CHAPTER - VIII

KARUNANIDHI AND STATE AUTONOMY
The general election of 1967 radically altered the party position in a number of states. The DMK's accession to power in Tamil Nadu horrified those passionately wedded to the idea of one India with a strong Centre. This party was professedly secessionist and the father of the Dravidian Movement, Periyar Ramaswamy had launched a movement to burn the Constitution. Rajaji also had become an ardent champion of State Autonomy as he was a wounded General in State-Centre relations. He revealed his mind on two occasions. The first one was with reference to the Constitution. He told Dr. Ambedkar: "You are committing a great mistake. One federation for the whole of India will always be from the Hindi speaking area. You should have two federations. One federation of the North and one federation of the South and a confederation of North and South with three subjects for the confederation to legislate upon and equal representation for both the federations." Rajaji
had predicated the break-up of India with the North and South as autonomous states. He also made a statement on the recommendations of the State Reorganisation Commission. "It is possible to put the State Reorganisation scheme in the cold storage for the next 15 years to govern India as the unitary state and deal with district officers and district boards directly, with regional commissioners' supervision. It would be utterly wrong to fritter away national energy in disputes over boundaries and divisions conceived in the drawing room and not in the background of conditions that have resulted historically."  

Secondly, as a Chief Minister of Madras state, Rajaji had requested the then Prime Minister and Union Finance Minister to grant Rs.10 Crores for Tamil Nadu Planning Commission, for he had accepted Chief Ministership at a critical period. But to his surprise, there was no response from the Centre. He was intolerant of the deadly delay and claimed urgently Rs.10 Crores as an over-draft for Tamil Nadu expenditure. Rajaji was issued a show cause memo as to why he claimed Rs.10 Crores by over-draft from the Reserve
Bank of India, this is against constitutional law. But Rajaji answered in clear and unmistakable terms, "that Nehru is no one to teach me constitutional law. So it is better to drop the matter as it is, if not you are forcing me to join with E.V.Ramaswamy of South." Rajaji was critical of the members of the Constituent Assembly for their lack of understanding on the problem of federalism. Dr.Ambedkar came to their help. He said "Even as Lord Sanke found it necessary to explain to the delegates of the Round Table Conference, the meaning of federal government quoting from the eleventh edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Dr.Ambedkar took upon himself the responsibility of enlightening the Constituent Assembly members. In doing this (he) almost converted the Assembly into a class-room for the study of comparative federation." Besides M.O.Mathai aptly quotes from a brilliant conversation with Dr.Ambedkar, The "Hindu wants Vedas, they sent for Vysa who is an out-caste; the Hindu wants epics, they sent for Valmiki who is an untouchable; and the Hindu wants Constitution they sent for me." K.Santhanam, dissatisfied on the Centre-State relations, said: "The extraordinary fact of Indian leaders, who had fought
strenuously against the British Government adopting almost slavishly the Constitution which was intended to perpetuate the British rule in India is not easy to explain."

Rajaji further went to the extent of demanding federal government by citing DMK in Tamil Nadu. "The DMK may be superficially deemed to be only a regional group. But it represents in effect the call for a true federation based on reasonable autonomy for all state governments. It represents the national opposition to an unworkable, inefficient and oppressive centre... the separatist bogey was an invention of the Congress party to perpetuate its own party tyranny. A truly federal government is the only efficient system for a country of India's size and nature. The DMK's triumphant protest is a symbol of that political truth."7

Anna had underlined, on more than one occasion, the need for autonomy. He said "I want the Centre to be strong enough to maintain sovereignty and integrity of India as it is the fashion to call it. I would put it in another way. It is to safeguard the independence of
the country. I am prepared to say that any body will accept without any remorse or without any reservation that all those powers needed to make the Centre responsible for the safety of this country ought to be with the Centre. But that does not mean that the Centre, in order to safeguard India from Pakistanis or the Chinese or the Baluchis, should think of having a health department here. In what way does that strengthen the sovereignty and independence of India? Should they have an education department here? In what way does that improve the fighting capacity of the military personnel there? He also felt that it was impossible to achieve economic and socialistic progress under this Constitution. "Under the present set-up, especially under the present Constitution, is socialism easy of attainment?" The emphasis on Tamil culture and language had logically led to a demand for State Autonomy. "The language is embedded in culture, as culture, as culture is embedded in language. Federalism provides the opportunity to give maximum scope to such self-expression. They are like the Siamese twin." The ancient glory of Tamil nationality made them think fast and the DMK sphereheaded the anti-Hindi movement
which shook the Tamils. "The growing consciousness of nationality had attached itself neither to traditional frontiers nor to new geographical associations but almost exclusively to the mother-tongues." The concept of secession was not only in the minds of southern leaders like E.V.Ramaswamy and Anna but it was ringing in the minds of leaders belonging to other states. "India's unity will get in to danger only when we refuse to recognise the importance of various nationalities in states. I would like to point out that it is only after the advent of the British that the concept of India was formed. Asoka and Akbar did not rule all over India. But the idea of Kerala as Kerala, of Andhra as a Andhra, of Bengal as Bengal and so on existed from times immemorial, even during the times of Mahabharatha." Chief Minister Anna however had statesmanship enough to give up the secessionist demand but he stressed much on State Autonomy. He pleaded for amending the Constitution so that it becomes effectively federal with fuller autonomy to the states." He gave vent to his strong feelings in his news papers: "Although I am the Chief Minister and although I am pining to do enormous good for my people, my hands are tied. More
powers are necessary for the state. To win those powers, we have to fight the Central government.\textsuperscript{14} Anna was prepared to fight as well as compromise in accordance with the definition of federalism." "By its very definition, federalism is looked upon to-day as essentially a principle of reconciliation and compromise to forge a degree of unity among a diverse people."\textsuperscript{15}

