

Letters to the Editor

"Principled" politics

Sir. — Your Editorial, "An unprincipled alliance" (Dec. 18) raises a number of vital issues of socio-political significance that need to be discussed in a rational manner and with a degree of depth as well as consistency. While the AIADMK's decision to go in for an alliance with the BJP in the coming Lok Sabha elections has been denounced as "unprincipled," no example is given of a "principled" alliance to be emulated. Which may be difficult to do, in the present confusing maze of permutations and combinations. Do the Leftists and the Muslim League, Mr. Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi and Mr. Gujral's Janata, the TDP and the CPI(M), the DMK and the TMC and such other combinations form an ideal "principled" alliance?

Regarding the inviolate sanctity of the "Dravidian" legacy in Tamil Nadu, is it necessary to accept a racial theory based on a hypothesis of Bishop Caldwell, effectively used for a purpose about 30 to 40 years ago, as one of the eternal, incontrovertible truths? Does not the concept of Dravida (Pancha Dravida) include the Telugus, Kannadigas, Malayalees and Maharashtrais as well as the Tamils?

"Hindutva" and the "Dravidian movement" have been presented as not only antagonistic and antithetical but as mutually exclusive, in reality. Does it logically follow from this that a "Dravidian" cannot be a Hindu and vice versa? Is it not unrealistic to project political friend-

ships and electoral alliances as permanent and sacred? In politics, there are no permanent friends and permanent enemies; only permanent interests. Or even temporary interests, as at present. If it is accepted that this State has until recently been a model of communal harmony, are we to take it as being so fragile that it would be seriously affected by the report of a new two-party alliance, when the most powerful forces are in full control of the situation?

In any event, is it desirable in a parliamentary democracy such as ours to propagate the creation of a "political" untouchability on an arbitrary criterion of "secularism" and "fundamentalism," neither of which has been clearly defined?

D. Anjaneyulu, Chennai

Sir. — Your Editorial has brilliantly exposed the sheer opportunism of both the AIADMK and the BJP. As you have rightly pointed out "the strange marriage between a Dravidian party and the party of Hindutva will certainly be seen as a betrayal of the cardinal principles which the Dravidian stood for."

S. Nazeer Muhammed, Chennai

* Sir. — If the BJP-AIADMK tie-up is an unprincipled alliance, can anyone truthfully say what the principles of Indian politics are? Have not our politicians let them go a long time ago?

Thirteen parties, very different in their ideologies, without any pre-poll alliance and com-

mon manifesto, hijacking the government and making it a laughing stock these 20 months — is that principled? One expects only one set of people to be principled, watching the country being ruined, by parties with a lesser mand-

N. Harithara Subramaniam

Sir. — The serious implications of this have been well analysed in the Editorial telling tale of its ultimate effect on the noxious communal atmosphere prevalent in Tamil Nadu. The people of the State are left with no alternative except passing through this test as a consequence of the imprudence of the political issues by the Congress since Mr. Sitaram Kesri took over as chief. To sum up, let us do well to remember what Goethe has to say about politics: "I hate politics, which leads to the misery of many thousand and millions of people."

Syed Gowher A

Proxy voting

Sir. — The Election Commission's proposal for proxy voting by members of the Defence Services is an excellent idea in principle, especially for personnel below officer rank, where they will normally vote for the same party as the head of the family. However, it should not be true in the case of officers, where the wife is somewhat strongly attached to a particular political philosophy. However, a matter of detail and could be worked out and sorted out.

But the problem is at the Service level, which has not included the mem-