That is the friendship between the Communist Party and the Dravida Kazhagam. We want to see the Congress Party defeated at the polls.⁷

The Communist-DK alliance was a short-lived matter of mere convenience, with the fissures of dissolution evident at its inception. Less than a year after the elections, Naicker enumerated his reasons for breaking off the friendship, charging the Communists with treachery and with "secret attempts to convert Dravida Kazhagam branches into Communist Party units." Perhaps the fundamental reason, however, lay in the Brahmin predominance in the Tamilnad Communist leadership and in the Kazhagam belief that the Communists were subservient to North Indian domination. "The Communists have their office at a foreign place, Bombay or Delhi," Naicker said, "and they are just as interested in exploiting our country as any of the other foreign-controlled parties. Besides, most of the Communist leaders are Brahmins. Ramamurthi is a *pucca* Brahmin. The editors of *Janashakti* (Communist Tamil weekly) are Brahmins. Wherever a Brahmin goes, into the Communist Party or anywhere else, he wants to support caste distinctions."⁸

The CPI's Brahmin-"tainted" leadership was a serious liability in Tamilnad, where the party had never successfully identified itself with the aspirations of the Tamil peoples. On the other hand, Communist support in Madras State, before States Reorganization in 1956, was concentrated in the non-Tamil areas of Malabar and Andhra, where they had identified themselves with regional nationalism and had found support among caste associations, such as the Kammass of the Telegu region. Any intimate association between the Tamil-based Dravidian Movement and the CPI would prove disastrous in these areas, where

⁷ Quoted in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-6.

a Dravidasthan would mean subjugation by the Tamil majority. The elections in 1951-52, however, marked the beginning of alternating periods of the CPI's association and disassociation with the DK and the DMK.

The elections also marked the beginning of a series of separate agitations by the DK and the DMK against "northern imperialism." The imposition of Hindi was opposed with mass picketing and the burning of Hindi books. The Five Year Plans were denounced for discrimination against the South. The DK extended its attack to include such instruments and symbols of "Aryan oppression" as the Indian Constitution, the National Flag, sacred Hindu relics and images, and pictures of Gandhi. These demonstrations were often accompanied by violence directed against the Brahmin community, and numerous outrages brought DK members into jail. Nehru decried these agitations as indicative of the party's "tribal mentality."⁹

The DMK demonstrations were more moderate than those of Naicker's Storm Troopers. DMK agitation began with the Three Fronts Campaign of 1953. The first Front was organized to register the protest of the Dravidian people against the increasing economic oppression of the North. The front was symbolically focussed upon the village of Kallakudi in Trichirapalli District. Dalmia, a North Indian industrialist, had established a cement factory in the village and had persuaded the authorities to rename it Dalmiapuram. The DMK proposed to restore the original name to the village. The second Front was directed against "the Delhi Sultanate," and to demonstrate Dravidian national honour, all trains were to be stopped from dawn to dusk on the 15th of July. The third Front, and by all means the most important, was directed against the proposed caste-based education policy of Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari, which would require children to be schooled in the occupations of their parents. The Chief Minister's residence was to be picketed in protest.¹⁰

Annadurai, Sampath, Natarajan, Nedunchezian, and Mathialagan—the "big five" of the DMK—were jailed under preventive arrest, but on the appointed day, the Three Fronts offensive

⁹ J. R. Chandran and M. M. Thomas, *Political Outlook in India Today* (Bangalore: Committee for Literature on Social Concerns, 1956), pp. 123-4.

¹⁰ *Sunday Times*, July 17, 1960.

was made. In Kallakudi and Tuticorin, police opened fire, killing six youths, and altogether more than 6,000 demonstrators were arrested during the day's agitation."¹¹

The significance of the campaign lies not so much in the number arrested, but rather in its effect upon C. R.'s Congress Ministry. His educational scheme to perpetuate duty according to caste (*Varnashrama Dharma*) was opposed not only by the DMK, but also by large numbers of Congressmen. Taking advantage of the bitter agitation against the bill and widespread support for the campaign, these Congressmen, rather than exploring the possibilities of compromise and persuading C. R. to drop the unpopular measure, took the opportunity to get rid of him.¹²

The President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee, K. Kamaraj Nadar—long termed the "King-maker"—took over the reins of power from Rajagopalachari. An astute politician of lower caste, Kamaraj immediately began to consolidate his position as Chief Minister. Though only 49 years of age, he was already a heroic figure, "a sanyasi in white clothes." Joining the Congress in 1920, he embodies Gandhian self-sacrifice as a bachelor, in his constructive work for the party, and in his six jail sentences, with a total imprisonment of more than 3,000 days.¹³ Unlike C. R. and much of the Brahmin leadership in the Madras Congress Party, however, Kamaraj is a man of the people. He speaks almost entirely in Tamil, and his powerful political machine is rooted in the soil of traditional loyalties and primordial identification. Indeed, Kamaraj represents, perhaps more clearly than anyone in India, the growing trend in State leadership toward a regionalization and traditionalization of politics and the ability of the political "broker" who is able to operate effectively at the local level within the strictures of village factionalism, caste, and communal identification, and at the same time function within the essentially modern political context of parliamentary democracy.

Kamaraj made a bid for the support of the Vanniyar caste, and drew its political representatives, the Tamilnad Toilers'

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² V. P. Raman, "Politics in Madras," *Quest*, III, No. 3 (December, 1957-January, 1958), p. 16.

¹³ *Hindu*, March 15, 1962.

Party and the Commonweal Party, into the Congress fold. C. R. had previously persuaded 6 Commonweal Assembly members to support the Congress, but they had refused to join the party. In return for the support, C. R. appointed Manikkavelu Naicker to a cabinet post. The Tamilnad Toilers remained in opposition, although in 1954, the Toilers gave full support to Kamaraj's Ministry and Padayachi joined the cabinet. The dissolution of the Commonweal and Tamilnad Toilers soon followed, and in response the Congress promised to choose a Vanniyar as Chairman of the North and South Arcot District Board. Many of the upper caste members of the North Arcot Board, however, refused to vote for a Vanniyar and instead elected a Reddiar. Threatened with the alienation of the Vanniyar community, the Congress suspended the recalcitrant members from the party.¹⁴

Kamaraj, a Nadar of humble peasant origins, shrewdly realized that if the Congress Party in Tamilnad was to retain power, it would have to accommodate traditional loyalties. Aware of the growing sense of nationality and "Dravidianism" among the people of the Tamil country, Kamaraj appealed to primordial sentiment and Tamil patriotism, and included no Brahmins in his cabinet. Soon after Kamaraj came to power, he had to face a by-election and made a bid for the support of Ramaswamy Naicker.¹⁵ The DK leader, who had carried on bitter anti-Hindi campaigns in 1952 and 1953 against the Congress Government, extended his full support to the new Ministry and, out of deference to Kamaraj, declared that no agitations would be staged in 1954.

In 1955, however, in response to the Central Government's moves toward the establishment of Hindi as "the national language," Naicker appealed to members of the Dravida Kazaghams to burn the National Flag on August 1, in order to express opposition to the imposition of Hindi on an unwilling people. "The people of Tamil Nad," he declared, "have not received justice under the flag of the Indian Union."¹⁶ Although Naicker emphasized that the action was not to weaken Kamaraj, the

¹⁴ Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Associations," *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ Raman, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁶ *Hindu*, July 22, 1955.

Chief Minister condemned the proposed agitation. In a statement on the National Government's policy regarding Hindi as a national language, Kamaraj tried to ease the fear of Tamil patriots that an "alien" Aryan language was being imposed upon them. Naicker announced the withdrawal "for the present" of his proposed flag-burning,¹⁷ and within several days, the Union Government issued a statement, through President Prasad, assuring the peoples of South India that there was no question of "imposing" Hindi on anyone. "Sheer practical necessities may drive us to an All-Indian language, but it cannot be forced."¹⁸

The DK's proposed flag-burning had brought a storm of protest from all sections of the State. The Tamilnad Provincial Committee of the Communist Party declared that it would oppose the agitation

which is an affront to our national dignity and is thoroughly provocative and disruptive of our national life. The Indian flag is not the flag of a particular political party but is a symbol of India's freedom and sovereignty. Burning the State Flag is a gross insult to the people of India including the Tamil people who fought against British rule and sacrificed everything so that India may be free. . . .¹⁹

Denunciation of Naicker was not limited to the Congress and Communist parties, however. Annadurai expressed his opposition to the agitation and said that the DMK would in no way cooperate in the flag-burnings.²⁰ M. P. Sivagnana Gramani, leader of the Tamil Arasu Party, called the DK agitation "anarchic" and a challenge to every Tamilian.²¹

The criticism had hardly died down, however, when Naicker moved toward the formation of another campaign, this time against the Constitution, which he called "illegal," as it had been framed before the introduction of adult franchise and the people of Tamilnad had no voice in it.²² The campaign was tabled in favour of another with the intention of burning pictures of Rama, which symbolized Sanskrit Brahmin domination

¹⁷ *Hindu*, July 13, 1955.

