CHAPTER I

A BRIEF POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF K. KAMARAJ

Early life:

Kumaraswamy Kamaraj was born on 15 July 1903 in Virudhunagar, a small town in the extreme southern district of Ramanathapuram in Madras Presidency. ¹ He belonged to a Nadar family. ² His parents were Kumaraswamy and Sivakami Ammal.³ Kumaraswamy was running a coconut shop. Kamaraj was born and brought up in rural surroundings. When he was barely six years old his father passed away and family responsibilities fell on Sivakami who had to bring up two children, Kamaraj and his sister Nagammal.

Kamaraj left school in 1914 when he was only eleven years old and was studying in the first form. (Present sixth standard). It was not entirely the death of his father that was responsible for the termination of his school days; his performance at school also showed that he was more fond of outdoor life than studies. ⁴

4. Rama, A.S. (Interview) Congress President Kamaraj, Illustrated Weekly of India, 10 January 1965, P.2
next year his maternal uncle Karuppiiah drafted him as an assistant in his cloth shop in Virudhunagar. It was a time when First World War had started. He developed quite early an interest in public events. The course of the War and the Indian agitation for self government were to Kamraj most interesting. He rarely missed any of the nationalist meetings even if 'some times this meant, his leaving of the shop earlier than the regular closing time'.

The War came to an end. The Montagu Chelmsford Report offered a caricature of self government to India. The country was also faced with Rowlatt Act which envisaged the most draconian measures for putting down nationalist agitations. 6 April 1919 was chosen as Satyagraha day by Gandhiji to protest against the Rowlatt Act. Four days later, on 10 April 1919, following the arrest of a few Punjab leaders, riots broke out in Punjab and it finally culminated in the gruesome massacre of hundreds of men, women and children at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. For sixteen year old Kamraj, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was the decisive turning point in his life.

It aroused Kamraj into a national effort, 'as he could not

6. Ibid.
resist the upsurge of emotions that the tragedy induced in him.\(^7\) It was his realism how urgent the attainment of national freedom was. He joined the Congress and became a volunteer. By the time he was seventeen, he was totally involved in Congress activities and his main preoccupation was organizing Congress meetings in his home town.\(^6\) But Ramnaj had to face a lot of hostility. The affluent section of Virudhunagar including his own caste men were pro-British and so were against his national activities.\(^8\) He was branded as traitor to his caste.\(^9\)

In Ramnad when he once tried to speak, he was stoned by his own Nadar community.\(^10\) He was forced to leave Virudhunagar and was able to continue his work in Tirunelveli among other community members.\(^11\)

In order to divert his attention from politics and thereby from anti-governmental activities he was sent to Tiruvendrum to work in the timber shop of his another uncle Nadanapuran. But his nationalist activities continued as before.\(^12\) He participated in Velum Outcry which was launched successfully to effect the removal of prohibitions against untouchables.\(^13\)

\(^7\) Ramnad, A.D. (Interview); Op. cit., P. 25
\(^8\) Robert J. Hawkins (Ed.), The Leaders of Tamil Nadu, London, University of California Press, 1985, P. 169
\(^10\) The Nadar of Tamil Nadu, Op. cit., P. 203
\(^11\) Ibid
\(^12\) Ibid
\(^14\) Ibid.
Finding that the change to Trivandrum had little effect on his political concern he was brought back to Virudhunagar, where once again he plunged into Congress activities more vigorously than before. He had shown much ingenuity in collecting funds for Congress meetings and won the appreciation of Varendarajulu Naidu, a senior leader of the Congress Party for his organizing talents.

By 1921, Kamraj had emerged as a full fledged Congress Worker, completely absorbed in the work of the Party. Political activity was his sole pre-occupation and when his uncle and mother some time in 1930 urged him to marry, he firmly turned down the suggestion. (He remained a bachelor until his death).

Congress Worker 1926-36: In response to Gandhi’s call for Non-Co-operation, Kamraj worked actively for the propagation of Khadi and carried on propaganda in the villages in favour of prohibition. He participated in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha in 1930 meant for resisting the official ban on the carrying of Congress flag in the city’s civil lines area. He organized another movement meant for defying the Arms Act. He was also one of the

20. Ibid, P.9
21. Ibid, P.10
organizers of Col. Naill's Status Renewal Agitation, and he had also organized the boycott of Simon Commission in Madras.

The year 1929 was eventful in Kesavraj's political life as it was in this year that he was taken as an assistant by Satyanarayana.

Kesavraj in Provincial Politics: After the year 1926, Kesavraj was rising in the official hierarchy of Provincial Congress. His jail life gave him an aura of respectability among his colleagues. He had served four terms totally. The first term was in 1926. When Gaadaji undertook his Dandi march to defy the Salt Law, Rajaji led a batch of Satyagrahis from Nandini to Vedanayakam to manufacture salt in violation of the Salt Act and Kesavraj's participation in the Salt Satyagraha campaign elsewhere resulted in his arrest. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment and was sent to Cellular Jail. When he was serving his jail term, his relatives with great difficulty got his permission to get released on parole in July 1931 to visit his ailing grandmother, but Kesavraj had to produce a guarantee of

19. Chandalingam, T.G., Kesavraj, Madras, Kanavaya Pracharaniprana, 1988, p.3
20. Ibid, p.31
22. Kesavraj, Special, p.12
good behaviour. This condition offended his principle and self respect and he did not leave on parole, to the bitter disappointment of his relatives. Before the expiry of the term he was released following Gandhi Irwin agreement. But Gandhi Irwin pact broke down soon and so he was again sent to jail (Vellore Jail) as he refused to furnish security. When he was in Vellore Jail the police tried to implicate Kamaraj in the 1933 Madras Conspiracy case. It was T. Preahass, the nationalist Andhra barrister who appeared on behalf of Kamaraj and proved how false the allegations were.

