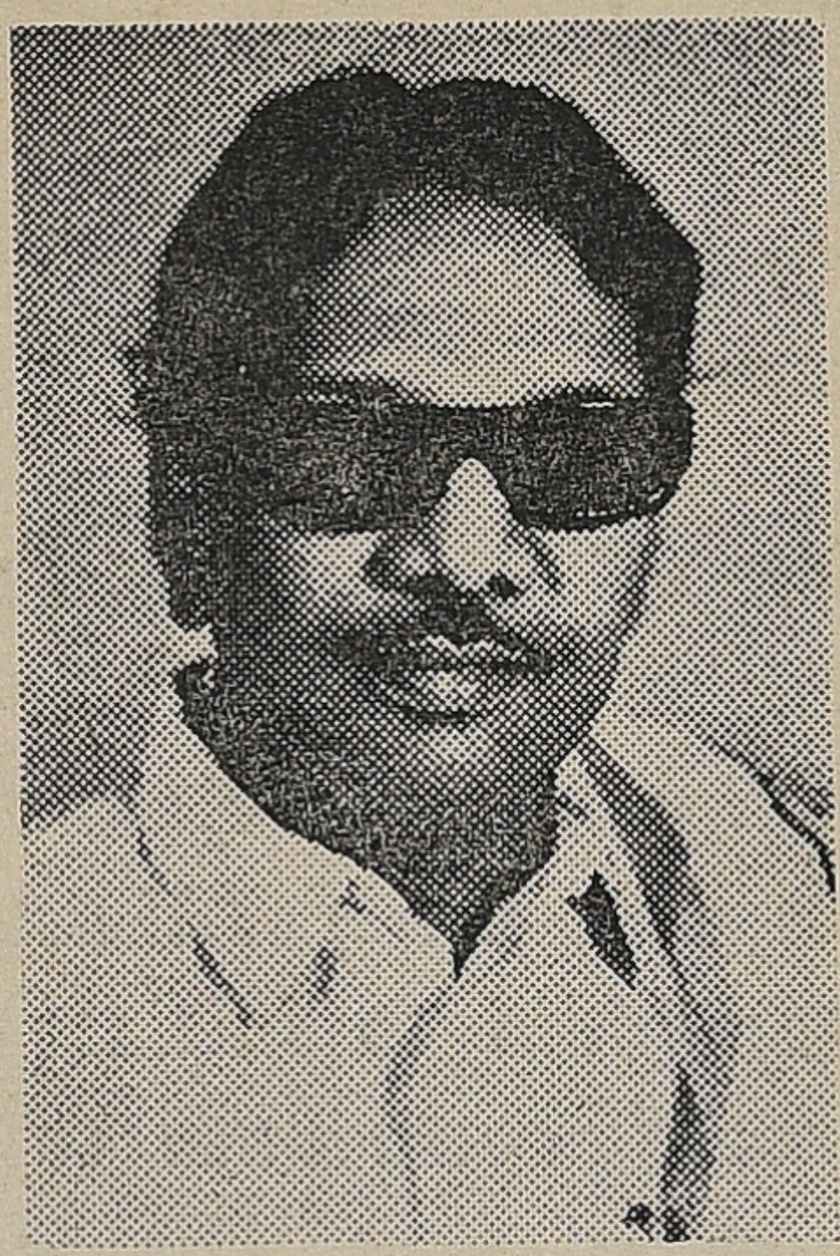
PRECIOUS LAMP IN OUR CARE



Speech delivered by

Dr. M. KARUNANIDHI

President of the D.M.K.

and

Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

at the

Tirunelveli District D.M.K. 5th Conference

held in Tirunelveli

on 9th and 10th of August 1975

The Fifth Conference of the Tirunelveli District DMK was conducted in Tirunelveli on 9th and 10th August 1975. The attendance at the Conference was of unprecedented proportions and the Conference itself was of immense political significance, particularly in the context of the situation prevailing in the country.

The Treasurer of the DMK (and Health Minister of Tamil Nadu), Prof. K. Anbazhagan proposed the following ,historic Resolution: "This Conference requests the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M. Karunanidhi to initiate such appropriate efforts as would contribute to remedy the extraordinary situation that has arisen in the country today, hold discussions with the prominent leaders of India and the Chief Ministers, meet the Prime Minister and do the needful to evolve a congenial atmosphere in a manner to gladden all the people of the land."

Seconded by Dr. V. R. Nedunchezhian, General Secretary of the DMK (and Education Minister of Tamil Nadu), the Resolution was passed with acclaim by the Conference.

