



C.S. had an earlier start in the Congress. He joined through the Congress organisational channel, while I came in via the trade union.



C. S. AND I : POLITICAL TWINS

□ R. VENKATARAMAN
I

Few politicians would have had the same parallel growth in politics as C.S. and I. In fact, we were political twins. Born in the same year 1910, we both qualified for the Bar. He started his practice in Coimbatore and I in Chennai (then Madras). Both participated in the Freedom Movement and had our baptism as patriots in the Sacred Church of the British jail.

C.S. had an earlier start in the Congress. He joined through the Congress organisational channel, while I came in via the trade union.

Post-war India witnessed an upheaval among the industrial and agricultural labour throughout India spearheaded by the Communist Party. Strikes, disruption of work and even refusal of domestic services and essential supplies to the landlords were resorted to on a widespread scale. The then Chief Minister of Madras Presidency appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Shri P.S. Kumaraswami Raja, with C.S. and myself as members, to

study the problem of agrarian unrest in Thanjavoor District. That was the first occasion we worked together in a formal organisation.

C.S. was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and he continued in the Provisional Parliament till 1952. I was in the Provisional Parliament during 1950-52. We were again members together. C.S., who had already built up a good position in the party in the State, had more or less decided to contest for the State Assembly in the General Elections of 1952. In the Provisional Parliament, I attracted the attention of Prime Minister Nehru as I supported all his policies such as the Hindu Law Reform, Planning and Mixed Economy.

As a student, I was a Leftist, a member of the Social Reform Club, a great votary of planning and the public sector on the Soviet model. When the names were being considered for the Assembly and the Parliament, I was in the list of candidates for the Parliament from my native district of Thanjavoor. Apparently, the decision was made by the Congress President, Shri K. Kamaraj. Thus both of us entered the legislature, one in the State and the other at the Centre.

The then Madras Presidency consisted of the whole of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh minus the Nizam's State of Hyderabad, a part of Kerala and a part of



In the 1952 General Elections, the Congress suffered a setback and failed to secure a majority in the State House. The question as to who should form the government came up. Several names were in the air for the office of the Chief Minister. That one of them was C.S. shows that the high standing he had in provincial politics.





Rajaji was a shrewd judge of men. With his vast experience of men and national affairs, he had an uncanny appreciation of the abilities of people.



Karnataka. In the 1952 General Elections, the Congress suffered a setback and failed to secure a majority in the State House. The question as to who should form the government came up. Several names were in the air for the office of the Chief Minister. That one of them was C.S. shows the high standing he had in provincial politics. Ultimately, Rajaji, who had retired as the last Governor-General of India, was persuaded by Shri Kamaraj and Shri Sanjeeva Reddy to take up the onerous responsibility of providing a stable government for the Presidency.

Rajaji scanned the records of all the members and chose his cabinet colleagues on merit. He chose C.S. as Finance, Education and Law Minister. At that time, it caused some surprise in political circles as C.S. was a colt and no a veteran warhorse. He astonished the legislature by his skill in debate, mastery of facts, and fairness in administration. He devoted himself to the spread of primary education with the zeal of a crusader. Within two years, at 43, C.S. achieved the position of a senior minister in the cabinet.

Rajaji, the Shrewd Judge

Rajaji was a shrewd judge of men. With his vast experience of men and national affairs, he had an uncanny appreciation of the abilities of people. Rajaji sent C.S. as a representative of the State to the meetings of



C.S. became the favourite of Nehru. Thus, even the N.D.C, the national level, C.S. achieved a unique position which State ministers seldom reached.



the National Development Council. In those days, the National Development Council used to meet regularly and discuss the national and state policies, programmes and problems. Prime Minister Nehru used to sit through the whole day, listening to the State Chief Ministers. It was a forum for discussion, face to face, the policies of the Centre. In 1952, Shri. T.T. Krishnamachari joined the Cabinet as Minister for Industries and Commerce. The Finance Minister, the Industries Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission were permanent members of the Council.

The State Chief Ministers normally voiced their grievances in this forum. But before the meeting of the NDC, Shri T.T. Krishnamachari used to brief C.S. and, with those facts, C.S. used to present the national approach to issues without sacrificing the least the State interests. His speeches came as a breath of fresh air in the stuffy atmosphere charged with the grievances and problems of the States and the parochial pleadings of their spokesmen. C.S. became the favourite of Nehru. Thus, even at the N.D.C, at the national level, C.S. achieved a unique position which State ministers seldom reached.