¹⁸ *Hindu*, August 13, 1955.

¹⁹ *Hindu*, July 28, 1955.

²⁰ *Hindu*, July 30, 1955.

²¹ *Hindu*, July 24, 1955.

²² *Hindu*, July 31, 1955.

over the peoples of Tamilnad.²³ The government, taking action through preventive arrest, jailed Naicker together with 1,000 DK agitators.²⁴

In the period that followed, Naicker continued his yearly campaigns against Northern "imperialism" and Brahmin domination, still maintaining his support for the Congress Ministry of Kamaraj Nadar. In 1957, he began a series of vicious speeches directed against the Brahmin community, reportedly inviting his followers to assault and kill Brahmins and to set fire to *Agraharams* (Brahmin localities). Upon his arrest, Naicker stated, "In my 40 years of public life, I have not done the slightest injury to anyone. I want to get things done in a peaceful way without resorting to violence. . . . Probably it is my fault in not having done anything of that kind that makes Brahmins do all kinds of false and mischievous propaganda."²⁵

Less than three weeks later, more than 2,000 DK members were arrested for attempting to burn copies of the Indian Constitution and portraits of Gandhi.²⁶ Ill health in the aging Periyar caused his next campaign, to burn the map of the Indian Union, minus Tamilnad, to be postponed three times, but in 1960, Naicker announced that Operation Map-burning would be launched on June 5. On that day, the Black Shirts would march in formation at the head of mass processions, carrying lighted country torches. The processions would then be converted into rallies, in which the faithful would impress Delhi with the

²³ *Hindu*, August 1, 1956.

²⁴ *Hindu*, August 2, 1956.

²⁵ *Hindu Weekly Review*, November 11, 1957. The "facts" of Naicker's speech has never been properly documented, but a DK proverb, chalked on walls throughout Tamilnad at that time, proclaimed: "When you meet a Brahmin and a snake, kill the Brahmin first." Lloyd Rudolph, in his "Urban Life and Populist Radicalism: Dravidian Politics in Madras," *op. cit.*, p. 286 f., reports that at a public meeting in March, 1957, Naicker claimed that Brahmin C. Rajagopalachari resigned his Chief Ministership because of his "threat of violent direction using the knife." (*Indian Express*, March 5, 1957.) When a DK member actually tried to carry out Naicker's injunction three years later, he completely repudiated the idea (*Link*, April 24, 1960). After the incident Naicker expressed his abhorrence of violence as a means of settling political differences and C. N. Annadurai, leader of the DMK, condemned the attempt with the "utmost disgust." Rajagopalachari, as leader of the new Swatantra Party, was paying tribute to Naicker on his 82nd birthday. (*Link*, October 30, 1960.) "Such," Rudolph suggests, "are the miracles wrought by the strength of the Dravidian appeal in Madras politics."

²⁶ *Hindu Weekly Review*, December 23, 1957.

Tamils' disgust for the "Brahmin-Baniya hegemony" exercised from that distant place. Naicker called upon his followers to denounce "the hypocritical concepts of united India and stress their determination to throw the Northerners and Brahmins out of Tamil Nad."²⁷ Several days later, from his hospital bed, Naicker said, "There will be no more agitations this year. Over three thousand of my followers have gone to jail . . . (and) there is no purpose in launching fresh agitations when my followers are behind the bars."²⁸

During the abortive campaigns which followed the 1951-52 elections, it became increasingly evident that the Dravida Kazhagam was moving away from its advocacy of a South Indian Dravidian State to that of a purely Tamil-speaking State of Tamilnad. With the move toward States Reorganization, in February, 1956, high level talks between Nehru and the Chief Ministers of the States began on the proposal for the formation of Dakshina Pradesh, which would incorporate the States of Madras, Mysore and Travancore-Cochin. Forgetting his earlier advocacy of a united South India, Naicker, fearing the submersion of the Tamils in the Dravidian whole, warned that "Dakshina Pradesh formation (would be) a life and death matter for Tamilians. It will be also a suicide for you and all. It may provoke unprecedented agitation by Tamilians. Pray save us and Tamil Nad."²⁹

The idea of Dakshina Pradesh was abandoned and, in December, 1956, the States were reorganized along linguistic lines, an action preceded in 1953 by the formation of Andhra out of the Telegu country of Madras State. With the loss of its Telegu and Malayalam areas, Madras became one with Tamilnad. In regard to Dravidasthan, the DK issued a statement saying that in view of the creation of Andhra Pradesh and in view of the fact that peoples of Kerala and Mysore were indifferent to Dravidasthan, those in Tamilnad would have to be content with Tamilnad as Dravida Nad. Naicker indicated that the door would be left open for all Dravidians to join in a united Dravidasthan at some future day if it was so desired.³⁰

²⁷ *Link*, June 5, 1960.

²⁸ *Link*, June 19, 1960.

²⁹ *Hindu*, February 2, 1956.

³⁰ *Hindu*, June 22, 1956.

While the formation of linguistic States led Naicker to abandon his goal of Dravidasthan, States Reorganization also led to the creation of a new political party of Tamil nationalism. The Tamil Arasu (Tamil Kingdom Movement) began in 1947 as a cultural faction of 40 members within the Madras Congress Party. Founded by M. P. Sivagnana Gramani, the group advocated the formation of linguistic States, then a controversial issue within the Congress. With the formation of Andhra, the Arasu agitated against the inclusion of certain Tamil areas within the Telegu State. Congress opposed the agitation and expelled the Arasu members from the party. In 1960, the Tamil-speaking areas of Andhra were reincorporated into Madras, and the Arasu was urged to come back into the Congress.³¹

The Arasu, however, had taken on an inner-life of its own and refused to re-enter the Congress. Gramani, educated only through the fourth grade, had been drawn into the Congress at the age of 20. Born of the Gramani caste of toddy tappers, he joined Gandhi and fought for prohibition against his own community and as a Congress member went to jail several times. During his imprisonment, he began a study of Tamil literature and became known as "Silambu Selvar," taken from the title of a Tamil classic of which he is a special student. *Silambu Selvar* illustrated to Gramani the fundamental unity of Tamilnad, for the action of the classic takes place in all three of the Tamil kingdoms—unique in Tamil literature. Out of these studies, Gramani came to advocate a united and autonomous Tamilnad, but not the separation of the Tamil country from the rest of India. The Arasu stands for greater autonomy in a socialist pattern, but not for Tamil independence. The Central Government would have only three powers: defence, foreign affairs, and transport-communications.³²

The estimated membership of the party, almost entirely limited to the lower middle classes of Madras City, is about 15,000. *Sengone*, a Tamil weekly, is the official organ of the party. The Arasu has not contested elections, supporting instead independent candidates who stand for the general principles of the party. The Arasu opposes both the DK and the DMK.³³

³¹ Interview with E. V. Mani, party official of the Tamil Arasu (Madras: October 8, 1960).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

Another movement, "We Tamils," sharply in contrast to the more moderate Tamil Arasu, advocates a separate and independent "consanguineous" nation of the Tamil peoples. Its concern has been directed primarily to the Tamils of Ceylon, who would be included in their State.

The five years between the First and Second General Elections in Madras State had brought momentous changes in the character of Tamil politics. Filled with the turbulence of successive agitations by the DK and the DMK and the emergence of two new contenders in the political arena, the times were characterized primarily by an increasing Tamilization of politics. Kamaraj, "the king-maker made king," forced the Congress to face a rather rustic reality, that caste was very much a part of politics in India.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND GENERAL ELECTIONS

WITH Ramaswami Naicker supporting Kamaraj's Congress ministry, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham soon became the vanguard of the Dravidian Movement. In the years immediately following the split in the Kazagham, the two parties, the DK and the DMK, often demonstrated striking similarity in aims and action. Yet, in spite of a unity of purpose—the creation of Dravidasthan—there emerged major differences. The formation of the Kamaraj Government in 1954 was a turning point for both parties and marked the beginning of a major transition within the Dravidian Movement. The DK abandoned its aim of a Dravidian State in favour of Tamilnad and pledged its support to a Congress non-Brahmin Chief Minister. The new government, while not abandoning the secular unity of the Indian Constitution, took on a new regional image of Tamil nationalism. Undercutting the growing power of the Dravidian appeal through a process of accommodation and revitalizing the stagnating Congress Party, Kamaraj had given the Congress in Madras a new face.