Anna's successor Karunanidhi pursued the demand for state autonomy with vigour and determination. His ceaseless fight and call for State Autonomy provoked many people in the country. He clearly and categorically explained that State Autonomy meant acquiring additional powers to map out socialistic plans for the people of his state as he was directly and immediately responsible to the people. He also explained that no region in the country should dominate another one in the name of national integration. He disliked the suppression of the rights of the states by the centre and called for a universal plan for the uniform economic development of all states. He justified meaningful integration and unity on the ground that there should be equal or fairer distribution of resources as well as equitably -
distributed investments of central projects in the various states. He said that having separate ministries at the centre for Agriculture, Medicine, Education and Public Work, Small Industries etc., are nothing but duplication of work and super-agencies, as these departments exist also at state level. (State List). He also opined that the centre should possess only defence and armed forces, foreign affairs and diplomatic representation, the Reserve Bank of India and foreign and inter-state commerce. He said, "I am not at all a separatist. I demand state autonomy for a united, strong and integrated India. I am afraid that those who deny us autonomy are the real separatists." Karunanidhi once rebellously levelled charges against the preceding Congress government's collusion with the Centre. He said "They had wanted Delhi to remain dictatorial and Hindi to be the ruling language. They want that Delhi alone should determine the fate of Tamil Nadu. They had no interest in Tamil culture." Underlining the handicaps of the State government he arraigned the Centre: we have no powers to set up industries. We have no powers to collect income-tax. We have not the right to float loans for developmental
purpose. We do not get President's assent even to the socialistic measures passed in the State Assembly. South Indian interests and requirements are being neglected, as also the economic development of the region. All the revenues and resources of Tamil Nadu have been sealed, delaying the full implementation of our policies and programmes. The Centre's anti-democratic practices of imposing President's Rule in certain states for 'political reasons', although there was scope for installing a ministry, should be ended. The Central government has been making 'veiled' attempts to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people, particularly the Tamils. Many Central government Departments are trying to thrust Hindi through back-door. The centre is apathetic to the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka which had denied language and economic rights to them although it constitutes a violation of U.N. Human Rights Charter. Even though Tamil Nadu produced enough yar, sugar, and cement the people of the state are experiencing difficulty in getting these because their distribution is vested in Central government. The Centre is meeting only half of the fertiliser requirements of Tamil Nadu." Karunanidhi with his
stewardship and his commanding political position in Tamil Nadu Legislature, endeavoured to create a climate of opinion in which additional powers are ceded to the states, so as to enable them to function as self-respecting states. He held that strong autonomous states would make for a strong, united and independent India. The legislature passed a historic resolution on 'State Autonomy' and urged upon the Centre that the Constitution be amended for establishing a realistic federal government under a system of State Autonomy in order to secure the integrity of India, to promote economic development, and to enable those states that had close contacts with its people to function without 'nays'. A white paper was also circulated by the DMK Government which expressed its salient demand. "It is a myth to say that the Centre would be strong only if most of the powers are concentrated in its hand; and in a true federation, the federal government should have powers, relating to defence, foreign affairs, inter-state communications and currency. These are the exclusive privileges of the Centre. All other powers should vest with the States. There could be discussions on the allocation of the remaining powers
between the Centre and States. The emphasis is that the State governments cannot discharge their responsibilities in meeting the growing aspirations of the people for a new way of life unless the resource-base of the State is considerably strengthened." There is a strong tendency to work the constitution as if it were a unitary one, treating the States as subservient to the Centre." "Ali Baig has said "My view is that the province will be nothing but glorified District Boards." Karunanidhi commented on the same lines: "Nothing tangible can be achieved so long as a State government retains the status of a 'post of New Delhi'. In regard to the strength of the Centre, Hanumanthaiah said: "Accumulation of files in the imperial Secretariat does not make for the strength of the Centre." Veerendra Patil one of the disillusioned Congress Chief Ministers said: "There is high concentration of power and finance in the hands of the Centre to-day. It is common knowledge that the State are forced time and again to go to the Centre with a begging boul, asking for money." Karunanidhi aimed at putting an end to the practice of State government going on "begging missions to Delhi off and on. It was well said by
Kunzru the provinces may suffer seriously - may, so to say, go about with a loin cloth - but the Centre will have little regard for their plight." 

The diplomat in Karunanidhi was fully convinced that it would be resolved through amicable discussions and was keen on averting Centre-State clash on this issue. He was also fully aware "that the outstanding feature of the financial relationship between the Centre and the States consequently is that the former is always the giver and the latter the receiver," in spite of State's contribution. The Karunanidhi government instituted a Committee under Dr. Rajamannar's chairmanship with Dr. A.I. Mudaliar and P. Chandra Reddy as its members to study Centre-State relations. The Committee reported: "This is a glaring instance of a power vested in the union to be exercised for the sole benefit of the states, being used to the detriment of the states." 