In 1931 Kamaraj became a member of the Tamilnadu Congress Committee (TNCC) for the first time and a member of the All India Congress Committee. In 1932 Kamaraj was made the secretary of the TNCC by Satyanarayana when the latter was elected as president. Kamaraj had the unique opportunity of touring with Nehru throughout Tamilnadu. In 1940 Kamaraj was elected as the president of the INOC. By 1941, Gandhi had started his individual Satyagraha to meet the country’s opposition.

to India's involvement in the war without the consent of the Indian people and it was well in progress. Leaders carefully chosen by Gandhi only offered Satyagraha, as mass Satyagraha had led to ugly scenes of violence in the past. Kasaraj was arrested in December 1940 when he was on his way to Warsha to secure the approval of Gandhi in the selection of Satyagraha, under the Defense of India Rules for speeches opposing contribution to war fund. While he was in jail he was elected as the Chairman of the Virudhunagar municipal council. He had the unusual opportunity of acting as Chairman only for one day, as he resigned on the very day he assumed office. He considered Congress Party activity as most important and did not want to involve himself in municipal activities.

The failure of the Cripps' Mission in April 1942 left the Congress with no choice but to think in terms of renewed struggle. The All India Congress Party at its Bombay session passed the historic Quit India Resolution on 8 August 1942. Kasaraj as president of INC was to implement it. On his way back from Bombay the police was ready to arrest him. But Kasaraj cleverly avoided arrest.

and after contacting local Congress workers and giving them instructions as to what should be done, he himself sent word to the police to be arrested. 31 He was sent to Vellore Jail on 26 August 1943 and later he was shifted to Amravati Jail where both provincial and all India Congress leaders were kept under detention. For three years he remained a detenue and was released along with other leaders in 1946, when the Second World War came to an end. This was his fourth term of Jail life. Meanwhile Satyanarayana passed away in March 1949 when Kamraj was under detention a personal loss to Kamraj. 32

In the provincial politics that followed in the subsequent years Kamraj played a very dominant role as king-maker, (this aspect is dealt with in detail in the next Chapter) and finally he became Chief Minister in April, 1964.

He was Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for three terms from 1964 to 1982 and totally he was Chief Minister for nine years, a record so far no Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had broken. In October 1983, he resigned the post voluntarily under his own 'Kamraj Plan'.

Kamaraj Plan: The year 1963 was eventful in the life of Kamaraj. It was in this year that the Kamaraj Plan was evolved. The Plan brought him fame and popularity and he emerged from that of a state leader to a national leader. As for the Plan it was simple, yet revolutionary - senior Congress men in government were to resign their posts and take up full time organisation work in order to revitalise the Party. What was the origin of the Plan? Kamaraj was not happy over the development in Tamilnadu for the past few years. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) under the leadership of C.J. Ambedkar was growing into a well-organised political party. The DMK had barely 15 members in the 1967 Assembly but in 1968 general election it emerged as the largest opposition Party with as many as 50 members. Kamaraj could not ignore the growing influence of DMK despite the comfortable majority which his party had in the Assembly. In a by-election to the Assembly from Thiruvanmoolai in June 1969, despite his heavy electioneering, Congress was defeated at the hands of DMK. DMK's rising popularity was a disconcerting feature to Kamaraj. He genuinely felt that if the Congress machine in Madras, particularly at the village side

was to be strengthened against the growing threat of WE, it was necessary for him to step down from Government and take up organizational work. 34

Erumraj discussed this idea with Nehru in Hyderabad in August 1943 and mentioned to him his desire to exchange the Chief Ministership for Party work. 35 Nehru welcoming the idea and at the same time feeling that it ought to be applied on a wider scale in order to produce a new image of the Congress in the public mind, asked Erumraj to draw up a plan and put it before All-India Congress Committee (AICC). The AICC which met on 10 August passed a historic resolution embodying the Erumraj Plan. Though Nehru wanted to take lead and sought permission to resign, he was prevented by Erumraj. In the same meeting many union cabinet Ministers and State Chief Ministers submitted their resignations. 36

On 26 August 1943 in the Working Committee meeting the final decision was announced. It was explained that the decision was based principally that Congress did not approve of people being attracted by office and power

35. Ibid, P.9
36. Ibid, P.10
that it brought. It was decided that six Cabinet Ministers at the centre and six Chief Ministers were to take the
'path of renunciation'. The Cabinet Ministers were Narasimha
Dessai, Jagjivan Ram, Lal Bahadur Shastri, C.L. Patil,
Doppel Reddy and K.L. Narayani. The Chief Ministers were
K. Kannan (Madras), Biju Patnaik (Orissa), Banzdi Chanan
Mohammed (Jamna and Kashmir), Bindrabanpur (Bihar), C.D. Gupta
(Uttar Pradesh) and B.A. Khandel (Madhya Pradesh).