The DMK, in exploiting the anxiety created under the impact of social mobilization in an expanding identity horizon, appealed to the "transitional" individual with the promise of a new re-orientation. It held out the image of Tamil identity and nationalism, of a glorious history and tradition and of an unfulfilled aspiration, Dravidasthan.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, having failed to contest the 1951-52 elections, sought access to the political system outside the democratic framework through mass demonstration and agitation. While the party used these campaigns as a means of augmenting its organizational strength and of winning mass support, agitation was also directed toward influencing public policy, as in its campaigns against the imposition of Hindi on

the South.¹ The increasingly Tamilian character of the Congress Ministry under Kamaraj, however, robbed the DMK of its claim to represent Tamil nationalism in Madras politics. In reaction for survival, the DMK, while still waving the symbolic banner of Dravidasthan, gradually began to formulate demands representing a specificity of interest, together with a basic acceptance of constitutional procedures. Extra-democratic agitations on the part of the DMK became a part of the larger aspect of lobbying and parliamentary participation.

With the approach of the 1957 General Elections, the DMK became increasingly concerned with basic economic issues and the plight of the industrially underdeveloped South. The fundamental problem for the DMK, however, was the "Brahmin-Bania" domination of business and industry in Madras. Even when ownership lay in the hands of South Indians, the firms were usually dependent upon North Indian banking sources. "Almost all banks in the South are controlled by Marwaris . . . northern classes," declared a prominent leader of the DMK. "They are slowly buying up the textile industries and more than 90 per cent of export-import trade is in their hands. The government plants under the Plans have even been put in the hands of North Indians. Except for textiles, every economic activity is dominated by northern elements, even the big plantations which were formerly in the hands of Europeans."² These views were reluctantly confirmed by G. Rajagopalan, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee and member of the Rajya Sabha from Madras. Enumerating the transport, sugar, and cement industries, he indicated that "the vast majority of industries are controlled by the northern-Brahmin elements."³

The DMK charged that the Marwaris are "the power behind the throne" in New Delhi and that they want to keep the South as their own private economic reserve. They attacked the Five Year Plans as an instrument of Bania tyranny, a scheme to industrialize the North while leaving the South open to exploitation by Marwari financiers. "The benighted south has simply

¹ Weiner, *Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 186-215.

² Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (Madras, October 20, 1960).

³ Interview with G. Rajagopalan (New Delhi, January 27, 1961).

passed from British hands to still worse Marwari tyranny.”⁴ The Marwari was blamed for almost all the woes of the Dravidian people:

The helpless peasant who loses his only hut and the small bit of land to the Marwari moneylender . . . remembers to the end of his life that a north Indian deprived him by unfair means of his food and shelter. To him all north Indians are the same, be they moneylenders or cloth shop owners. The petty retail trader, who winds up his provisions store—owing to uneconomic competition in the shape of price reduction from formidable north Indian cartels—finds later that they have raised commodity prices to a very high level. . . . Money-lending has resulted in many south Indians becoming insolvent. Sometimes the accrued high rate and unfair interest has rendered south Indian families close to ruination. In fact north Indian migration is the root cause for the present downtrodden state of south Indian society.⁵

South Indian businessmen, even the powerful Naidus and Chettiers who control the textile industries of Coimbatore, find it difficult to compete with the economically entrenched Marwari. The mill owners have invested substantial funds in the Dravidian Movement, hoping to “ennoble their pursuit of private interest with ringing universal slogans.”⁶ The support of Tamil entrepreneurs, however, was first given to the DK, which was attacked in 1951 as “the party of the weak and timid South Indian capitalist class. . . . It is an open secret that the DK movement is financed by the mill owners of Coimbatore.”⁷ Annadurai has increasingly received donations from the non-Brahmin capitalist interests, but the DMK directs its appeal primarily to the non-Brahmin depressed rather than the well-to-do. The orientation of the party is socialist, surrounded by

⁴ A. S. Venu, *Dravidasthan*, p. 34, cited in Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 131.

⁵ S. Vedaratnam, *A Plea for Understanding: a Reply to the Critics of the Dravidian Progressive Federation* (Conjeevaram: Vanguard Publishing House, 1951), p. 33, cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁶ Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁷ *Indian Express* (Delhi), August 6, 1952, cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

a mystic aura of communism. Annadurai discounts the charges of heavy capitalist support for the DMK.

It is very easy to secure the support of the capitalists and industrialists to our cause by giving them a blank check. They will be only too willing to support us because of their natural desire to step into the shoes of their North Indian counterparts. But we are not here to oblige Dravidian capitalism of any sort, be it North Indian or Dravidian.⁸

In the 1956 Trichi Conference, the DMK decided to contest the forthcoming elections and issued a Manifesto embodying a socialist image. The party called for the abolition of northern domination over the South and for the fullest exploitation of natural resources in Madras. Dravidasthan, the symbol of Tamil nationalist aspiration, was at the most a side issue, for the Manifesto implicitly accepted the existing Constitutional order.

1. Each state should have full freedom to secede from the Indian Union if it desires and should be given full and equal representation in parliament so that the large states do not dominate the others. The central government's taxing powers in the states must be limited.

2. Industry should be nationalized, as "the predominance of private enterprise has been a great impediment to the welfare of the people."

3. The South must have industries to develop, but the Five Year Plans have been formulated mainly to improve the wealth and raise the living standards of the North. The majority of the irrigation and hydroelectric projects and new industries have been concentrated in the North; Dravida Nad has been completely neglected.

4. No wages for personal services should be less than Rs. 100 (\$21) a month and maximum salaries should be no more than twelve times that amount.

5. There should be a ceiling on land holdings to help the peasantry overcome exploitation by intermediaries. Co-

⁸ Quoted by Vedaratnam, *A Plea for Understanding*, p. 34, cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

operative farming should be developed in livestock, poultry and dairying. Fisheries must be developed.

6. The state must meet the national goal of free education through the secondary standard. Several crores of rupees are being wasted in educational schemes actually designed to strengthen the grip of the Congress Party. Education must be free from political, religious or communal bias (i.e., must not stress Hindu writings such as the epic Ramayana).

7. The medium of instruction at all stages must be in the students' mother tongue. The fanaticism with which Hindi is being imposed upon the South is to be deplored. English, being an international language, should be given due encouragement and should be treated on a par with the mother tongue to facilitate the spread of technological and scientific knowledge. To concede Hindi in our State would be dangerous.

8. Uniform wage scales should be established for employees of the central and state governments. "Dearness allowance" should be included in basic pay. Village servants should be paid a living wage.

9. Only Tamil diplomats should be appointed as envoys to countries with many Tamil settlers (e.g., Ceylon, Malaya).

10. It is unnecessary for the Indian government to be spending more than half its income for defence purposes. The government should cut these expenses and use the savings for development.

11. The working class must be provided with housing, medical and leave facilities. The Congress has failed here too. The Five Year Plans help the North Indian worker and discriminate against the South. Profit-sharing and capital-sharing plans are needed.

12. To help the handloom industries, all *dhotis* and *saris* should be handloomed.

13. Tamilnad must not be joined in any bilingual or trilingual state but must include all Tamil-speaking areas. . . . Madras state should be renamed Tamilnad.

14. We must have a classless, casteless society.

15. The D.M.K. deserves the voters' support to provide an effective opposition to the Congress.⁹

Kamaraj denounced the DMK Manifesto as "a patched up affair of bits of the Congress manifesto,"¹⁰ and declared the issue of Dravidasthan an affront to the unity and solidarity of the country and a mean exploitation of India's present problems.¹¹

Naicker, presiding over the Salem District Conference of the DK, advised his followers to oppose all DMK candidates and to actively campaign for Kamaraj.¹²

Since Mr. Kamaraj has done his best to serve the Tamilians, since he has changed Acharyar's educational system designed to perpetuate the caste system, since he has sincerely thwarted the formation of Dakshina Pradesh, since he has conferred many jobs and benefits on Tamilians in the educational and other spheres and since the Brahmins and the DMK people are trying to oust him from power, it has become the duty of all Tamilians to support Mr. Kamaraj and his followers in the elections.¹³

Kamaraj, sensitive to the widespread opposition to Naicker's "black shirts," categorically declared that he had not sought DK support, but added that if Naicker canvassed votes for him out of his own free will, he would certainly not discourage him.¹⁴ He sought to make it unmistakably clear that neither he nor the Congress Party shared the anti-Brahmin sentiments of Naicker. Kamaraj said that in 1952, Naicker had referred to him as a "poisonous snake," and that the only reason the Periyar now supported Congress was out of personal antipathy toward the DMK, and possibly, because of Congress welfare activities among non-Brahmins in Madras, such as free education and mid-day meals for poor children.¹⁵ While Kamaraj repeatedly denied seeking DK support, Naicker declared that

⁹ Quoted in Talbot, "Raising a Cry for Secession," *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰ *Hindu*, February 17, 1957.

¹¹ *Hindu*, June 11, 1956.

¹² *Hindu*, January 22, 1957.

¹³ *Indian Express*, February 14, 1957.