The Constitution, Karunanidhi explained, provided ample scope for the politically motivated misuse of power by the Centre with the help of its agents. "The
Governor is the agent or rather he is the agency which will press for and guard the Central policy, \( ^{24} \) and Das gave a critically comment that "you cannot have democracy and autocracy functioning together. In the provinces you are going to have democracy to the neck and autocracy at the head. Both are bound to fail." \( ^{25} \)

For vague reasons, the stable ministry of EMS Nambudripad in Kerala was dismissed in 1957. In 1974 the Gujarat Ministry was dismissed but the Assembly was not dissolved while the public opinion is that State forced its dissolution. Pointing to the Centre's strength, he asked: "Has the Centre's so-called strength been helpful to resolve the Cauvery dispute between Tamil Nadu and Mysore or the border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra? Has it stopped the wranglings within the ruling Congress party in the states controlled by it? What great progress has the country achieved all these years by refusing autonomy to the states? Why have lawlessness and violence engulfed Gujarat, Bihar, and many other states in spite of a strong Centre? Referring to the disgraceful manner in which the Gujarat Chief Minister was elected, counting the ballots of MLAs in Delhi and not in Ahmedabad, he explained that the
procedure had certainly degraded the state and detracted from the MLA's the privilege to elect their Chief Minister. The afore-stated events added strength to his demand for State Autonomy. Notwithstanding the apparent hypocrisy of the Congress and its Chief Ministers, one cannot deny the need to re-examine Centre-State relations in the light of our experience of the past 28 years. It would be rash to assume that the federal system in India has definitely settled down to the acceptance of Central dominance. The growth of regional consciousness has only just begun and new problems based on it coming to the surface. The planning Commission is another Central body which has a crucial role with regard to the States. Unlike the Finance Commission, it is extra-constitutional, but it regards itself as a government within the union government, its manner of functioning invites much criticism. "It is a well recognised concept that the spending power of a state is co-terminus with its legislative power. It will be ultra vires for the Union to expend any money for a purpose not covered in the Union list or the Concurrent list and it will be equally ultra vires
for a state to spend any money on a matter which is exclusively within the Union list... Article 282 confers on the Union or State spending power without conferring legislative power." Morarji Desai himself was of the opinion while speaking at the Indian Parliamentary Association Symposium on Centre-State relations held in New Delhi on 3rd May 1970. He "dealt with the question whether the devolution of plan resources also should be regulated by Statute ... though it is true that in the earlier years, there was not a regular system in this matter and sometimes favouritism was shown to some people according to the predilections of people lay." On May 30, 1972, Karunanidhi, while advocating State Autonomy at the National Development Council at New Delhi, said "Decentralisation is particularly necessary if a large country like ours is to cope up with the problems of a modern economy. It is in this sense, our demand for State Autonomy should be understood as a request for more efficient management of the country's resources, as a means to enable the Centre to be strong in areas of vital national concern, as a method of enabling the
minimum demands of our people to be met in the quickest
time and in the most efficient manner." 30 One may not
accept all the radical changes suggested in his speech.
At the same time there is no need to take an alarmist
view of it. 'Balkanisation' and 'fissiparous tendencies'
are cliches that will not help (why has not the phrase
'fissiparous tendencies' come into vogue among
political commentators? When Prime Minister Indira
Gandhi described the word 'autonomy' as dangerous and
said it could pose a threat to the unity and strength
of India. He refuted sharply that he was not alone in
his demand, as even leaders like Acharya Vinoba Bhave
and Jayaprakash Narayan had stressed the need for
State Autonomy with a view to strengthening the Centre.
"The basis for the demand for state's autonomy lies in
the multi-nationality of India. The re-structuring of
the relations between Centre and States requires first
of all genuine equality of all States, including
equality of the national languages, encouragement to
national and tribal cultures and primarily economic
development which will prevent oppression of nationali-
ties in the interest of anti-democratic forces." 31
Referring to the soaring prices of essential commodities
which directly affect the poor, the states governments are helpless due to the multiplied debts to the Centre. In the olden days, the East India Company saved revenue as profits, transferred them to London and later brought them back as loans advanced to the Government of India. Nowadays the Centre raises taxes in the territory of the States, takes them to New Delhi, and sends a portion of it back as loans advanced to the States. This surfeit of money in the hands of Central government enables it to play politics with it in relation to the states.  He believes that circulation of black money and the evasion of income-tax to the extent of crores of rupees which has a bearing on the high prices, are factors the Centre alone has the powers to control. Referring to the Centre and State Planning Schemes, he said "when there is a planning process and the state government and Central Planning Commission working together, I do not see why there should be central schemes and centrally-sponsored schemes in areas which are part of state responsibilities. I plead most emphatically that these outlays should be transferred to the state plans and there should not be any central sector schemes in subjects which are definitely of the
nature of the state plan schemes." The Tamil Nadu Government decided to nationalise the Madras Aluminium Company (MACCO) and appealed to the Centre for permission on February 26, 1973 but no reply was received from the Centre. Karunanidhi said, "it should be viewed more as a part of the theme of socialism that the organs of people's power should be vested with necessary resources and authority. In our view, the surest way to ensure the implementation of socialist ideals in a large country like India whose constituent states are politically and geographically distinctive is to endow the slates with greater autonomy."