'The Hindu' referring to the Plan reminded the
Congress Party that it was an appropriate occasion more
for a re-examination of policies than for a mere reshuffle
of personalities.37 There were others who criticised the
Plan in a different way, at a later stage. The result of
the Plan according to them was a neat opportunity for
Nehru to get rid of troublesome colleagues and controversial
person; in short to weed out those who were not hundred
percent Nehru men.'38 C.L. Patil who himself had ascended
the famous resolution soon started commenting that
it was used to get rid of 'unwanted Ministers'. Narasimha
Desai termed it as 'unfortunate' and 'had ulterior
motives'. He said a year later bitterly that it seemed

37. The Hindu, 1 September, 1963.
38. Girdhar Bhyrav, The Indian Experience: Key to Asian
Future, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1972, P.34
to him that it had been motivated not only to get rid of him but also to pave the way for Mrs. Gandhi to the Prime-Ministership. As added, Nehru was trying to do for Indira in 1969 what his father Motilal had done for Nehru in 1929, passing on to the latter the highest office, then open to an Indian nationalist, viz. the Congress Presidency. 30

It was a fact that the 'Kamarajed men' were not selected by chance. There was only an apparent geographical equity; Morarji from Gujarat, Jagjivan Ram from Bihar, Chastri from U.P., Patil from Maharashtra, Gopala Reddy from Andhra Pradesh and Shrimali from Rajasthan. More than that, ideology played a major part. The left wing of the Congress Party in the cabinet had been weakened considerably by the Chinese attack and consequent departure of Krishna Menon and K.G. Malaviya. This had resulted in the majority of the right wing represented by Dossal and Patil. Their withdrawal under Kamaraj Plan helped Nehru to keep the balance. 40 As for others, specific reasons could be adduced in terms of insufficiency, pressure of factionalism etc. In so far as Kamaraj and Chastri were concerned,

40. Ibid., P.19
the genuine intention was there. About Jagjivan Ram he had been in the cabinet since 1946 and hence his was the 'ideal case for renunciation of power'. Nehru by using Kamaraj Plan fully restored his political power which temporarily suffered by the Chinese debacle.

But Kamaraj Plan could not be regarded as a success in terms of its stated aims. There was no evidence that those who were 'Kamarajed' did anything constructively to strengthen the Party. In most of them there was more gloss in their subsequent activities than infusion of any new spirit into the Party. Nevertheless the effects of the Kamaraj Plan on post Nehru transition was something fundamental. The Plan brought to the fore a strong South Indian Congress leader viz. Kamaraj one of the effective Chief Ministers who was to play a significant role in coping up with the delicate post Nehru transition; secondly the Plan was significant for the succession to Nehru. It sent the potential successors particularly Kamaraji, to the wilderness. He was previously in a tactical advantage as the second ranking member of the cabinet and now he lost that position. 'But for the Plan he would have become Prime Minister on 27 May 1964 instead of Gokarilal Hansa'.

41. Ibid, p.10
Kamaraj – The Congress President

Soon after the Kamaraj Plan, Kamaraj was elected as All India Congress President. On 9 October 1963, when the Congress Working Committee met in New Delhi to consider the election of the new Congress President, there were three names before the Committee: those of Lal Bahadur Shastri, Atulya Gosh and Kamaraj. Nehru favoured Kamaraj's election as President. The AICC session at Jaipur on 20 November 1963 unanimously elected Kamaraj as President of the Congress Party. He was the second Tamil leader to be chosen for the Presidency of Congress. (S. Subrahmanya Bharathi was the first to hold the post in 1920). Kamaraj took up his office at the 69th Congress session in New Delhi in January 1964.

Election of a new Prime Minister: On 27 May 1964, Nehru passed away. G.L. Nanda, the Home Minister being the senior most, was sworn in as acting Prime Minister by President Radhakrishnan. The preparation to elect a successor to Nehru began in June 1964. The principal figure of this whole event was Kamaraj, the Congress President.

Kamaraj’s first and immediate task was to do everything within his capacity to reach a consensus to avoid contest and achieve unanimity. This he thought should be done as he felt, ‘... would expects you to behave with dignity’. 44

Kamaraji was the main contestant. He had the support of Patnaik and Jagjivan Ram. Lal Bahadur Shastri was favoured by V. P. Chavan, Kamaraj and his associates in the syndicate. (The syndicate consisted of a small group of like-minded senior Congress leaders like Atulya Ghosh, Nijalingappa and Sanjooa Reddi who favoured the election of Kamaraj as Congress President). Mrs. Gandhi refused to be a candidate ‘as she was emotionally ill prepared’. The question was whether to elect Kamaraji or Shastri. The important point that was raised was whether the Congress Parliamentary Party was to elect the new leader or the Working Committee was to take the lead. According to Kamaraji the Congress Parliamentary Party alone should have the voice in the selection of the leader. 45 On the other hand, Kamaraj felt that the Congress Working Committee should elect the successor unanimously and thereby demonstrate its unity. 46