¹⁴ *Hindu*, February 14, 1957.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

“when Mr. Kamaraj took up office, he came and asked for our support. We said, ‘If you do all that we of the DK want, we will give you our support.’ Mr. Kamaraj answered, ‘It is my duty to help you in your programme and I shall do it willingly.’”¹⁶ Regardless of whether Kamaraj actively sought DK support or not, a large number of Congressmen opposed any connection between the Congress and the DK.

These dissidents resigned *en bloc* from Congress, forming their own party, the Tamil Nad Congress Reforms Committee. There were a variety of motivating factors. Some had been among the North Arcot District Board members at the time of the Vanniyar controversy. Some were Brahmins who felt that they had suffered discrimination at the hand of the low-caste Kamaraj. Others were motivated by individual frustration in their fights for Congress tickets or were prompted solely by their concern for party “purity.” Kamaraj was attacked for humouring caste and class at the cost of Congress principles. Tickets, they charged, were sold to the highest bidder, and the Congress creed had yielded to the almighty Rupee.¹⁷ The Congress Reforms Committee sought to oppose those “undesirable official Congress candidates” who appeared favourable to the DK.¹⁸ A highly respected independent politician, S. K. Balasubramanian, said that the Congress had selected 45 former DK members to contest the ensuing elections in preference to “many true and loyal Congressmen” who had courted prison several times during the political struggle for independence. Kamaraj was denounced as having entered into “an unholy alliance with the Dravida Kazaghams.”¹⁹

The Communists also lashed out at the Congress-DK “alliance” which, according to varied reports, was illustrated by the fact that both Congress and DK flags were flown together at a meeting organized to support Congress candidates. P. Ramamurthi, leader of the CPI in Madras, said that by their alliance with communal and anti-national organizations such as the DK, the Congress leadership of Tamilnad was doing a great

¹⁶ *Hindu*, February 17, 1957.

¹⁷ V. P. Raman, “Politics in Madras,” *Quest*, III, No. 3 (December, 1957-January, 1958), pp. 18-19.

¹⁸ *Hindu*, January 19, 1957.

¹⁹ *Hindu*, January 20, 1957.

disservice to national interests.²⁰ He appealed to the electorate to vote only for those candidates and parties which believed in preserving the political unity and independence of India and to oppose those Congressmen who had accepted the aid of the DK. Ramamurthi extended his attack to the DMK, which he branded as politically immature. The cry for Dravidasthan, he said, "was an attempt . . . to cover the exploitation of the people by South Indian capitalists."²¹ M. R. Venkataraman, Secretary of the party in Madras, stated that the movement for Dravidasthan "ignores the reality as well as the people's aspirations of linguistic states in a resurgent, united India, and is disruptive and anti-democratic. Such a slogan has to be rejected by our people in the very interests of Tamil Nad and India."²²

The DMK did not remain silent during the controversy over the "alliance" between Congress and the DK. Annadurai suggested that Naicker was carrying on propaganda for Kamaraj with the intention of annihilating the Congress. This view was either totally naïve wishful thinking or a move to encourage a Congress rejection of DK support, for there was never an official alliance between the two parties and virtually no personal association between Kamaraj and Naicker. Indeed, Naicker did not extend DK support to all Congress candidates, but only to those known as the "camp followers" of Kamaraj. He went out of his way to campaign against those Congressmen who were not in sympathy with the Kamaraj Ministry, those who had chosen to remain within the party at the time of the formation of the Congress Reforms Committee.²³ The primary motivating factors behind Naicker's support for Kamaraj were the Congress welfare policies among non-Brahmins, and more important, the deep antipathy for the DMK. Naicker found Kamaraj a ready partner in his attacks on the DMK, and the Chief Minister discovered in the DK a useful counterbalance against the growing strength of the DMK.

As the election approached, 788 contestants had filed for the 205 seats of the Madras Legislative Assembly. The final results brought the Congress a resounding victory, but the DMK had

²⁰ *Hindu*, March 7, 1957.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Hindu*, December 26, 1956.

²³ *Hindu*, March 10, 1957.

TABLE 1
GENERAL ELECTIONS IN MADRAS: LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY *

	1951-52†			1957			
	Seats Won	Votes	Per Cent of Votes	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes	Per Cent of Votes
Congress ..	133	3,336,054	35.5	201	151	5,046,576	45.3
DMK ..	....	....	....	112	15	1,622,181‡	14.6
CRC ..	....	....	....	50	14	1,009,223‡	9.6
CPI ..	17	909,022	10.0	55	4	823,579	7.4
PSP ..	3	1,088,173	12.0	23	2	293,778	2.6
Socialist ..	..	....	....	8	2	124,343‡	1.1
Forward Bloc§ ..	3	....	....	2	2	108,904	1.0
Other parties & Independents ..	34	3,878,829	42.5	337	15	2,108,156	18.4
Totals	190	9,212,078	....	778	205	11,136,740	....

* Phillips Talbot, "The Second General Elections: Voting in the States," *India*, Report PT-6-'57 (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1957), p. 42.

† 1951-52 figures adjusted for territory of present Madras State.

‡ Unofficial figures.

§ The Forward Bloc, representing the Maravan caste of two taluqs in Ramanathapuram District, cooperated with the CRC in the Assembly.

TABLE 2
GENERAL ELECTIONS IN MADRAS: LOK SABHA *

			1951-52† Seats Won	1957 Seats Won
Congress	..	..	22	31
DMK	..	..	..	2
CPI	..	..	2	2
CRC	..	..	..	2
PSP	..	..	..	..
KMPP	..	..	1	..
Socialist	..	..	..	1
Forward Bloc	..	..	1	1
Commonweal	..	..	3	..
Tamilnad Toilers	..	..	2	..
Independents	..	..	5	2

* James Roach, "India's 1957 Elections," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. xxvi, No. 5 (May, 1957). Government of India, Election Commission, *Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-1952*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1955). Government of India, Election Commission, *Report on the Second General Elections in India, 1957*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1959).

† Adjusted figures to the territory of present Madras.

established itself as the second most powerful party in Madras, winning 15 seats and 14.6 per cent of the vote.

The Congress Party, even with the withdrawal of the CRC, increased the percentage of its vote from 35.5 to 45.3, to capture 151 seats in the Assembly. This increase came largely because of Kamaraj's attempt to identify the Congress with Tamil nationalism.

The Communists, on the other hand, dropped from 17 seats in 1951-52 to only 4 in 1957. As these represent adjusted figures to the districts of present Madras State, the CPI losses cannot be attributed to the formation of Andhra, where the Communists were particularly strong in the Kamma caste. In the 1957 elections, the economic appeal of the CPI had been undermined by the Congress. The Madras Communist Party had promised tenants of wet-land areas 50 per cent proceeds of crops, an offer met by the Provincial Committee of the Congress Party. Kamaraj reversed his own party's fifty-fifty recommendation, and just

before the elections, passed the Fair Rent Act, giving the tenant 60 per cent.²⁴ The Communists were further weakened by the fact that they had cut themselves off from the current of nationalist sentiment in Tamilnad. "It must be admitted that many of us did not grasp the tremendous democratic significance of the (Tamilnad) national factor," wrote a Communist Party leader, and "without a doubt, the minimization of this factor by us helped the DMK to capitalize anti-Congress sentiment in a big way."²⁵

The DMK emerged as the major challenge to the Congress Party in Tamilnad. With 14.6 per cent of the vote, the DMK would have secured a greater representation in the Assembly than its 15 seats, had not the Communist Party thrown its weight toward Congress in several three-cornered fights. In addition to its showing in the Assembly, the DMK contested 8 seats for the Lok Sabha and won 2, these going to R. Dharmalingam and E. V. K. Sampath, one of the founders of the DMK. DMK support, however, was basically limited to the urban areas of northern Madras State. Its seats were won only in Madras City and in North and South Arcot, areas with a comparatively high degree of communications exposure. The DMK made no inroads into the rural-based stronghold of the Congress in the districts of central and southern Madras, including Tanjore District, the locus of DK strength.

Following its successes in the General Elections, the DMK, aware of its urban strength, planned a major offensive to capture control of the Madras City Corporation, and in the municipal elections held in the Spring of 1959, the party made a dramatic show of power which shook Congress complacency. In electoral alliance with the Communist Party, the DMK won control of three of the five largest city governments in Madras State. The Tamilnad Communist Party, sensitive to its disastrous defeats in the 1957 elections, extended its support to DMK candidates in the hope of Kazaghams backing in the areas of Communist strength. Annadurai welcomed the "arrangement" and told a May Day rally that the Communists "are of the poor, for the poor, and so are we." He went on to predict that "ultimately

²⁴ Lloyd Rudolph, "Urban Life and Populist Radicalism: Dravidian Politics in Madras," *Journal of Asian Studies*, xx, No. 3 (May, 1961), p. 293.