Let me now chronicle my progress in Parliament. It is the British Convention that, at the first session of parliament after a general election, the Crown addresses



Besides, in the debates on Bills, the speakers were not regulated by the whip and I took full advantage of these opportunities. By the end of the first session, I became well-known in the Lok Sabha.



both the Houses, the Commons and the Lords, in a joint session. We follow this practice. Thereafter, a Motion thanking the Crown (in England) and the President (in India) is moved and seconded by a Private Member. This Motion is treated as a test of confidence in the Prime Minister and the Ministry. To be chosen to move and second the Motion of Thanks is regarded as a great honour. The choice is made by the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Nehru chose Shri Anil Chanda, a scholar from Tagore's Santiniketan, elected from West Bengal, to move the Motion. He chose me to second it - indeed a matter of prestige. Naturally, all the eyes were on me. Members began to know who I was and how active I had been in the Provisional Parliament. It was a good start. In a House of 500 members, juniors hardly got a chance to speak. In seconding the motion, I got a good opportunity to speak. In important debates, I could easily catch the eye of the Chair. Besides, in the debates on Bills, the speakers were not regulated by the whip and I took full advantage of these opportunities. By the end of the first session, I became well-known in the Lok Sabha. In those days, I used to sit in the House from the commencement to the conclusion of the daily session, like a school boy, and thus I mastered the rules of procedure.

The Andhra Case

Shortly after the inauguration of the Republic, the Andhras started an agitation for a separate province. The Andhra Pradesh Bill was finally debated in the Lok Sabha in 1953. Members of Parliament from Andhra bitterly complained against the neglect of the Andhra area and the step-motherly treatment accorded to their area in irrigation, communication, education and industrial development.

Anticipating this, Rajaji, who was then the Chief Minister of the composite province, sent two Deputy Secretaries - one from the Department of Finance and another from the Department of Public Works, to brief me on the figures of expenditure and of programmes of development in the Andhra area compared to that of the whole province. These figures belied the charges of neglect or step-motherly treatment of the Andhra area. Members from the Andhra area made such emotional speeches that the entire House was swayed in their favour. When my turn came, I conceded that the Andhras were entitled to have a state of their own and the residuary province was not opposed to it. Then, I proceeded to cite figures to disprove the charge of bias against the Andhra area. The figures showed that, far from the Andhra area being neglected, it had its legitimate share in every aspect of development, perhaps a little more. I spoke soberly without trying to match abuse with abuse.



Members from the Andhra area made such emotional speeches that the entire House was swayed in their favour. When my turn came, I conceded that the Andhras were entitled to have a state of their own and the residuary province was not opposed to it.





भवनं तु विना

Years ago, as a college student, when I read in the newspapers that Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer had been chosen by the British Government to go as an advisor to the Indian delegation to the League of Nations, I wondered whether I would ever have such an opportunity.



Call from P.M.

Shortly thereafter, the Prime Minister called me. Such summons usually foreboded some offer of posts of a junior minister. I was not enthused as I was participating in the debates on Constitutional Amendment, Hindu Code Bills, and other major issues. I enjoyed the freedom of an active Private Member. To my utter surprise, the Prime Minister asked me to join the Indian delegation to the U.N. General Assembly as a member. I felt as if I was in the seventh heaven. (Years ago, as a college student, when I read in the newspapers that Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer had been chosen by the British Government to go as an advisor to the Indian delegation to the League of Nations, I wondered whether I would ever have such an opportunity. I let out a sigh of despair). I was dumbstruck when the Prime Minister made the offer. I was pleasantly surprised when the Prime Minister told me that he had heard my speech on the Andhra Bill. With his charming smile, he said that I talked to a brief very well. He continued to send me as a delegate to the U.N. from 1953 and stopped it only in 1962 when my responsibilities in Tamil Nadu precluded my continuance with U.N. work. (In 1955, I was elected Member of the U.N. Administrative Tribunal of which I became the President in 1968 and continued as such till 1979. For 24 years continuously I was with the U.N. Administrative Tribunal).

In the State Cabinet

Thus, during 52-57, both C.S. and I earned the fullest appreciation of Prime Minister Nehru.

In the 1957 General Election, C.S. contested for the Assembly and I for the Parliament and both of us were elected with comfortable majorities. The continuance of C.S. in the State Cabinet was a certainty. I was informed that I would be a Minister of State in the Union Cabinet. But, when I returned from Delhi, Shri Kamaraj threw a bombshell by inviting me to join the State Cabinet. He said that the State was very backward in industrial development and that I should take up the challenge and contribute to the development of the State. I was not prepared for this -- my immediate reaction was to decline the offer as I had already made a mark in Parliament. But my relations with Kamaraj was such that I could never refuse anything he wished. In fact, people used to say that 'if Rajaji's favourite was C.S., Kamaraj's favourite was R.V.' I told Shri Kamaraj that, as I had been elected to Parliament, I should seek Prime Minister's permission to join the State Government. Shri Kamaraj said that he would take 'necessary action'. And so the political twins became colleagues in the State Cabinet. C.S. was the Leader of the Legislative Assembly and continued as such. I was appointed Leader of the Council (Upper House). The period of five years we



भवनं तु विना

People use to say that 'if Rajaji's favourite was C.S., Kamaraj's favourite was R.V.'