44. Succession in India, Op.cit., P.88
45. Ibid, P.85
46. Ibid.
On 31 May 1964, the vexed issue of the propriety of the Working Committee taking the lead was finalised. Kamalraj announced the general agreement over the principle of unanimity and the leadership of Working Committee. Next came the question of who, how and when the consensus principle was to be achieved. Working Committee authorized Congress President Kamalraj to ascertain the opinion of congressmen and to tender the advice to Congress Parliamentary Party. 'It was indeed almost carte blanche discretion to one man to determine the succession – through consultation and advice – and the person concerned was known to prefer one of the candidates'. During the two days 31 May and 1 June – the period allotted for the mammoth one man poll Kamalraj met about 200 Members of Parliament as well as members of the Congress Working Committee. On 1 June Kamalraj conveyed his reading of the Party's Choice - Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The next day in the Central Hall of Parliament Kamalraj took the chair. After paying tributes to Nehru he spoke briefly about his consensus procedure and

emphasised the need for 'collective leadership'. He pointed out that the protective umbrella of Nehru’s stature and prestige was no longer available and so they had to function in future with great care and caution. "The unanimous election" he concluded was a fitting but humble tribute to Nehru. The outcome of the struggle and the manner of its achievement was widely acclaimed in India and abroad.

Election of Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister: Sooner than expected the problem of electing a Prime Minister once again occurred when Chastri died of heart attack suddenly on 13 January 1964 in Jaipur, immediately after the conclusion of a treaty with Pakistan. Chastri’s death created once again a constitutional vacuum and it was once again filled swiftly and smoothly under the guidance of Narasraj.

Nanda assumed the post of acting Prime Minister. Like last time, Narasraj this time too wanted to try his luck. But the syndicate was against him. The most suitable candidate to Narasraj was Mrs. Gandhi. To her credit

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40. Ibid., p.37
41. Succession in India, op.cit., p.209
she had certain assets. First of all as Nehru's daughter, she had a recognisable personality. Internationally also she could produce a better image than other leaders. But Kamaraj did not let it be known even indirectly at that stage. The Bengali leader Atulya Shank suggested that Kamaraj would be an ideal Prime Minister in an election year. But Kamaraj's reaction to the suggestion was '...I am not interested in the Prime Ministership; in an election year Congress Presidency is the most important Office.'

On 19th the tempo of activity increased; it was a day of bargaining and lobbying. The nerve centre was Kamaraj's house at 4, Janakpoot. On 19th the Working Committee met to decide on the procedure for the election. Kamaraj reminded the members about the consensus formula of last time and wondered whether it might be adopted again. Kamaraj himself reacted 'violently' and insisted on a vote in the Parliamentary Party. After a somewhat confused discussion, the Committee urged Kamaraj to seek a consensus and if this attempt failed, to hold an election in which the winning candidate should get an absolute majority.

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83. Ibid, 620
of the votes of the Parliamentary Party. 54

Then started the process of consultation of Members of Parliament, Chief Ministers and State Congress leaders, Kamraj clearly indicated to the Chief Ministers and others that Mrs. Gandhi seemed to him to be the most suitable choice. He correctly assessed that Members of Parliament for their re-election had to look upon Chief Ministers of States for patronage and for Party tickets in the forthcoming general election and so were dependent of diverse ways on the Chief Ministers who had held on them. It was indeed a brilliant strategy on the part of Kamraj in building up a massive pressure in favour of Mrs. Gandhi. By 10th, Kamraj announced that almost all the Chief Ministers were in favour of Mrs. Gandhi. 55 When on 10th Kamraj conveyed to Morarji at the latter’s residence the result of his consultation and requested him to withdraw from the contest, Morarji disclosed the issue by telling, ‘... Tomorrow the ballot box will show’. 56

The day of the contest came. All Congress Members of Parliament were present in the Central Hall for the first

54. Michael Foot, Succession in India - A Study in Decision-making, London, Oxford University Press;
55. Ibid, p. 132
56. Ibid, p. 320-322
contested election to the leadership. Kamaraj, though not a member, presided over it. The result was as Kamaraj expected and had worked out. Mrs. Gandhi was declared elected by 365 votes to 169. Kamaraj pulled out a paper from his drawer and the voting was as he had calculated with an error of a bare 4 votes. 

\[\text{king-maker was established.}\]

| On 27 July, 1966, Kamaraj undertook a tour for Russia and East European countries. This was his second visit abroad. (In 1953, he visited Palaya and Ceylon for the purpose of studying the problems of Indian settlers). He was the first President of the Indian National Congress to go abroad officially. |

**Cow Protection Committee's Demonstration:** During his Presidency one untoward incident happened in November 1966. A massive demonstration was organised by Cow Protection Committee under the leadership of Sadhus. When the mob turned violent it also attacked Kamaraj's residence and set fire to the bed-room where Kamaraj was sleeping. Kamaraj had to be moved into the K.Pa' Club in Rali Kany. He had earlier criticised the anti cow slaughter agitation in the Congress Working Committee.

59. The Hindu, 28 July, 1966
The 1967 general election results came as a rude shock to the Congress Party. It brought severe reverses to it both at the centre and in the States. Kasaraj himself was defeated in Virudhunagar Assembly constituency by a V.K student leader with 2000 votes difference. Except Sanjiva Reddy all the older leaders of the Syndicate were defeated. The critical food situation due to the failure of monsoon successively for three years, the spiralling of prices after the Chinese and Pakistani wars were all responsible for the Congress debacle at the centre.