²⁵ *New Age*, June, 1957, cited in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

we may agree that both of us should jointly represent Communism."²⁶

In the Madras City Corporation, the DMK won 45 of the 100 seats, electing with Communist support one of its members, A. P. Arasu, as Mayor. In return for the support, the DMK backed the Communist candidate for the chairmanship of the Coimbatore municipality. The DMK candidate became Vice-Chairman. In Salem, factionalism within the Congress Party resulted in an Independent being elected as Chairman with DMK support. The Congress maintained control of Tanjore, but in Madurai, for the first time in decades, the Congress lost control of the municipality. Having previously had an absolute majority on the 36-member Council, the Congress was able to salvage only 9 seats. The Congress contested 35 of the 36 seats, polling 47,881 votes. The CPI, in an electoral arrangement with the DMK, contested 12 seats, winning all with a total vote of 32,862. The DMK won 2 seats, and together with heavy support from Independents, they could have easily provided the Communists with control of the city government in Madurai. The Communists chose instead to maintain maximum maneuverability and avoid the entangling responsibility of actual control.²⁷

The Congress had suffered tremendous losses, with its majorities in the 55 municipalities of Madras having dropped from 27 to 22, and out of a total of 1,513 seats it had dropped from 709 to 647.²⁸ The Congress losses, however, were almost exclusively in urban areas. The DMK and the Communists, on the other hand, made a show of strength in the cities, but their weakness in the towns and villages of rural India was revealed in the election statistics. Contesting 75 seats, the Communists won 30—almost entirely in the larger urban areas. The DMK set up 350 candidates in 20 different municipalities, but won only 40, many of which were in triangular contests where the votes were hopelessly split. In over 30 straight contests, the Congress candidates thoroughly routed their DMK rivals.²⁹ Out of the 54 bodies holding municipal elections, the DMK attained repre-

²⁶ Quoted in Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

²⁷ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (Madras: October 20, 1960; New Delhi, December 10, 1960). *Link*, April 5, 1959. Rudolph, "Urban Life and Radical Politics in Madras," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁸ Rudolph, *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ *Link*, March 22, 1959.

sentation on 30, but in only 7 did it have more than 5 members on the Council.³⁰

The DMK's control of the Madras Corporation brought the party to the reigns of power for the first time, and the election of a DMK Mayor and Deputy Mayor was hailed as a hallmark in the Dravidian Movement. The Mayor of Madras is elected by the 100 Councillors of the Corporation, and a 30-year old convention governing the mayoral elections ordains that a non-Brahmin Hindu, a Brahmin, a Muslim, a Christian, and a Harijan be selected to the office on a strictly communal rotation. Introduced by the Justice Party leader A. Ramaswami Mudaliar when he was president of the Corporation, it is usually referred to as the "A. R. Convention," both because of its originator and because it is an "accommodating and rotating" convention of communal representation.³¹

The DMK Mayor, Arasu, was elected under the system, and in December of that same year, Abdul Khader was elected Mayor, taking the position as a Muslim. Khader, a DMK member, was elected with 52 votes against the rival, Congress's 43 votes. As in the previous election, the DMK and the CPI allied, with the support of two Independents, to defeat the Congress candidate.³²

One year later, in November, 1960, for the third consecutive time, the DMK candidates captured both positions as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, defeating the Congress, 53 to 45. In the elections, the Congress departed from the A. R. Convention in selecting their candidate for Mayor. The DMK rushed to the defence of the communal rotation, branding the Congressmen "cut-throats of democracy." In breaking the convention, "the Congress Party had disgraced itself" before the people, and the DMK placed another ember in the fire to be used against the party in the 1962 elections.³³

The DMK, however, did not come out of the controversy unscathed. N. Jeevaratnam, leader of the DMK Councillors in the Corporation, was relieved of his post because of his bitter opposition to Munuswamy, the Kazaghams candidate for Mayor.

³⁰ *Link*, April 17, 1959.

³¹ *Sunday Times*, December 4, 1960.

³² Dispatch to *Link* from Madras correspondent, December 4, 1959. (Unpublished.)

³³ *Sunday Times*, December 4, 1960.

Disappointed in his own bid for the office, Jeevaratnam told Annadurai that he had no business in overlooking his claims for Mayoralty. "You (Annadurai) are worse than Hitler in your treatment of your fellow party members. You are a dictator without the capacity to deliver the goods."³⁴

The DMK had found electoral success in the General Elections of 1957 and in the municipal elections which followed. Beneath the black and red banners of the DMK, however, there seethed a discontent which was soon to erupt in a crisis.

³⁴ Unpublished proof, *Link*, November 20, 1960.

CHAPTER VIII

CRISIS AND VICTORY

IN the two years immediately following the 1957 elections, there appeared within the ranks of the DMK growing dissatisfaction with the party leadership and activities. The crisis came in December, 1959, when Finance Minister Subramanian challenged the DMK in its annual boycott of the Governor's address to the Legislative Assembly. As a Congress member wanting to know whether the DMK accepted the Constitution of India, Subramanian said,

If you are for working the Constitution, you have to accept the Constitution, as it is worded now and abide by it in letter and spirit. If your claim, on the other hand, is to wreck the Constitution, then decency and political honesty demand that you admit your intentions, motives and all, and face all the consequences. During the freedom struggle we Congressmen made no bones about our objectives. We said we would never accept the British made Constitution and that we would do everything in our power to wreck it. We faced the consequences of our actions then, boldly and fearlessly. I challenge you to do the same, now that you give us to understand that you don't accept the Constitution of India.¹

Annadurai, in response to the challenge, issued a definition of DMK ideology, proclaiming its goal as the creation of a decentralized government. To clarify the DMK position, Annadurai set forth two principles. First, that by "North Indian domination," his party meant that under the present Constitution, the Central Government is invested with extraordinary powers, so designed that it has come to dominate the States. Second, the DMK seeks nothing more than "amendment of the Constitution through perfectly Constitutional methods."²

¹ *Link*, July 3, 1960.

² *Link*, July 3, 1960, and December 27, 1959.

Sampath, disillusioned at the talk of amendment, issued a secret letter to all members of the party's General Council, giving full expression to his "deep sense of agony and frustration at the unseemly sight of our leadership developing cold feet even at mild threats to our settled and cozy way of living to frighten us into giving up our aim of Dravidasthan."

Are we serious in demanding separation, in demanding a separate homeland for the people of the South? If we are serious, why should we be afraid to state our position boldly, that freedom is not won by speeches, not by scrupulous adherence to May's *Parliamentary Practice*. It is achieved only through blood and toil, suffering and sacrifice. If we are not prepared for prolonged strife and supreme sacrifices, then, let's call it a day and wind up the show.³

Condemning Annadurai's "dictatorship" and casting aspersions on the leader's public and private morality, Sampath reminded his fellow party members that the DMK came to be founded because "our former leader, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, refused to democratize the Dravida Kazhagam of which we were active members. When the Periyar equated the party with his personal property, we protested. Should we keep quiet now, when Annadurai attempts it?"⁴

In a public speech shortly following the circulation of the letter, Sampath proclaimed his views.

The Northerners used to have some fear of our activities in the South. This fear is no longer there! Obviously they have found us out, judged us for what we are worth. They know that except for shouting empty slogans and indulging in rhetoric, we mean no serious or sensible business. This state of affairs is most painful to me, especially, for I have been one of the DMK's founder-members.⁵

He condemned the DMK as a glamour party. "We worship cinema stars and follow them, with astonishing servility—in all

³ *Link*, July 3, 1960.

⁴ *Link*, March 27, 1960.

⁵ *Link*, May 22, 1960.

probability the cinema stars will not take serious note of us once they finish exploiting the DMK's following for expanding their fan circle." ⁶

Annadurai, immediately on the defensive, tried to justify his statements in the Assembly through a series of articles published in one of his three weeklies, *Dravida Nadu*. He testified to his "rock-like faith in the destiny of Dravidian homeland," and that all he meant by the term, "seeking amendment of the Constitution," was that the party should adopt constitutional methods of agitation to further its political objectives. To Sampath's plea for "agitation, agitation, and agitation until the end is achieved," ⁷ Annadurai responded humbly.

Tambi (little brother), I speak the truth. . . . I am really thrilled at the spirit of daring you have displayed. However, you should allow me my claim for wisdom, acquiring through experience in serious politics for over four decades. I readily concede I lack the spirit of daring which you so abundantly possess. My advice is that it would be unwise to set a deadline for achieving our political objective of Dravidasthan, especially now, when we have not prepared the masses for prolonged struggle. We must contest more elections, win more seats and that way, win the confidence of the people; and when it is hot, we can strike and strike hard.⁸

Sampath admitted that a "deadline" could not be set, but suggested that "once mass support to a movement is assured, there is no need for agitation at all. But to win mass support there is need for such political agitations as would keep alive and strengthen our movement."⁹

In order to maintain party unity, Annadurai placated Sampath's demands by giving him free reign at the June, 1959, General Council meeting at Komarapalayam. In a call to militancy, the body resolved to launch an "all-out struggle" against the President's pronouncement of Hindi as the official language of India.¹⁰ An "Action Committee" was formed under Sampath's leadership and it was decided to stage a black-flag demon-

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Link*, July 3, 1960.