Babu Jagajivan Ram, the then Defence Minister paid an encomium to Karunanidhi while addressing a meeting at Salem. He also stressed that strength and greatness of the nation depended on the strength of the constituent states in the Union. As regards the Centre-State relations in implementing socialist principles, he said "We believe that socialism can be brought about in this country, only on the basis of an adequate decentralisation of powers. Otherwise, centralisation of powers and bureaucratic centralism will erode the
content of socialism. The shifting of the Centre of power from the hands of a few capitalists in Tamil Nadu to a few government servants either at New Delhi or at Bombay, as had happened in the case of nationalisation of banks or general insurance, will not ensure the complete fulfilment of the socialistic goals before us. Indeed the Central government is yet to come forward to associate the State government in the management and day to day administration of these institutions.”

It was not only the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who raised his voice for autonomy but there were others also. The only difference between him and the others was that they belonged to the Congress. The than Karnataka Chief Minister said: "It is feared at this rate there may be urgent demands for more autonomy by the States and a day might come when different Houses and Bhavans of the States in Delhi are constrained to assume the character of embassies... the Union government has no territory of its own except small areas here and there administered by the Union.” undoubtedly, concentration of administrative powers at a distant centre tends to breed inefficiency and
resentment, which in turn provoke people against the Centre. It follows logically that unnecessary accumulation of administrative power increases not only delays, but also causes irritation and friction. One authority has stated: "(The) Constitution vests control in the Hindus of the North," with reference to Uttar Pradesh's domination. A political analyst has said: "The consequence of the present imbalance, caused by the denial of the federal principle of equality of units has been to create feelings of distrust and resentment in all the states outside Uttar Pradesh... That will be a danger to our unity, if such feelings are allowed to exist and remedies are not sought and found now."38

Valuable suggestions have come from leading jurists like M.C.Chagla and P.V.Rajamannar, urging that the time had come when a high-powered, all-party committee should be set up to review the working of the Constitution in respect of the powers of the States in relation to those of the Centre and of the powers of the Governor in relation to the State government. Experience with the 1950 Constitution
had revealed the need for a review of the Union-State financial relationship also. At the Madras Bar Council meeting, on April 17, 1974 an eminent advocated the 'restoring to the states their legitimate power', as envisaged in the Constitution in the field of commerce and industry. The massive concentration of economic power in the hands of Central government should end. Every state ought to have powers to start and develop industries and the Centre should not come in their way. Even though Tamil Nadu had rich resources, it did not have the powers to exploit them on its own. A little careful analysis will reveal that the right and power concerned do not rest in the act of tax collection, but in the distribution of the money so collected. If a Central government is constitutionally assured of a definite amount, why should it bother about the actual collection? It is interesting to recall the view of S.M. Rahman. He said: "In case of a Federation it is only the fiscal taxation in which it is interested. The rest of the purposes of taxation viz., productive, social, commercial and moral, are the responsibility of the federating units. This is what is done in the U.S.A. and some other federations. In the USSR even
the taxation is not done by the Union. There is no Finance Minister and the Finance Ministry in the Union government of Soviet Union. The Finance Ministers and Ministers are all with Federating Republics. They meet the requirements and serve the purposes of the Union government. Have these arrangements weakened the Central authorities of the USA and USSR? It was with this knowledge and experience of the working of a Federation that Cabinet Mission offered an Indian Federation without the power of taxation and it was for the same reason that the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the offer. It will, therefore, be seen that a federation can be firmly provided with its finance without being burdened with the duty of tax collection."

Karunanidhi fully realised that State Autonomy is not an ordinary matter to be settled between the Prime Minister of India and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu but should be a burning and living concept which permeates the thinking minds of the masses. He sowed the seed of State Autonomy in such a way that the people of other states also took up the issue. He also appealed to the Prime Minister to grant State Autonomy temporarily on a 10 years trial
basis to see whether it was workable and good for the Nation. He also mentioned the powers and rights in respect of fiscal autonomy. "Fiscal autonomy for the State would involve the right to retain the entire revenue from various types of taxation except conceding a small percentage to the Central government for its expenditure on Defence, Posts and Telegraphs and other centralised services. There should be free scope for competition between the states through tax incentives and favourable rates of taxation, particularly for the backward states." Each state will have a right to retain, and use as it pleases, the entire foreign exchange earnings. The states will have a right to enter into foreign collaboration of their own choice with any country of the world, wedded to any political system and belonging to either Eastern or Western bloc. Karunanidhi aimed to mobilising enough support for the successful piloting of a resolution in Parliament by different parties and states, endorsing the state legislature's views on State Autonomy. By referring to the popular 1945 Election Manifesto of the All India Congress, he said "The Federation of India must be an willing
union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units that may desire to do so.\textsuperscript{41} Maran, a learned and leading parliamentarian of the DMK Party, pleaded for autonomy in lucid terms and said: "We do not hold any dogmatic approach to this problem and as federal government is the 'product' of economic and social pressures, nothing can be said on the last word on this subject. Federalism is a growing concept capable of improvement according to change of times and needs and we are prepared for any fruitful dialogue with all interested parties and individuals."\textsuperscript{42}