At the State level, Shaktawatsalam's (Chief Minister of Cuddapah) inept handling of the language issue alienated him and his Party from the masses. The alignment with Rajaji's Swatantra Party with the already growing D.K was also another reason for the defeat of the Congress party. Its strength had decreased from 139 to 49 whereas the D.K's had increased from 50 to 138 in the Assembly.

Once again the question of selecting the Prime Minister arose, the obvious candidates being Mrs. Gandhi and Kasaraj. This time the syndicate's relationship with Mrs. Gandhi was not what it was in 1966. Even Kasaraj who was instrumental in making her the Prime Minister had been disillusioned with her considerably over
her policy of the devaluation of the rupee. (The Indian rupee was devalued by 36.5% on 5 June, 1966). In spite of his own misgivings about it and his advice to her to take the decision after careful and cautious consideration, Mrs. Gandhi assuring Kamaraj that she had already consulted experts, carried out immediately. As feared by Kamaraj Indian economy experienced a recession and prices rose. Kamaraj was sufficiently sore with her rash and independent approach. This became the starting point for a lasting resentment between the two. ‘The close confidence which existed originally between Kamaraj and Mrs. Gandhi changed to a cool expedient alliance after the devaluation.’

When the question of selecting the Party leader came, Kamaraj understood the need to checkmate Mrs. Gandhi. To this role who else could suit admirably except the ‘rigid and uncompromising’ Kamaraj? Despite Kamaraj’s personal antipathy to Kamaraj, he had become acceptable and from this point onwards he became part of the syndicate. Kamaraj’s hand this time was down due to his defeat in the State election. He was not the same President as he was

60. The Hindu, 6 June, 1966.
62. Ibid, P.182
in 1964 and 1966. On her part, Mrs. Gandhi no more needed any godfather to make her the Prime Minister like last time. She was in such a condition at present that she could claim the position as a matter of right. Kamaraj put considerable pressure on Mrs. Gandhi that she should accept Morarji as Deputy Prime Minister, an office which had been abolished on Sardar Patel’s death. As wished by Kamaraj, Mrs. Gandhi who became Prime Minister on 12 March 1967 for a second time by the unanimous choice of the Party, accepted Morarji as Deputy Prime Minister.

Contrast was between Kamaraj and Mrs. Gandhi. From 1967 onwards, the gulf between Mrs. Gandhi and Kamaraj was widening. She was acting independently in most of the issues, without consulting the Congress President who made Kamaraj disillusioned. His concept of collective leadership whereby Government had to consult the Party Organisation and then act, was becoming only a wishful thinking. The cabinet members were all Mrs. Gandhi’s choice. The Congress President was neither consulted nor was shown the list prior to President’s signature. Differences arose again in the nomination of presidential candidate to succeed Dr. Radhakrishnan. Kamaraj wanted Dr. Radhakrishnan.

69. Pandit, C.S., End of an Era - The Rise and Fall of Indira Gandhi, Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1977, p.20
to whom he had apparently committed, to continue for a second term. But Mrs. Gandhi favored Dr. Zakir Hussain, the Vice-President. "The controversy reached such a pitch that Mrs. Gandhi made it a personal prestige issue to see that Dr. Hussain was elected." 64 Zakir Hussain was elected on 6 May 1967 as President. 65

Mrs. Gandhi well understood that Kamaraj, due to his stature could not be ignored easily. She did not want him to continue as Congress President. When Kamaraj's term of office came to a close in December 1967 Mrs. Gandhi floated a principle that a leader defected in the polls should not hold the exalted party office, since they had already been rejected by the people. 66

Kamaraj, realizing what a handicap a defeat in the election caused to a leader in public life went back to Tamilnadu to re-organise the Congress which had been so badly mauled during the 1967 election. When a seat fell vacant for Nagarecoil Lok Sabha constituency he stood for it and won the seat, with a big margin. Mrs. Gandhi showed keen interest to induct Kamaraj in the Union cabinet, probably to neutralise Kamaraj and the syndicate. 67 She

64. Ibid, p.22
65. The Hindu, 6 May, 1967
made the offer in February 1969 but Kamraj preferred to stay out as he probably thought, it was not possible for him to serve under her. In case him was to rebuild and strengthen Tamilnadu Congress and reign in the administration which had been lost to D.K.

Tamilnadu Congress under C.Subramaniam: C.Subramaniam, one of the losers of the 1967 General election was now the President of Tamilnadu Congress Committee. C.Subramaniam, always an administrative man never an organizing man, found to his dismay that the rank and file always looked to Kamraj for leadership and were anxious to know the wishes of the elder leader and act, rather than look to C.Subramaniam. C.Subramaniam resigned from the INC on 27 September 1969. 68 He dropped a brick by disclosing that Kamraj had offered Chavan the Prime Ministership if Mrs. Gandhi would step down, meaning that, if Chavan co-operated, Mrs. Gandhi would be pulled down and Chavan would be made Prime Minister. He strongly advised Kamraj that if the so called collective leadership was to be attained in future Kamraj should have no truck with the syndicate, give up his prejudice against the Prime Minister and unreservedly declare his support to her leadership. 68 This piece of advice on the part of

C. Subramanian came at a time when Congress was heading towards a deep crisis and a split. (Kamaraj had his own opinion about C. Subramanian. He had said on a different occasion, that C. Subramanian had faith neither in principles nor in people).

