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Title:	Beyond the Politics of Identity: The Left and the Politics of Caste and Identity in Tamil Nadu, 1920-63
Authors:	Vaitheespara, R. (/jspui/browse?type=author&value=Vaitheespara%2C+R.) Venkatasubramanian, R. (/jspui/browse?type=author&value=Venkatasubramanian%2C+R.)
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Abstract:	Wedge uncomfortably between the gathering pan-Indian nationalist movement and the locally resonant and divisive anti-Brahman, Tamil ethno-nationalist movement, Left leaders in the Tamil region in India were faced with a difficult and complex set of political choices and challenges in the early twentieth century. These political challenges brought to the fore the social and political contradictions between an anti-colonial Indian nationalism led mostly by upper-caste liberal-bourgeois leaders and an equally entrenched and locally resonant ethno-nationalist movement which, despite its social reformist and anti-Brahman platform, was led by dominant non-Brahman caste leaders committed to the continuation of British rule. In this paper, we will be looking at two of the most prominent Tamil Left leaders who attempted to work with and bridge these contradictory movements in Tamil society. M. Singaravelu (1860-1946) and P. Jeevanandam (1907-63) were prominent Left leaders and intellectuals in the Tamil region and were well known for their close engagement with and sensitivity to issues of social reform, caste and linguistic and cultural hegemony. Both joined various political movements including the Indian National Congress, the Dravidian movement and the Indian communist party in different phases of their careers. It is their participation and engagement with such diverse and contradictory movements that make their intellectual interventions unique and a close study of their work valuable for providing a window into how the Left attempted to deal with such thorny issues as the politics of caste and language in India
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