⁷ *Link*, March 27, 1960.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Link*, July 3, 1960. *Sunday Times*, July 3, 1960.

stration against the President upon his arrival in Madras, August 6. The resolution brought an immediate response from the Central Government. Home Minister Pandit Pant denied that President Prasad's Order was in any way a departure from the Prime Minister's assurances that Hindi would not be imposed upon an unwilling people. President Prasad declared that he wished to "allay the misgivings of some of our non-Hindi speaking brethren. Hindi will never be imposed on anyone." It was not until Sampath received a letter from Nehru, however, that the DMK withdrew its ultimatum.¹¹

The outcries of the DMK had become a voice of Hindi opposition to which the Communists and regional patriots allied themselves. Knowing full well that there was no immediate danger of Hindi being imposed upon the South, the DMK exploited the situation for all it was worth, capitalizing on the issue to both gain publicity and consolidate the party ranks. Their success was realized in widespread newspaper coverage and in the response of Union officials and Madras Congressmen. In the words of a Delhi weekly of political opinion,

A small minority party, and admittedly a subcommunal anachronism in a secular India with no more than 15 seats in a State Assembly of 206, it had suddenly propelled itself into all-India attention and at the highest levels. With the general elections practically round the corner, the DMK's objective was thus more than achieved.¹²

The agitation's success was largely attributed to Sampath, and, in September, the General Council convened for a final resolution of inner-party conflict. As the Council members slowly gathered, however, the drama began to fade from the trial of strength. Annadurai, in private negotiation with Sampath, proposed that both he and Sampath would take the key positions in the party and that regardless of personal differences, they would pledge to preserve the unity of the party.¹³ In the assembled Council, Sampath was unanimously elected as Chair-

¹¹ *Sunday Times*, August 7, 1960.

¹² *Thought*, April 20, 1960.

¹³ *Link*, October 2, 1960.

man, and in turn proposed that Annadurai be elected un-animously as General Secretary of the DMK.¹⁴

Behind the façade of party unity, the two wings were becoming more crystallized. The editor of the DMK Tamil daily, *Thani Arasu*, stood with Sampath, as did the Mayor of Madras and 40 other members of the General Council.¹⁵ Representing leftist orientation, the faction favoured continued "alliance" with the CPI and welcomed the Tamilnad Communist resolution, drafted by Venkataraman and Ramamurthi, calling for a "closer and rational" understanding with the DMK because it "is essentially a left force."¹⁶ Annadurai, however, was anxious to terminate the arrangement with the Communists in favour of full-fledged collaboration with C. R.'s newly-formed Swatantra Party, which had already put out feelers for the formation of an electoral alliance between the two parties. Rajagopalachari, who as Congress Chief Minister of Madras before 1954, was the declared arch enemy of the DMK, now sought a marriage with it, dismissing its caste orientation by saying that "the Congress is more communal than the parties which are openly communal."¹⁷

In January, 1961, the General Council met again at Vellore. M. G. Ramachandran and S. S. Rajendran, film stars active in the DMK, were ready to bring a no-confidence motion against Sampath and had collected over 100 signatures out of the 159-member Council. As the Council opened, Sampath put forth a series of demands, but was interrupted when the meeting was invaded by men who turned the conference into a brawl.¹⁸ Sampath, who had been beaten up, reported that the "hooligans were brought in to intimidate Council members to vote for the no-confidence motion." He resigned his post as Chairman of the General Council and set forth to make his views known.¹⁹

Sampath began an "educational" tour, utilizing public meetings as a means of settling inner-party conflicts. At such a mass meeting in Trichy, Sampath was attacked by a young DMK member, and his colleague, Kannadasan, was assaulted. Annadurai condemned the violence, but Sampath believed the inci-

¹⁴ *Sunday Times*, October 2, 1960.

¹⁵ *Hindustan Times*, January 26, 1961.

¹⁶ *Link*, October 16, 1960.

¹⁷ *Link*, January 8, 1961; January 22, 1961; March 12, 1961.

¹⁸ *Link*, February 5, 1961.

¹⁹ Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, March 20, 1961).

dent to be inspired by the "enemy headquarters in Madras." In protest, he declared an indefinite period of "purificatory fast" to teach Annadurai a lesson. Annadurai responded with elaborate confessions of his errors and pleaded with Sampath to give up the fast. Party treasurer M. Karunanidhi, and S. S. Rajendran, leaders of the anti-Sampath group, resigned from the General Council in order to demonstrate to Annadurai their ardent opposition to Sampath and the left wing in the DMK.²⁰

Less than two months later, Sampath bolted the party, terming it a "political fraud."

Without the Dravidasthan front, the DMK loses its right to exist. It has to exist . . . because it has become a big business that gives profitable employment to a group of leaders in whom control of the party vests. . . . Everybody in the top rung of the DMK ladder knows that Dravidasthan is an empty slogan. Some have said so publicly. Soon after my return from the Soviet Union in 1958, I expressed my doubts about this goal and told Annadurai and others that the slogan had no meaning after the linguistic reorganization of States. I wanted it to be given up and all efforts concentrated on building an effective regional opposition to the Congress. Annadurai appeared to agree with me, but was reluctant to give up the slogan possibly because he and some of his friends might be uprooted from their comfortable positions.²¹

Sampath said that when he provoked the DMK leadership with the question of whether they were really serious about Dravidasthan, they started a campaign of "malign" against him. "Those who were interested in keeping the party going as a commercial proposition united against me. Notable among them were the leading lights of the film lobby in the party . . . which controls the party because it controls its funds. Some of the top leaders in the party, not excluding Annadurai, are more in the movies than in the party." Accusing him of an "ignorance of realities," Sampath said that Annadurai, as leader of the DMK in the Legis-

²⁰ *Link*, March 5, 1961. *Sunday Times*, February 26, 1961; March 5, 1961. Interview with E. V. K. Sampath (New Delhi, March 20, 1961).

²¹ Quoted in *Link*, April 30, 1961.

lative Assembly, was "unprepared for serious debate on most issues."²²

In withdrawing from the DMK, Sampath took a large body of his following with him, including a number of General Council members and 7 of the DMK's 47 Madras City Councillors, including the Mayor, Munuswami. Many of the rebels, including Munuswami, were lured back into the DMK, but a core of Sampath militants stood by the leader.²³ In late April, Sampath set up his own party, the Tamil Nationalist Party, defining its objective as "an autonomous Tamil State," with "the right to secede from the federal structure"—a demand similar to that of Gramani's Tamil Arasu, which welcomed the new party and expressed willingness to cooperate with it.²⁴ At a conference of the Tamil Nationalist Party held in September, Sampath said that he did not wish to create "harmful linguistic antagonisms," and expressed a desire that the TNP would work with other linguistic movements in India.²⁵ Its Election Manifesto issued in December recognized the territorial integrity of India as a Federal Republic, consisting of linguistic States. The Manifesto demanded, however, the right of secession on the Soviet model.²⁶

In spite of the spirit of Sampath's militancy, all but his most dedicated stalwarts slipped quietly back into the ranks of the DMK. If the DMK had all but abandoned its goal of Dravidasthan, its mass following had surely not abandoned the party. Sampath's hunger strike and his accusations against Annadurai had elicited sympathy and support, but the image of integrity he projected was not sufficient to counteract the growing power of the DMK. The promise of political office held the aspiring candidate in the grip of the party and the DMK's increasing concern with specific economic demands was far too attractive to be abandoned by those who had given support to the party. The strength of the DMK remained such that the opposition parties in Madras all sought some sort of electoral arrangement with it, so that they might benefit by association with the "vanguard of Tamil nationalism."

²² *Link*, April 30, 1961.

²³ *Link*, May 28, 1961; *Hindu*, April 10, 1961.

²⁴ *Link*, April 30, 1961; "Another Spokesman for Tamilnad," *Economic Weekly*, April 29, 1961, p. 667; "DMK Split and After," *Economic Weekly*, June 3, 1961, p. 845.

²⁵ *Link*, September 24, 1961.

²⁶ *Hindu*, December 25, 1961.