The Congress Split: The split of the Congress which took place on 14 November 1969, on the eve of Nehru's Birthday was an important event in the post Nehru era. The tension that was brewing latently between Mrs. Gandhi and the syndicate for quite some time reached the point of saturation and exploded in the form of a split.

Opportunity for open fight between the two groups came when the AICC met in Bangalore on 10 July 1969 to decide the successor to Dr. Zakir Husain who died in May, 1969. The syndicate chose Sanjivee Reddy as the candidate though Mrs. Gandhi had clearly stated that she could hardly work with Reddy as President. 70 For the syndicate, the unexpected vacancy at Rashtrapati Bhavan provided a golden opportunity to attempt to emasculate the Prime Minister by putting their own man. Finally

70. Pandit, C N. End of an Era - The Rise and Fall of Indira Gandhi, Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1977, p.50
Sanjeeva Reddy was chosen by the Congress Parliamentary Board as the official Congress candidate, much against her wish. She told in a press conference on July 13th angrily that those who had tried to humiliate her would 'have to face the consequences', as, she maintained, her concurrence to a candidate for the high office of the President was absolutely necessary, because both of them had to function in concert. The implications were clear. What was so remarkable was the way she acted with unusual decisiveness and speed.

Kamaraj was relieved of his finance portfolio on 16th on the ground that the Prime Minister needed it, in order to implement certain economic measures. On 19th by a Presidential Ordinance, 14 leading Banks were nationalised. Thus she successfully shifted the limelight from the intense power struggle in the organisation to ideological differences. Kamaraj welcomed the Bank Nationalisation in spite of his differences with Mrs. Gandhi. But by that time he had no credit to gain in the matter of ideology, as at present she was the winner.

72. Pandit, C.G., End of an Era - The Rise and Fall of Indira Gandhi, Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1977, P.69
In top of all these, V.V. Giri had already resigned as the acting president and had announced that he was in the run for the Presidential post as an independent candidate. He was adopted by all the leftist parties and state parties like U.C.

In the changed condition especially when the Party leadership was split, the election of Sanjivana Reddy as President was not assured. When Mijalingappa, the Congress President tried to seek an understanding with Jan Sangh and Swatantra party to secure the election of Reddy, he was accused by Mrs. Gandhi of seeking alliance with reactionary forces opposed to Congress principles. But at the same time she would not issue a public statement in support of the Congress candidate. Finally she declared that she was no longer bound by the dictates of the party discipline and demanded, 'a free vote of conscience', meaning freedom to vote for Giri. 'Never before had Presidential election evoked so much popular interest generated by the inner conflict of the Congress leadership'. Giri won the election with 450077 votes against 405427 assured by

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74. Ibid, p. 74
Sanjeevody, a tactical victory for Mrs. Gandhi over the syndicate in a crucial contest. 75

This tension between the two camps reached a climax on 12 November 1969 when the Working Committee expelled Mrs. Gandhi and asked the Parliamentary Party to elect a new leader. 76 An overwhelming majority in the Party stayed with her and only 65 out of 234 members of the Lok Sabha and 46 of the 150 of Rajya Sabha members, elected Morarji as their leader. From now on, it came to be known as Organization Congress. Congress (O) and the Congress that Mrs. Gandhi headed came to be called as Ruling Congress – Congress (A).

For the present Congress (O) presented an impression of a Party of old leaders, a committee of conservatives and the Ruling Congress wore a youthful look of dynamism and radicalism. It was true, Mrs. Gandhi had several close associates who had socialist leanings and Congress (O) consisted of conservative politicians like Mijalingappa, S.K. Patil, and Morarji.

76. Political Development or Political Decay, Pacific Affairs, Op.cit., P.74
But the same Congress (I) also included leaders like Kararaj and Ashok Mehta who were as socialist as anybody in the ruling Congress which too sheltered well known conservatives. In her fight with the syndicate Mrs. Gandhi again and again stressed the ideological rather than personal power aspects of the conflict. 'But the split was more along factional and less along ideological lines'. The economic platform adopted by the ruling Congress which included nationalisation of Banks, abolition of Privy Purses etc. were the same 10 Point Programmers adopted by the Congress Working Committee on 7 May 1967, when Kararaj was holding the Presidentship.

What was most interesting during these hectic days was the pressure that Kararaj tried to put on Chavan urging him to come out openly into their camp. The arrangement was if they succeeded in removing Mrs. Gandhi, Kararaj would continue as Prime Minister until the coming general election in 1972.

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79. Pandit, G.S., End of an Era - The Rise and Fall of Indira Gandhi, Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1977, p.69
After the general election, Morarji would have to quit giving place to Chavan and Chavan would be made Prime Minister. Kamalraj himself accepted that such a 'conspiracy' was there but it failed because Chavan was doubtful of Morarji quitting voluntarily after 1972. 80

(This was the incident quoted by C. Subramaniam when he resigned TNCC Presidentship).

The General Election of 1972. The Government headed by Mrs. Gandhi became a minority government after the split. She needed the support of at least fifty members in Lok Sabha to retain her Party in Power. She was assured of the support of the leftist Parties like Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party (Marxists), Praja Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party and Regional Parties like DME. But the Congress (O), now the main opposition in Parliament fully exploited this situation. When a Constitutional Amendment Bill abolishing Privy Purse was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12 May, 81 it was only passed but the same was defeated in the Rajya Sabha on 5 September, for want of one vote.

