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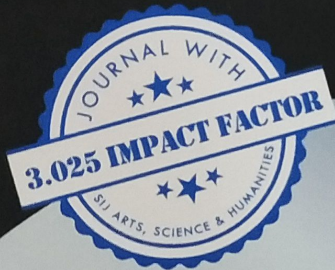
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DAWN OF DRAVIDA KAZHAGAM

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E.V.R. was one of those rare leaders who had never made any compromise on socio-political policies for the sake of political power or social acceptance. He never cared for seats of power and he was in a continuous fight against certain socially accepted ideas. Remaining constant in his ideology, he made experiments with his tools and strategies. From 1938 to his end in 1973 he was not participating as an actor on the political stage but remained the most successful 'king-maker' in Madras politics. The goal was to realize 'complete independence' for the Tamilians in every sense

The alliance of the Self-Respect Movement with the Justice Party proved a failure for both with the rout of the Justice Party in 1937 elections. This caused a change in the politics of the Self-Respect Movement which in any case had to reconsider its alliance for the next stage of political reforms. The alliance politics - first with the socialists and then with the Justice Party failed but still the Self-Respect Movement required an organization to play its political role.

Birth of the Dravida Kazhagam

E.V.R. was a born leader and was continuously engaged in some kind of direct action from 1920, from the days of his active Non-Cooperation. His belief in direct action determined the political role of the Self-Respect Movement. From the position of a partner in a political party alliance, the Self-Respect Movement soon reverted to its original role of serving as an all-comprehensive social movement. But there occurred a vital development in its political ideology mainly due to the rapid constitutional advancement towards full self-government towards full self-government.

Politically E.V.R. was not interested in capturing places of power but in acting as a force behind the scene to effect implementation of his ideologies through those in seats of power. This role of E.V.R. came to significance slowly from 1935 and became his unique achievement after independence.

The total defeat of the Justice Party in 1937 did not discourage E.V.R. but encouraged him to think of the good that could arise out of adversity. Indeed he observed that he was happy at the defeat of the party and that he expected that this would serve to intensify the propaganda work of the Self-Respect Movement as more people would be available for work. He hoped that the defeat would help promote unity in the movement and even expressed that victory could have deprived the movement of the support of the leaders of the party.¹ Several leading Justicites defected to the Congress after this election and E.V.R. welcomed this also as a development that would serve to cleanse the party of power-seeking elements and unpopular electoral candidates. He expressed his gratitude to the Congress for absorbing such elements.³

The Self-Respect Movement did not gain anything by its electoral alliance with the Justice Party in 1937, which was under the leadership of the Raja of Bobbili at that time. In 1938, when E.V.R. was unanimously elected as the leader of the Justice Party, the party was virtually in shambles as most of its leaders had deserted and as it had not built up a strong organizational base. The Self-Respect Movement could hope for no political advantage, or institutional support through the leadership of the Justice Party.

From the point of political prospects of the Self-Respect Movement, this event served to eliminate one competitor claiming to serve non-Brahmin interests and to elevate E.V.R. and his disciples as the