In answer to Rajagopalachari's attack on him for weakening the DMK in the face of the coming elections, Sampath replied, "Don't trust him. At least verbally the DMK which professes faith in socialism, should not, even by mistake, join hands with a rank reactionary party like the Swatantra which unashamedly stands for exploitation of man by man and seeks to perpetuate social injustice and inequality." Within the DMK itself, there was evidence of misgiving about the growing influence of C. R., and many felt that he was responsible for the rift between Sampath and Annadurai.²⁷

In order to stem the tide of criticism within the party, Annadurai reaffirmed the "essentially left character" of the DMK and announced common grounds with "progressive forces" on issues such as land reform and nationalization of industries held by "usurpers of public wealth."²⁸ Riding both the Swatantra and Communist horses, Annadurai envisaged the possibility of a united Opposition of all parties against the Congress Government. Such an alliance had immediate precedent in the agitation for changing the name of Madras to "Tamilnad," for earlier in the year, under the leadership of Gramani's Tamil Arasu, the Communists, the DMK, the Swatantra, and the PSP staged a united walkout from the Assembly and boycotted the proceedings for two days.²⁹

Communist support in the DMK had largely gone with Sampath, but there still remained a deep suspicion of Rajagopalachari. Desiring effective opposition against Congress, the DMK began a series of dizzily-constructed about-faces in its quest for electoral alliance. In June, Annadurai called for a "much closer and intimate understanding with Rajaji." While C. R. was willing to align "even with the devil" to oust the "entrenched Congress monster," he demanded that Annadurai agree to oppose Communist candidates as "enemies of Tamil race and culture."³⁰

One month later, however, Annadurai was castigated by a DMK meeting in Conjeevaram for overstepping himself in his negotiations with Swatantra.³¹ Later that month, in Madurai,

²⁷ *Link*, May 7, 1961.

²⁸ *Link*, March 19, 1961.

²⁹ *Link*, October 9, 1960; February 12, 1961.

³⁰ *Link*, June 4, 1961; July 9, 1961.

³¹ *Link*, July 2, 1961.

the DMK held its annual conference, which called for the boycott of shops owned by Northerners. With 4,000 delegates and more than 300,000 people attending the opening session, the party avoided any decision on the Swatantra alliance.³² In September, however, the DMK moved closer to its sometimes ally, the Communist Party. In declaring a joint opposition to the Congress's Land Ceiling Bill, Annadurai denounced the legislation as half-hearted, "not a bill to impose ceiling, but one to protect the holdings of landlords . . . a sham, a mockery, an eye-wash. . . ." ³³ In opposition to the Bill, the DMK, the CPI, the Tamil Nationalists, the PSP, and the newly-reactivated Muslim League walked out of the Assembly, and the DMK and CPI proclaimed a united *kisan* front for agitation against it.³⁴

Despite C. R.'s warning that Annadurai's "honeymoon with the Communists" would end in "total disaster for the DMK as a political force,"³⁵ the DMK announced an electoral understanding with the CPI for "straight contests" between the Congress on one hand and the CPI or DMK on the other. As the rallying point for an alliance, the DMK then came to an understanding with Muthuramalinga Thevar's Forward Bloc and Mohammed Ismail's Muslim League.³⁶ In formulating a similar agreement with the Swatantra, however, Rajagopalachari demanded that the DMK back out of its commitments to the Communists. Annadurai gave the nod, and together with C. R., apportioned Assembly and Lok Sabha seats among the allied parties' candidates. Less than a week later, however, Rajagopalachari announced that any formal understanding with the DMK was definitely off. Annadurai responded with the statement that the DMK was severing all electoral alliances with the opposition, except for the Muslim League, "which has but very limited ambitions."³⁷ The electoral lists, which had been formed to minimize a split in opposition against the Congress, remained intact.

The DMK Election Manifesto, drafted by Annadurai, declared its long-range goal as the creation of a Dravidian "Socialist"

³² *Link*, July 23, 1961.

³³ *Link*, September 10, 1961.

³⁴ *Link*, October 8, 1961.

³⁵ *Link*, October 8, 1961.

³⁶ *Link*, December 3, 1961; December 10, 1961.

³⁷ *Link*, December 31, 1961; January 7, 1962; January 14, 1962.

Federation, but that in the meantime the DMK would place before the people an immediate programme. In the 50-page document, the DMK called for the creation of a socialist economy, based on direct taxation and nationalization of banks, big commercial chains, cinema theatres, and transport. If elected, the party would undertake a series of industrial developments, including oil exploration and the construction of an Atomic Power Station. In undertaking all types of industries, the government would progressively minimize the role of the private sector for the ultimate objective of social ownership of all means of production and distribution. If elected the DMK would distribute 3 acres of wet land or 5 acres of dry to each Harijan family without land of its own. It would constitute Wage Boards to fix fair wages for industrial labour and minimum wages for agricultural labour. It would reserve the production of *dhotis* and *saris* exclusively for the handloom industries, and it would give 25 per cent of membership in all co-operative societies to backward communities.³⁸

The Manifesto reflected, as in 1957, an increased concern with specificity of issues—and, even though the demands were less than realistic, the Manifesto played a significant part in the orientation of the DMK's campaign. Indeed, the fact that the Manifesto received elaborate consideration testifies to a growing concern for a broader social base for the party. Dravidasthan, as an election issue, was shelved in favour of a concentration on the problem of rising prices in Madras—a bread-and-butter issue of concern to every voter.³⁹

The DMK also made a concerted attempt to win support from the Brahmin community. It showed a more "liberal" attitude toward Tamil Brahmins than the Dravida Kazaghram, and its membership lay open to Brahmins. Although few joined the movement, one of the DMK leaders, V. P. Raman, is a Brahmin. The party's association with Swatantra did much to ease the anti-Congress Brahmins' fear of the Dravidian Movement,⁴⁰ as

³⁸ *Link*, December 24, 1961.

³⁹ *Hindu*, February 4, 1962; February 6, 1962.

⁴⁰ The Brahmin in Tamilnad has increasingly come to feel discriminated against, if not persecuted. With reservation of seats for "backward" communities in government and universities, he is often denied the position commensurate with his ability and training. This has given rise to an "exodus" of South Indian Brahmins to Bombay and the cities of the North. Aileen Ross indicates that "the Brahmins remaining in the South

it had also brought the support and financial backing of industrial interests. The DMK announced its intention to seek recognition as an all-India Party, and in addition to its efforts in Madras, it would contest Assembly seats in Mysore and Andhra.⁴¹

The thrust of the DMK's expanding social base, however, was directed at the areas of central and southern Madras State. Relying on the cinema as the most effective instrument of communication and the popularity of the film stars as its greatest calling card, the DMK staged rallies throughout the State, emphasizing the issue of rising prices. S. S. Rajendran, one of the most popular Tamil film stars, was himself a DMK candidate for the Assembly from Theni, in Madurai District. Other stars, such as M. G. Ramachandran, campaigned actively for the DMK.⁴² Shivaji Ganesan extended his support to Sampath's Tamil National Movement, but warned, "Artists, keep away from politics."⁴³ M. R. Radha, the DK's representative in the cinema world, campaigned for the Congress, together with a host of other film personalities.⁴⁴ The Congress Party fully exploited the film medium through a short, *Vakkurimai* (The Right to Vote), which starred some of the most prominent names in the Indian film industry. The film was circulated among major cinema houses in Madras, incurring the wrath of the

who cannot compete successfully for the limited occupational openings often become completely discouraged about their futures for they cannot get the type of jobs which their parents, relatives and caste expect them, as Brahmins, to attain." *The Hindu Family in Its Urban Setting* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 194.

B. Kuppaswamy, Professor of Psychology, Presidency College, Madras, reports that among university students interviewed, 67 per cent of Brahmin men said that they were victimized because of their caste, as against 35 per cent of non-Brahmins. "An Investigation of Social Opinion in Madras State" (Madras, 1951), p. 30. (Cyclostyled.)

In a recent court case in Madras, a woman said that she could not be admitted into the State Medical College because she was a Brahmin. Another Brahmin was refused admission into the Government Engineering College on similar grounds. The allotment of seats by the Madras Government on the basis of caste and religion was challenged by the two Brahmins as an infraction of their Fundamental Rights and as a violation of Art. 15 of the Constitution which forbids such discrimination and Art. 29, which offers protection to the citizen against denial of admission to educational institutions. The Supreme Court upheld their contention. *Link*, January 28, 1962.

⁴¹ *Link*, September 3, 1961.

⁴² *Link*, February 18, 1962.

⁴³ *Link*, September 24, 1961.

⁴⁴ *Link*, February 18, 1962.

