



Karunanidhi and the shaping of the Dravidian movement

Posted at: 08/08/2018

In many ways, Muthuvel Karunanidhi was both a product and a creator of the Dravidian movement.

- The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam that he took over from its founder C.N. Annadurai in 1969 had already made significant ideological departures from the rationalist social reform movement that was the Dravidar Kazhagam.
- The atheistic streak of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy had even at that time morphed into a secularism that allowed for a monotheism without the ritualistic trappings of organized religion.
- The violence and hatred toward the dominant Brahmin caste had turned into a rights-based approach to ending caste hierarchies and social discrimination and to securing educational and job opportunities for non-Brahmins. And the demand for secession was given up soon after the India-China war in 1962.
- The DK, and later the DMK, were instrumental in the making of Mr. Karunanidhi, first as a writer and later as a politician. Newspapers, public meetings and theatre and cinema were the means of mass communication for the Dravidian movement.
- The desire to be hailed as the leader of the 'Tamil race' led him to be overindulgent toward the LTTE in his third innings as CM in 1989-91. The need to sound supportive of a militant, secessionist organisation in Sri Lanka, while opposing their activities and all fissiparous tendencies in Tamil Nadu, led to conflicting postures.

The transformation was complete: he began as a man of the party; now, the party was of the man.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