Policies and principles were intertwined in Karunanidhi's radical programme. Karunanidhi used to state often that the party must use power not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve its social, economic, and political objectives. Circumstances prevented him from achieving State Autonomy, but he promised that he would even quit the office to launch a movement for
State Autonomy if necessary. His conviction was so strong that he and his party would go it alone even if other states failed to join him. It was a good beginning and an initial triumph for Karunanidhi that the Centre accepted his suggestion that the Chief Minister of respective states be permitted to unfurl the National flag on Independence Day. This honour and privilege had been denied for 25 years to the Chief Ministers who were elected by the sovereign votes of the people but it was given to the Governors who were agents of the Centre and the local bureaucrats. Recently, Hon. M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, paid glowing tributes to Karunanidhi's achievement while he unfurled the National flag on the Independence Day. Karunanidhi stated in the legislature that mere contesting and winning the elections was not their aim. He urged that even at the cost of our lives, we must be prepared to fight for State Autonomy. He emphatically stated, we extend our hand of friendship and raise our voice for rights. His life-mission was to work for the common people, to broaden and deepen their outlook in social, economic and political matters and to make them active and bright citizens of a self-respecting state. He said that he would not rest till he achieved a
suitable amendment to the Constitution (written by a minority) for State Autonomy. In India, 'the people' enact the Constitution 'in our Constituent Assembly', but the Assembly was composed of representatives elected by a minority of the people of India and the Constitution itself was never submitted to the people for their approval directly.\(^4^3\)

**Dismissal of the D.M.K. Government:**

Corruption has been a standard ground on which politicians attack each other in modern politics, not only in India but all over the world. Even the Congress leaders had used the word corruption against one another. C. Subramaniam, as Union Steel Minister, was linked with Aminchand Pyarelal affair. While Kamaraj was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Rajaji called his government a corrupt government, Kamaraj retorted 'Is Rajaji a Dharmaputtra? Is corruption prevalent only in my administration? Was there not corruption for 5000 years even during Thiruvalluvar days?\(^4^4\) The politics of corruption had been on the high side even during Karunanidhi's Chief
Ministership. He faced charges of corruption from opposition parties as well as his own partymen, including M.G. Ramachandran, the matinee idol who acted in a dozen Tamil films written by Karunanidhi. It is a popularly notion that M.G.Ramachandran built up the DMK through his celluloid propaganda. In reality it is difficult to determine how much he owed to the DMK. In so many political cum public meetings Anna and Karunanidhi urged the people to patronize M.G.Ramachandran's films in large numbers. Though he did not participate in any agitations, M.G.R. was offered party treasurership by Karunanidhi as he had helped Karunanidhi in his bid for Chief Ministership after Anna's death. A unique procedure not known in any other part of the country or in the world which Karunanidhi sponsored and got adopted in the Tamil Nadu legislature in a resolution was to make it obligatory for the Ministers and MLAs to place before the legislature annual statements of their assets including those of their spouses, children and other family members. M.G.Ramachandran was reminded of this several times and was asked to produce the statement of his assets to the legislature. In turn he pressed for the declaration of assets of important men in the party or face inquiry. He distributed pamphlets
denigrating the party. Karunanidhi explained that "the party would have been tolerant if M.G. Ramachandran had made the allegations against the Ministers including himself, but it was unfortunate that he was sling ing mud on the integrity of 18,000 branch Secretaries. So, the council had to take unavoidable and painful decision of expelling him from the party." The exit of M.G. Ramachandran from the D.M.K. was a major turning point in the party's history and in Tamil Nadu. The tussle between Karunanidhi and M.G. Ramachandran which brought about Karunanidhi's downfall was not the outcome of ideologica l conflict or charges of corruption, but it was the result of a power struggle and clash of personalities. On several occasions M.G. Ramachandran defended Karunanidhi's alleged corruption. But when M.G. Ramachandran decided to fight Karunanidhi it was only due to a feeling that Karunanidhi was not giving him due regard and importance." Anbazhagan said "that ever since he (Karunanidhi) constituted his cabinet in 1971, M.G. Ramachandran had been working for getting himself appointed as a Minister. Karunanidhi was inclined to accede to the demand, but his only condition was that M.G. Ramachandran should, in that case, give up acting
in films. But M.G.Ramachandran wanted both - a ministership and acting as a career. M.G.Ramachandran had several Manrams (Fan Associations) in his name and he used to convene the conferences of these. Manrams even during Anna's days Karunanidhi wounded the feelings of M.G.Ramachandran by not obliging the superstar. On the contrary he tried to project his son M.K.Muthu as the new light in the Tamil cine field. Further he tried to convert the influential M.G.Ramachandran Manrams in his favour. He even tried to overpower and sidetrack the authority of M.G.Ramachandran as the treasurer of D.M.K. M.G.Ramachandran grew rebellious, not only in asking for the accounts but he also charged that Karunanidhi was a dictator and that there was no inner party democracy in DMK. At last M.G.Ramachandran founded his 'All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam' in 1972. At the Bangalore Glass-house Session, there came a 'Great Divide' amongst the Congress members, reducing the Indira Gandhi Government to a minority in the wake of the defection of 70 odd members of Parliament from it. The DMK and Karunanidhi played a politically significant role in tilting the balance of power against or in favour the Indira government. Karunanidhi rose to the
occasion, taking cognizance of the need for a strong, stable Union Government at the Centre and in particular of Indira Gandhi's pledge to implement socialistic measures like the nationalisation of Banks and the abolition of (privy-purse) princely privileges. Hence he gave his full support with 25 MPs and supported her government. He was the only Chief Minister, during the 1971 mid-term poll, who supported Indira's political views and dissolved the state legislature and faced elections for both Lok Sabha and the Legislature at the same time and also sincerely laboured for the success of ten Congress candidates. Against the advice of Rajaji, he had also supported and backed V.V. Giri, Indira's nominee for Presidential election. Sri C.Subramaniam and the late Mohan Kumaramangalam were elected to the Parliament from Krishnagiri and Pondicherry by-elections with his support. C.Subramaniam openly declared in a public meeting on the eve of his victory "My victory is the Victory of D.M.K." But these two stalwarts of Tamil Nadu Congress sowed the seeds of conflict between the Congress and D.M.K. They had also a plan of acquiring Chief Ministership, even if it meant dislodging D.M.K. government with the help of M.G. Ramachandran. The Congress-DMK relations were becoming
strained due to developments such as Simpson workers strike in 1972, the wallposters of Prime Minister and Chief Minister together displayed in Madras, the farmer's agitation by the old congress and Swatantra for which C.Subramaniyam extended his manifest sympathy etc. The Indira Congress wrongly calculated that ADMK could not play the Congress game in Tamil Nadu and therefore negotiated positive steps to win Kamaraj to its side. Indira's decision to secure the support of Kamaraj in Tamil Nadu was a blunt confession of the fact that M.G.R's Party was a failure. It was held that the only way to reinstate Congress in Tamil Nadu was to operate with Kamaraj. On the other hand, the bond of relationship with the ruling Congress became rigid and apparent. Karunanidhi said "This was the man who only a month before, had declared at the DMK conference that Tamils would face Indira's Military if the State Autonomy demand was not conceded. But Indira Gandhi had made him to meet her Government's income-tax authorities instead." The Karunanidhi government committed a political blunder in suspending prohibition in Tamil Nadu with a view to increasing the state revenue. MGR, backed by the CPI leader Kalyansundaram rushed to exploit the crisis. ADMK demanded the introduction of prohibition as it affected most women
of the labour and agricultural classes whose menfolk were squandering all their earnings over drinks. Karunanidhi pulled back, and announced a policy of gradual closure of the arrack shops and revival of prohibition.