C.S. was the Leader of the Legislative Assembly and continued as such. I was appointed Leader of the Council (Upper House). The period of five years we worked together was the pleasantest in our political career. C.S.



worked together was the pleasantest in our political career. C.S. was in charge of Finance, Education, Law and a few others. I was put in charge of Industry, Labour, Co-operation, State Transport and Commercial Taxes -- the last two because no one else was prepared to take them.

Good Debator

C.S. was not an orator but a good debator. He handled the D.M.K. opposition with dexterity refuting the charge, "as the North prospers the South languishes". At the same time, C.S. maintained most cordial relations with the DMK members in the best traditions of parliamentary democracy. As Finance Minister, he managed the State funds so prudently that there was not a single occasion when the State found itself was in a financial crisis. In fact, the second Finance Commission, under Shri K. Santhanam, did not provide any assistance to the State - the improvident ones got much because of their revenue deficit. C.S. initiated a quarterly review of Plan progress - something which neither the States nor the Centre did. As a result of monitoring, the Plan was fully executed and the surplus, in any programme was almost always used for power development. Prime Minister Nehru complimented Madras on rural electrification at one of the meetings of the National Development Council. He pointed that out of the total number of villages electrified in India, 50% were in the State of Madras at that time.

Education

C.S. made an immense contribution to general as well as technical education. Shri Kamaraj set the target of one primary school for every village with a population of 500 and a secondary school within 1.5 kilometers of every primary school -- this was achieved. As Minister for Industries, I was in charge of Industrial Training Institutes, which trained fitters, turners, machinists, welders, etc. C.S. was in charge of Polytechnics, Engineering Colleges and Higher Technical Institutions. Between us we ensured that the whole State had institutions enough for training skilled manpower. In fact, the rapid growth of industries during the period was in no small measure due to the attention paid to the development of skilled manpower.

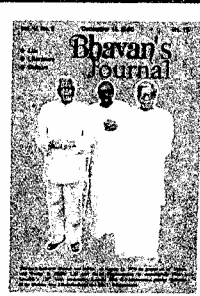
One of the great achievements of C.S. was the Parambikulam-Aliyar project which supplied water to rural Coimbatore District.

From Negative to Positive

The bureaucracy had been trained to take a negative attitude. The foreign rulers did not trust the native staff and imposed a hierarchy of checks. Brought up in that tradition, the brown bureaucrat was not different from the white. On the first day in office, I got files. I opened and scanned them. There were applications from small-scale units requesting allotment of controlled materials. The first note on the file said that the application for allotment



C.S. was not an orator but a good debator. He handled the D.M.K. opposition with dexterity refuting the charge, "as the North prospers the South languishes".





One of the great achievements of C.S. was the Parambikulam -Aliyar project which supplied water to rural Coimbatore District.



of pig iron be rejected; the next one on an application for aluminium, favoured rejection. Indeed, all the five applications on the files were to be rejected. I said to myself that I would not start my career with rejections. I called the Director of Industries the next day and told him that, in all such cases, he should call the enterprenuer and discuss with him the alternatives and help him to function. The Director was a fine officer. He said that he would take back the papers and discuss with the applicants and find out if they could be helped in some way. The success of our small-scale industries was, to a very large extent, due to the change of attitude of the Departments, -- from being negative to being positive.

C.S. had a positive approach to all issues. I launched a number of risky ventures with fabulous (in those days) financial assistance. The Finance Ministry was (and continues to be) a wet blanket. C.S. was an exception. All the schemes sailed through successfully because of his own progressive and positive approach.

Free Discussion

The Kamaraj Cabinet was a very different one from the present-day cabinets where only the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister decides and others nod. We used to have full and free discussion without any inhibition. C.S., Bhaktavatsalam and I were active participants. One unique feature of the Cabinet was the utmost bonhomie that prevailed among the Ministers and the total absence of bitterness and jealousy.



The Finance Ministry was (and continues to be) a wet blanket. C.S. was an exception. All the schemes sailed through successfully because of his co-operation.

During this period, I put through a new Sales Tax Act, the Housing Board Act and a number of Industrial Estates. The Guindy Industrial Estate became a model and the U.N. chose it as its venue for an international conference on Industrial Estates - one year after my assuming charge of Industries in Madras. We invited Prime Minister Nehru to inaugurate the Guindy Industrial Estate. Nehru was surprised how the Industrial Estate could come into being within a year. The Director of Industries explained that the Industries Ministry created a separate engineering cell and avoided the P.W.D.'s proverbial delays.

The State Transport, which catered only to the city transport was expanded and long distance deluxe buses connecting every district headquarters with the provincial capital were introduced. This turned the State Transport from a loss of profit-making institution.

Co-operative Spinning Mills were established one in each district and there was accelerated growth in small and medium industries.

The state gained a name for efficiency in administration.

(To be Continued)

R. Venkataraman

(R. Venkataraman)

New Delhi
December 15, 2000