DMK, which claimed to have been denied the right to show a similar short.⁴⁵

Naicker became a self-appointed wheelhorse of the Congress campaign, nominating Kamaraj as his heir-apparent. "I am old. I may not live very long. After I am gone Kamaraj will safeguard the interests of the Tamils. He is my heir."⁴⁶ The 85-year old Periyar called on the people of Tamilnad to vote for all Congress candidates, be they donkeys or Brahmins. "Ultimately it is Kamaraj who counts—not others, candidates or even voters who are anyway unfit to judge what is right and good for them! Take my word, vote Congress and you will be well. If you don't the ingenious Rajaji, riding the DMK horse, will trample you all without mercy!"⁴⁷

In January, 1962, Naicker called a conference of the DK to endorse the Kamaraj Ministry. Abandoning his notorious love of austerity, he sanctioned Rs. 5,000 for decorating the dais of the conference and provided food for over 2,000 delegates upon the payment of a modest charge. In a procession, which included the representatives of the Congress, the PSP, and the Tamil Nationalists, Naicker rode in the resplendent grandeur of a horse-drawn chariot, covered with garlands.⁴⁸

During his vigorous speeches for Congress, Naicker eased the severity of his attacks upon Brahmins, but the criticism aroused during the Periyar's campaign impelled Kamaraj to disclaim any formal association with the DK. "If any Congressmen have supported Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, presented him with garlands, etc., they may have done so in their own individual capacity."⁴⁹ Kamaraj, however, fully exploited the popularity of Naicker and identified himself with Tamil nationalist aspiration. In February, the Chief Minister introduced a bill changing the name of Madras to "Tamilnad" for inner-State communication, and he advocated that Madurai become the capital of Tamilnad. Harkening back to the days of the Pandyan kings, he said that Madurai had "nurtured" Tamil language, culture, and political life.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 11, 1962.

⁴⁶ *Link*, May 28, 1961.

⁴⁷ *Link*, November 26, 1961.

⁴⁸ *Link*, January 14, 1962.

⁴⁹ *Hindu*, February 19, 1962.

⁵⁰ *Hindu*, August 18, 1961.

There was little question that the Congress Party would be returned to power by a substantial majority of seats, but the results of the 1962 General Elections revealed the emergence of the DMK as a force far more formidable than the Congress had ever anticipated. Capturing 7 seats in the Lok Sabha and 50 seats in the Legislative Assembly, the DMK became the strongest Opposition ever to challenge the Congress Government in Tamilnad.

TABLE 3
THIRD GENERAL ELECTIONS: MADRAS *

Party	Assembly (206)			Lok Sabha (81)		
	Seats Con- tested	Seats Won	Percent of Vote	Seats Con- tested	Seats Won	Percent of Vote
Congress	206	139	46.14	40	301 ³¹	45.3
D.M.K.	143	50	27.10	18	7	18.6
Swatantra	94	6	7.82	16	..	10.5
C.P.I.	68	2	7.72	14	2	10.2
P.S.P.	21	..	1.26	5	..	1.7
Socialist	7	1	0.38	2	..	0.4
Forward Bloc	6	3	1.38	1	1	1.4
Jan Sangh	4	..	0.08	1	..	..
Republicans	4	..	0.45	2	..	1.5
We Tamils	16	..	0.93	1	..	0.1
T.N.P.	9	..	0.35	2	..	0.7
Socialist Labour	7	..	0.34	1	..	0.7
Muslim League	6	..	0.71	2	..	1.4
Independents	127	5	5.34	2.8	..	7.5
Total	718	206	100.00	133	41	100.00

* Source = *Report on General Elections, 1962.*
Madras = Govt. of Madras, 1963.

Doubling its strength in the Assembly, the DMK secured 3.5 million votes, as compared to about 5.7 million for Congress. While Congress gained nearly a 2 per cent increase in votes polled, it lost 13 seats in the Assembly. The Congress campaign was directed to recapturing those seats lost in the 1957 elections. Of those 54 seats, it recovered 47, 14 from the DMK, 3 from the

CPI, 2 from the PSP and the rest from Independents and "Reform Congress" on the Swatantra ticket. The Congress strongholds, however, suffered the brunt of the DMK attack and every DMK victory was a loss for the Congress Party.⁵¹

While the DMK cut deeply into Congress power, 14 of its 15 sitting members were defeated, including Annadurai. The only sitting member returned, Karnunathithi, won by less than 2,000 votes over his Congress opponent. N. V. Natarajan and Anbazhagan were defeated in the heart of Madras City, centre of DMK power.⁵² The most crushing loss for the DMK, however, was the defeat of its leader in Conjeevaram. S. Y. Natesa Mudaliar, a little-known Congressman, defeated the DMK Supremo by a majority of more than 5,000 votes.⁵³ The election had been the centre of Congress's offensive against the DMK. The Communists threw support to the Congress out of distaste for the DMK's association with the Muslim League and the Swatantra. In handing over the reins of Assembly leadership to R. Nedunchiazhian, former General Secretary of the party, Annadurai had not been left without public office. Farsightedly, he had contested and won a seat in the Rajya Sabha. If relegated to a political purgatory in Delhi, his control over the party was in no way lessened.

The DMK won 50 seats; in 15 other constituencies, it lost by less than 1,000 votes, securing position as the second party in all other constituencies, with the exception of 4 for the CPI. Largely as the result of an informal electoral arrangement between Annadurai and Rajagopalachari, there were 23 "straight" contests between Congress and the DMK, the DMK winning roughly half of them. In 39 constituencies, the Swatantra set up rival candidates to the DMK and Congress; its entry as a third force was successfully designed to split the votes which went to Congress in 1957. In several of these constituencies, they had won in the last elections by less than a 1,000-vote margin, and the Swatantra's presence in 1962 ushered in DMK victories.⁵⁴

In addition to doubling its number of seats in the Assembly, the DMK had successfully expanded its geographical base. In

⁵¹ *Link*, March 4, 1962. *Comet* (Hyderabad), March 14, 1962.

⁵² *Link*, March 4, 1962.

⁵³ *Hindu*, February 27, 1962.

⁵⁴ *Link*, February 11, 1962; March 4, 1962. *Hindu*, February 27, 1962.

the 1957 elections, support for the party was virtually limited to the northern districts of North and South Arcot, Chingleput, and Salem. In 1962, however, as a result of an intensive campaign of penetration into the central and southern regions of the State, the DMK captured Assembly seats throughout the State, except for the extreme southern portion of Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli, areas basically underdeveloped and with low communication level. In Tiruchirappalli and Madurai Districts, which had not previously manifested significant DMK support, the Kazaghams won 8 and 3 seats respectively.⁵⁵ In the elections for the Lok Sabha, the DMK won 2 seats in North Arcot, and 1 each in South Arcot, Chingleput, Salem, Madras City, and Tiruchirappalli.⁵⁶

The Congress, frightened by the "growing menace of the DMK," began to re-evaluate its position, and the Communists, shaken by crushing defeats throughout Madras, considered Ramamurthi's proposal that the CPI seek areas of agreement with the DMK for a "joint struggle" against the Congress.⁵⁷ DMK members in the Legislative Assembly, in the meantime, pledged allegiance to the Constitution and refrained from contesting the Speakership election as a gesture of goodwill toward the Chief Minister, Kamaraj.⁵⁸ The issue it had taken to the people, that of rising prices, became the focus of its concern in the Assembly immediately after the election, and the party gave all indication that it was ready to accept the role of a loyal Opposition.

Whether the DMK has reached the political maturity to accept the discipline of a parliamentary party and the values of democratic government in any more than a germinal sense at the present time is doubtful. The Dravidian Movement has, however, been transformed, and the direction of its development indicates that it will increasingly take on the character of a democratic parliamentary political party.

With the decline of the Justice Party, an *élite* without mass base, the movement exploited primordial sentiment under the black and red banner of the Dravida Kazaghams and expanded its ranks in the process of social mobilization. Placated by

⁵⁵ *Link*, March 4, 1962.

⁵⁶ *Hindu*, February 27, 1962.

⁵⁷ *Link*, April 15, 1962.

⁵⁸ *Link*, April 8, 1962.

governmental accommodation of primordial sentiment with the emergence of Kamaraj, the DK extended its support to the "Tamilization" of politics in Madras by the Congress Ministry. In its place as the vanguard of the Dravidian Movement, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham was drawn into the political system with an increasing specificity of interest, reflected in the formation of pragmatic political demands.

Though decried for its reactionary appeal to caste sentiments, the Dravidian Movement has served as a vehicle for an expanding identity horizon. It has given the Tamil people a sense of community, of national identity. It has, as well, in some respect "traditionalized" the political process in Madras, but a dialectic is never a one-way process. As Rajni Kothari points out, "Emphasis has been almost entirely on the impact of caste on politics, . . . yet the most significant development overtaking Indian society . . . is the modification of the traditional structure."⁵⁹ Tamil nationalism, in formulating a wider sense of personal identity, has drawn increasing numbers into the political culture. In accommodating primordial sentiment, the Government has given the village rustic a stake in the system in terms which he understands. Rather than a threat to the unity of the Indian Union, a self-consciously participant society—even when it operates in terms of caste and linguistic identification—offers the possibility of a meaningful pluralism as a base for viable democracy.

⁵⁹ Rajni Kothari, "The Take-Off Elections," *Economic Weekly*, July, 1962.

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