The politically frustrated adventurist MGR did not remain quiet. Taking advantage of the reverses suffered by the DMK, he started making a vile propaganda against the DMK Government and Karunanidhi through petitions, memorandums, wallposters etc. There was nothing surprising in the opinion of MGR, the political exile, carrying to Delhi a voluminous Memorandum of 'corruption charges' against the Karunanidhi Government, with the inspiration and guidance of comrade Kalyanasundaram. MGR in his petition to the President, pointed out that the DMK Government had indulged in 'goondaism', 'arson', 'loot', murder and acts of repression comparable to Jalianwala Bagh, besides several anti-social acts unheard of and unknown in the annals of Indian history ... the most oppressive and disgusting lathi charge, firing and tear gas by police and torture by the ruling party goondas. The CPI leader Kalyanasundaram, claiming to act on behalf of the Executive Council of the State Council made the following allegations. "The ruling party had captured trade unions
for political ends; the Tamilar Padai (troops of Tamils) had been organised only in order to let loose violence on the public; the money sanctioned by the Central Government during the drought in 1970 was not properly utilised and there should be an investigation into the matter. He also requested on similar lines as those of MGR that a Commission of enquiry be appointed to look into these charges. But Indira Gandhi did not heed to this request for quite some time. However, the Prime Minister forwarded a copy of these petitions to Karunanidhi calling for his comments. Karunanidhi, not only enclosed a lengthy statement of replies to the allegations to the Prime Minister, but also rebutted the charges point by point on the floor of the legislature and printed replies were circulated to the members and then published for the general public. Referring to the petition he made a special mention of the vague phrases like 'it is believed', 'it is further believed', 'widely believed', 'commonly spoken', 'generally believed' etc., used by the petitioner in most of the allegations. MGR had also pointed out that Karunanidhi had not filed a statement of assets for 1970 and subsequent years, although the State Assembly had in 1969 adopted a resolution enjoining all MLAs and Ministers to file annual property statements in the Assembly. Replying to the allegations
contained in the petition of Kalyanasundaram, Karunanidhi stated that "the alleged use of 'state machinery' for the 'suppression of other political parties' or 'the use of power for self-enrichment by Ministers' was a figment of imagination. The Prime Minister was reminded that when the Congress was in power in the State, the communists had represented before the masses, with a measure of success that the Congress was a Party of rich landlords and industrialists, and the future have-nots lay only with communists."53