As a counter measure, the Government by a presidential order derecognized the princes and thereby Privy Council stood automatically terminated within hours of the collapse of the will. On 15 December 1970 the Supreme Court declared that the order of the President was unconstitutional, illegal and void and on that account inoperative. 32

Mrs. Gandhi immediately dissolved Lok Sabha on 27 December and mid-term poll was announced to be held in March 1971 a year ahead of schedule.

In Tamilnadu Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister belonging to U.P.A. Party, sensing that the importance of national factors, were assuming disproportionate influence, joined hands with Mrs. Gandhi and immediately announced the election.

It was a time for Kanaraj to gather all his energy to win, particularly in the State Election and thereby save the image of his party by getting it a base. Actually Tamilnadu Congress was not much

32. Ibid, p.168
affected by the congress split. Kamaraj's followers stood behind him solidly. Kamaraj was on the war path simultaneously against the ... in the State and \textit{Mrs. Gandhi} at the Centre.

A new alignment known as the 'Grand Alliance' was formed by Congress (U) along with Parties like the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra. In Tamilnadu also the Grand Alliance took place between Kamaraj's Congress and Rajaji's Swatantra Party. After a long spell Kamaraj and Rajaji were coming together to rout their common enemies but in their programmes and outlook they were poles apart.

But the election results proved otherwise for Kamaraj. \textit{Mrs. Gandhi} was back in the saddle, this time with greater glory and so was D.N.K. D.N.K. captured an overwhelming majority of 134 seats in a House of 234. Kamaraj's Congress could muster only a paltry opposition of fifteen members. It was a severe blow and loss of prestige to him.

Kamaraj was not right in his conclusion that when D.N.K. had won with the support of Rajaji in 1967 General Election why should not his own Party
take the advantage? It was not with Rajaji's help alone that D.M.K. won in 1967 General Election, though Rajaji claimed so. D.M.K. had become so popular that its success, even Rajaji could not have prevented at that time.

It did not take much time for Kamraj to understand that Mrs. Gandhi's leadership was something inevitable. Her handling of the Bangla Desh issue, her decisive victory in the 1972 December Indo-Pakistan war and the massive victory she obtained in the Legislative Assembly Elections in sixteen States and two Union Territories held in March 1972, enhanced her prestige both at the national level and abroad. 83

At present Kamraj confined himself attacking only the D.M.K. Meanwhile well meaning friends of both Kamraj and Mrs. Gandhi like T.T.Krishnamachari and Mohan Kamara Kanganan attempted to bring about a rapprochement. 84 Mrs. Gandhi also knew too well that as far as Tamilnadu was concerned Kamraj's influence was something unassailable and she was powerless to destroy it.


An interesting feature of a by-election in the Ariyankuppam Assembly Constituency held in 11 March, 1972, was, for the first time since the split, Congress (C) of Tamil Nadu supported the ruling Congress (hereafter Congress) candidate. By this time, the D.K - Congress electoral alliance of 1971 had cooled down. The Congress candidate was the victor. It prompted the rumor that in Tamil Nadu two Congress Parties might re-unite and that it would become a challenge to D.K.

The emergence of a new party in Tamil Nadu: The political situation in Tamil Nadu underwent a sudden development by the end of 1972. K.G. Ramachandran (K.G.R.) the popular film star of Tamil Nadu, so far a very good votecatcher for the D.K., in a personal clash with Karunanidhi, found himself expelled from the Party. He started a Party known as Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (A.D.M.K.) at the end of 1972. Though it was felt the split was first a 'freak phenomenon' based on the personal popularity of a matinee idol, nevertheless it posed a threat to both

Congress at present. To Kamraj both D.K and M.K. were parties of dissension except for the fact that the latter "he" had been added to the latter. He ridiculed D.K. pointing out that was it not the same D.K. who offered to face even the Indian Army on the issue of State autonomy when he was in the D.K.K.).

Though Kamraj equated both parties on the same line with contempt, in the Hindigul Lok Sabha by-election held in the same year 1972, D.K. K. won an alarming victory.

The result gave a clear indication that unless something was done, D.K.K. wave would sweep over Tamilnadu. As mentioned before, by 1972, D.K.K. - Congress electoral alliance had come to an end. There were open charges on both sides against each other. Karunanidhi charged that the centre was trying to topple his government. In the Congress circles, Karunanidhi's concept of an autonomous self government at the state level and compositive government at the centre was understandable. Mrs. Gandhi pointed out that a lot of autonomy was already being enjoyed by the States.

88. The Indian Express, 19 February 1972.
90. The Hindu, 1 March 1972.
and further allotment would only weaken the centre. 91

An electoral alliance was concluded in Tamilnadu between the two Congress Parties for the election of Pondicherry Assembly and Coimbatore by-election, to be held in February 1974. 92 A.D.M.K. made some unsuccessful attempts for such an alliance with Congress. Then it joined hands with CPI.

Kamarji Desai and Ashok Mehta in the Working Committee of Congress (0) opposed the alliance, as they felt it might affect the prospects of the impending U.P. election. To this, Kamaraj retorted had they hoped to win if there was no alliance. 93 His policy so far had been to guide his Party on what he thought best and never allowed the Central Working Committee to interfere.