Originally the DMK was started as a party of the down-trodden and backward classes whose social and economic emancipation was the sole aim of the party. Indira after receiving the replies of Karunanidhi remained silent for four years, keenly watching the developments in Tamil Nadu. A judgement of the Allahabad High Court delivered by Mr. Justice JML Sinha on Mr. Rajnarain's election petition against Mrs. Indira Gandhi, raised far-reaching issues of constitutional law and practice in our parliamentary democracy. Mr. Justice Sinha had found Mrs. Gandhi guilty of committing corrupt practices on two counts under S.123(7) of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 and "rob the minister of the most elementary qualifications of manifest unquestioned probity and her resignation ought in all propriety to follow as a matter of course."54 The Prime
Minister could not continue in office without undermining the prestige and authority of the high office and lowering the standards of the country in the public eye. The Congress Party endeavoured to seek nationwide public support. The hapless Chief Ministers of some neighbouring states were asked to stage public support to the Prime Minister. They had a long experience in marshalling state machinery to gather crowds. It did not take them long to get buses and men and rush them to be round about near Mrs. Gandhi's residence, a ready made rostrum from the days of V.V. Giri's election in 1969. The cabinet ministers were asked to sign a pledge expressing faith in Indira's leadership. All the Congress leaders from all over India gave their support and recognised her leadership. She also kept her own counsel. She did ask Jagajivan Ram, Swaran Singh and Chavan whether it was proper for her to continue in office till the Supreme Court disposed off her appeal against Allahabad Judgement. All the three said that it would spell a disaster if she were to quit and her leadership was indispensable. But Ram's speech, however struck a slightly different note. He said "that the Judgement had at least shown that the Judiciary in India functioned without fear or favour. Pointedly avoiding the use of the word 'indispensable', Ram however stated that whether in or out of office, Mrs. Gandhi
would continue to lead the nation." The foreign press
gave a mixed reaction to the Allahabad verdict. The Chinese
news media did not make any comment. The Soviet Newspapers
supported Indira. The western press did not take much
notice of it. A resolution at the meeting of the
representatives of all non-communist opposition parties
deplored Indira's refusal to step down from office following
the Allahabad verdict and managed to stage rallies. "It
said the Gujrat elections had proved that the people were
longer with Mrs. Gandhi. To say that "Indira is India and
India is Indira" is not only ridiculous but also an insult
to the genius of the 600 million people of this country." All
opposition leaders criticised her continuance in office.
J.P. Narayan's speeches stirred every citizen and threatened
the position of Indira. He said "she must go as her nine
year rule had already ruined the country's economy as well
as its public and political life ... her continuance in
office will debase further, not only the political coinage
but also everything else that the ordinary Indian citizen
still holds dear." On another occasion he asked army men
to reject illegal orders. "He called upon the armed forces
personnel to be dutiful and go by their own training to
judge which order of the Government is just."
of all the strained relations with Indira's Government Karunanidhi did not try to fish in troubled waters. No severe criticism came out from him. He merely said "She must set an example to the nation in obeying the Judgement." Again in the wake of the Judgement of Allahabad High Court when the parties in the J.P. Movement announced their plans of agitation demanding Indira's resignation, the representatives of the DMK did not affix their signatures to the resolution but returned to Madras. It was on the basis of this consistently friendly relation with Indira that the DMK approached the problem. The DMK Government did not extend its support to any movement aimed at toppling Governments. Actually when the committee of J.P. Narain's Movement took for consideration the Resolution that the Bihar Government should be dissolved by the Centre, the representatives of the DMK made it plain that they were not for conceding to the Centre the authority to dissolve a State Government. Karunanidhi recalled the events which took place in 1971. "After the split, the Prime Minister had herself invoked the help of other political parties and the DMK lent its sincere support through what had been a period of trial for her. But for this support, the whole history of the Congress might well have been different."
Karunanidhi's complete dedication to democratic principles is apparent in his severe condemnation of the resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress demanding the resignation of the Indira Ministry. Karunanidhi declared that "any effort to topple or to change a government before it had run its full term of office would be antithetical to the principles of democracy. A party which came to power through the people's verdict should be allowed to rule for its full term of five years. The DMK would never stand in the way of any political party that made sincere efforts on democratic lines to establish an honest and stable government. To put an end to all the opposition hue and cry against Indira and her Congress rule, the emergency was proclaimed. The President's proclamation of emergency on June 25, 1975 automatically removed the fetters on the state to make laws or to take executive action restricting Fundamental Rights under article 19 of the Constitution. Again, the President had promulgated an Ordinance amending the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971. Under the Ordinance, it would not be necessary to communicate the grounds of detention to a person detained under the Act, but it would be necessary for the authorities to make a declaration to the effect that the detention of the person was necessarily for
dealing with the emergency. While justifying the emergency she said "all these opposition leaders were raising the bogey that democracy was being damaged by the Congress and herself. In fact, these people were doing the greatest damage to democracy by spreading rumours and lies." The trouble between her and the opposition she said, "mainly started when she gave a twist to the country's economic policies to help the poor and depressed sections of the society. They were fighting for a certain class while she and the Congress stood for the people who till today had not shared properly the fruits of independence." The people of India lost their freedom in June 1975. The Emergency was clamped. The top leaders of the country were unceremoniously bundled into vans and carried off to jails. The press was muffled and controlled. Those who dared to defy the Government were hunted down and imprisoned. Dissentors in all walks of life were harassed." It was Karunanidhi and his DMK Party who were the first to oppose the imposition of Emergency. It was the DMK which organised protest meetings, circulated hand bills throughout the country and conducted anti-emergency conferences attended by lakhs of people, during the emergency period demanding the release of all political
leaders. Karunanidhi unequivocally declared: "The DMK will never accept Preventive Detention in any garb in the place of MISA. The Central Government should give this matter a serious reconsideration and drop the proposal altogether. It was a dreadful experience when the MISA, which was introduced as a measure to oppress the smugglers, hoarders and anti-social elements, was used to arrest 1,60,000 politicians and keep in custody for a year without any trial." He did not deny that the Emergency was useful for the purpose of curbing the enemies of society, the economic offenders, the smugglers, the tax-dodgers and those who indulge in fraudulent transactions of foreign exchange; and place these elements behind bars. The then Central Government had also overtly accused the DMK Government that Tamil Nadu was an island which gave asylum to the leaders belonging to the old Congress and the socialist party who went underground. The Central Ministers, C.Subramaniam and V.C.Shukla, who were in Tamil Nadu stated that there was no emergency in the State and, said that prices had come down throughout India with the exception of Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi gave lengthy statistical data as to the action taken by the Food Department and the Police Department of the State. In his reaction to Indira's 20-Point Economic Programme, Karunanidhi said "though the State Government had implemented many of these
schemes even with the powers available to the state, the programme was welcome in that it should benefit other states."