During the election campaign for Pondicherry Mrs. Gandhi clarified that past misunderstandings were all over and that Kamaraj's thinking and principles were identical to the policies followed by her. 94

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But when the results came out it proved that the alliance was only marginally successful. ADmk, CPI alliance secured an absolute majority.

The Pondicherry arrangement however was not carried on to its logical conclusion. Congress and Congress (O) never merged. The success of A.D.K.K. made the Congress (O) feel that an alignment with A.D.K.K. would not be unwelcome. By January 1975, Kamraj finally made up his mind not to have any truck with the Congress. When C. Subramanian set a dead line on 31 December, 1974 for the Congress (O) to merge with his Congress before 16 February 1975, Kamraj pock-pocked it and said that 'such ultimatum would not shake him' and that 'he would rather go it alone'. He continued to criticise the Congress for feeding the people on empty slogans and thereby 'cheating them'.

His last days: In India, politically speaking, 1975 was a very critical year. It began in an atmosphere of tension of which the assassination of the

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86. The Indian Express, 8 January 1975.
86. Ibid, 10 February, 1975.
Railway minister L.K. Advani was the symptom. The tensions were a legacy of events from the preceding year, which saw the forced dissolution of Gujarat Legislature by a 'People's movement'. This movement with stray student participation aimed at ending corruption and opportunism in the State. The movement soon spread to Bihar, under the direct leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. It constituted as a symbol of popular dissatisfaction with the Congress regime.

In the midst of this movement came the Allahabad High Court judgement, on the petition filed by Raj Narain against the election of Mrs. Gandhi in the 1971 mid-term Lok Sabha poll. She was guilty of two corrupt electoral practices; she was deemed to have illegally used the services of Yashpal Kapoor while she was still a civil servant to further her election prospects and to have used the State Government officials of Uttar Pradesh for the same end. Though the offences were trivial and hinged on highly technical interpretation of the law and evidence, nevertheless Mrs. Gandhi's election was declared legally valid and she was barred from holding elective office for six years.

same day Justice Sinha issued a twenty days stay order giving Mrs. Gandhi time to appeal. Her appeal for an unconditional stay against Allahabad verdict was lodged shortly after, but it was rejected and only a conditional stay was awarded on June 15th. She could continue to hold the office of Prime Minister, pending the final verdict by Supreme Court and could continue to sit in the Lok Sabha but could not vote in Parliament.\(^{100}\)

Taking use of this opportunity the opposition parties, with Jayaprakash Narayan started charging that she had no moral right to continue in office.\(^{101}\) On 20th it was decided that if she refused to quit, a countrywide movement would be launched from 20th under the chairmanship of R. N. Turgi.\(^{102}\)

A State of Emergency was declared on 20th by the President's Proclamation.\(^{103}\) (It was internal the external Emergency declared since the war with Pakistan in 1971 was still continuing.) Mrs. Gandhi explained over All India Radio that there was deep and wide spread conspiracy against her progressive measures, 'duly elected governments were not allowed to function', lawfully elected

\(^{100}\) Ibid, 199
\(^{101}\) The Fate of Indian Parliamentary Democracy, Pacific Affairs, Op.cit., P.200
\(^{102}\) The Crusade and End of Indira Raj, Op.cit., P.308
\(^{103}\) Bhishma, S.l., The Dark Days of Emergency, Ovissam, Bhishma Publication House, 1977, P.6
Assemblies had to be dissolved and there was indiscipline in every walk of life and so the nation's integrity demanded firm action. Any opposition leaders including Jayaprakash Narain and Govindji were kept in detention. strict censorship was imposed; a series of constitutional amendments were passed placing the present prime minister and the future prime ministers beyond the pale of law; an order issued by the president prohibited those detained under emergency from moving the courts for relief or for enforcement of Fundamental Rights.

It was at this critical period, on 2 October, 1975 - on a Gandhi Jayanthi Day, Kamaraj died of massive heart attack. The end was sudden and shocking to all.

How did Kamaraj react to Jayaprakash Narain's Movement and Emergency? He did not support the Movement overtly. In fact when Jayaprakash Narain paid a visit to Tamil Nadu in order to get support for his Movement in February 1975, the two leaders never met. Nor any enthusiasm was shown to this Movement by Kamaraj even

106. The Hindu, 3 October, 1975.
when his Party's relationship with Mr. Gandhi was at its lowest ebb. Probably he thought it was anti-democratic in nature.

He was alive for four months after the declaration of emergency. Due to press censorship there is an absence of press statement about his stand at that time, when general elections were declared in 1977, and the emergency was lifted, during the election campaign Janatha Party leader Sowarji, Tamilnadu Congress (J) Party President, P. Ramasahran, and the deposed Chief Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Karunanidhi clarified the public on this issue. Sowarji in a public meeting on the Marina said that Kamaraj had told him that he was unhappy over the behaviour of the ruling party and the Prime Minister and that he had experienced many things in life, but the 'bitter experience' he had with the Congress was something surpassing and there could be no question of unity with them. 107

P. Ramasahran said that the imposition of Emergency came as a rude shock to Kamaraj from which he never recovered and also disclosed the Janata (O) passed a resolution condemning the Emergency and that it was