The DMK public meetings at Madras, Salem, Tninelveli and Coimbatore were rounded off with a pledge read by Chief Minister Karunanidhi and repeated by a large section of partymen and audience that they would protect Indian democracy under any circumstance and in any eventuality. He said, "our party is dedicated to the fundamentals of Democracy that is more or less a reason viewed with disfavour by those who have never had faith in the creed." Apart from his love for democratic ideals, he made Indira know that she could not bully everyone. Whatever his reasons, Karunanidhi had the courage to stand up to Indira's authoritarianism. The Executive Committee of the DMK passed a resolution demanding the release of the senior national leaders who did not belong to their party and who did not have any alliance whatsoever with the DMK. Another demand was that the Emergency needed to be reviewed; and the third one was that the rights of the press should be restored. He did not say anywhere that there should be agitation or struggle to get these demands fulfilled. On the contrary, he said "What the Resolution stipulates is that Tamil Nadu, in order to win these demands, should approach the problem in a manner suited to its traditions - along the Gandhian
path - along lines of action evolved by Anna - and without in any way impairing law and order and general peace and thus seeks a proper and happy solution to the problem." Since the D.M.K. government had not fallen even after the allegations, some persons tried hard to topple it during the emergency. After finding fault with the resolution passed by the D.M.K. Executive Committee, M.G.Ramachandran and Kalyanasundaram were submitting petitions to the President of India and the Central Ministers visiting Madras, seeking the ouster of the D.M.K. Government. Some one asked: what was the immediate cause for the proclamation of Emergency? Indira Gandhi said "J.P.Narayan, Desai and others tell that I should be unseated in undemocratic manner and threatened to stage dharna in my residence and should I have to tolerate that? hence the Emergency." Karunanidhi elucidated his argument on similar lines. He asked "Did not Mr.M.G.Ramachandran who today tells Mrs.Gandhi that the D.M.K. Government in Tamil Nadu be unseated, declare at a public meeting that he would lead a march to the residence of Chief Minister in Gopalapuram, embark on a literal invasion, at the conclusion of which mission there would not be any shred of evidence or a single witness even? Did not
the CPI leader K.T.K. Thangamani tell a public meeting at R.S. Mangalam that Karunanidhi should either choose to commit suicide like Hitler or people should beat him to death, as it happened in the case of Mussolini. Has it proved in the court of law that Mr. Thangamani did speak in this manner? If persons such as these demand the ouster of D.M.K. Government, may we not be justified in questioning their credentials their patriotism even?"

The D.M.K. which vehemently opposed the emergency, directed its opposition in the most peaceful manner of Anna and did not resort to any violent or virulent methods whatsoever. But the D.M.K. felt that it should fight the emergency because of its attendant evils.

Karunanidhi gave a clarion call to his partymen "if instead of our endeavour succeeding, something else were to occur, then let us remember that we are of the clan that treats throne and prison alike. And so my valorous comrades all, you who are of the lineage of Chera Senguttuvan, Pandya (̈), Nedunchzhian and Chola Karikalan in the event of our having to encounter an unavoidable situation, you should be prepared for any sacrifice."
It is because of this stance of that Indira Gandhi revived the memorandum of M.G. Ramachandran and Kalyanasundaram against Karunanidhi. She used them for dismissing his ministry. Thus the D.M.K. Ministry was dismissed by the Presidential order of 31-1-1976. She acted forgetting the fact that the D.M.K. had supported her during her political crisis 1967-71 and again during the 5th General Elections.

The dismissal was made on the ground that primarily the D.M.K. Government followed secretly secessionistic views in their conference in Tirunchirappalli, Madras, Salem and Coimbatore. Secondly, the D.M.K. Government had failed to raise the per capita income of the people in Tamil Nadu. Thirdly it had failed to eradicate the bonded labour system in the State. Fourthly it had paid improper attention to the implementation of the 20-Point Economic Progressive plans. Fifthly, it had failed to encourage big industries and to exercise proper control over labour. Lastly, the government was totally corrupt.

No less a person than K.K. Shaw the State Governor had more than five times during his tenure of office had
praised the efficient and effective policies and programmes of the D.M.K. government. He had said on 31-1-1976 in the Gandhi Memorial Hall, that he had no doubt that D.M.K. Government and the people of Tamil Nadu would set an example to the rest of the country and it is a pace-setter to Gandhian way of government participation in welfare schemes. Yet the Government was dismissed from power the same evening by the President by a proclamation issued on 31st January 1976 under Article 356 of the Constitution dissolving the Assembly and imposing President's Rule in Tamil Nadu (Proclamation order – vide Sec. II Table No.III).
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