This booklet contains the text of the speech delivered by Dr. M Karunanidhi, President of the DMK, on 10th August 1975.

"THIS Conference of the Tirunelveli District DMK has been organised in immense enthusiasm and ardour by our friends here who have gone about the task in accordance with our revered Leader Anna's maxim that we should continue to do our duty, even in the midst of trials and tribulations.

"Friends who spoke at this Conference yesterday and today referred in justifiable pride to the greatness of the Tirunelveli region — of the many martyrs and freedom-fighters which the soil here has given birth to.

"They related how it was in the Tirunelveli region was born that warrior Kattabomman who challenged the British aggressors with the words, "When it is the cloud that gives rain and the land that provides corn, why on earth should we yield to your extortion ?"

"What our friends refrained from mentioning was that it was the very same soil here that gave birth to Ettappan too — he who betrayed Kattabomman ! There is a possibility of evil too accompanying the birth of good, on some occasions ; and the tale of Kattabomman and Ettappan goes to illustrate this.

"That monarch among poets, Subramania Bharati who said in anticipation, 'The talk everywhere is that Independence has come'; V.O. Chidambaram who was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment and yoked to the oil-mill ; Vanchinathan who trod the hard path and embraced death in the prime of his life ; Puli Thevan who stood up to the coercive might of the whites and struck terror in their hearts ; and that outstanding Islamic poet Umaru pulavar — all of them were born in this region only.

MEMORIALS FOR MARTYRS

"We have done what all needs to be done on behalf of our Government and we have raised appropriate memorials in the region for those freedom-fighters, martyrs and intellectuals.

"Until a few days back, if one desired to have a look at Kattabomman's Fort, all that one could see was a famine-stricken, dilapidated structure in the Panchalankurichi region. But today we have reconstructed the historic fort.

"The house in Ettayapuram, where Subramania Bharati was born, has been purchased by the Government and made into a memorial.

"Statues of V.O. Chidambaram have been installed near Tuticorin harbour and in Madras; and a number of residential areas in the State have been named after him. Time was when the oil-mill to which V.O.C. had been yoked could not even be located; in the DMK regime, however, we have taken pains to trace that poignant relic and it has been brought to Madras city where it is kept on display.

"Arrangements are under way on behalf of our Government to install a statue of Puli Thevan also, in the near future.

"The request that a suitable memorial should be raised for Umaru pulavar too, is under consideration by the Government.

"All these could be done and have been done by the Government.

VALOROUS VANCHINATHAN

"But, for over one year, we have been pleading with the Central Government to rename the Maniyachi Railway Station as "Veera Vanchi Junction" (with the note 'Alight here for Maniyachi'), after that valorous youth Vanchinathan who shot dead a white fanatic and shot himself dead soon afterwards — at that very place where he entered the battlefield and shed his blood, at that very place where he pledged his precious life and lost it without a murmur, in the cause of the motherland's liberation!

"We have not been successful in this, for the reason that the Central Government, which claims to honour the martyrs, has refused to accord consent to the proposal to rename Maniyachi Junction as Veera Vanchi Junction, on the ground that Veera Vanchinathan was not a celebrity but only a "local leader"!

"Although this proposal of ours has not been brought up in the form of a Resolution at this Conference, I request the Central Government on behalf of this Conference to take my present speech itself as a Resolution and rename Maniyachi Junction as "Veera Vanchi Junction" (with the explanatory note, "Alight here for Maniyachi".)

COWARDICE AND TREACHERY

"Quite a few of those who spoke before me, while dwelling on the present-day situation said, "Karunanidhi has become very patient — almost excessively so" !

"I am inclined to think that what these friends had actually intended to say was that I have become a coward ; and that, out of a desire not to hurt my feelings or offend me, they have had recourse to euphemism and said merely that I have become patient !

"Anyway, I am not prepared to get worried even if the complaint of cowardice is levelled against me ! *One could be a coward but one should not become a traitor.* It might be asked, "Are not all the traitors cowards too ?" Traitors are cowards of course ; but not all cowards are traitors.

"In any Movement, there are bound to be some weak-hearted individuals. Afraid of indulging in courageous deeds, these persons would simply elect to remain aside. Instead of that, they would not scheme, "Since we are not equal to this task, let us do something or other," and proceed to commit treachery.

"If, along these lines, you would take me as a coward who, however, has never been guilty of betraying the principles he had accepted, then I am quite prepared to welcome that title !

"When, indeed, does cowardice arise ? And when, indeed, does fear come into being ?

PRECIOUS LAMP

"If, when a lady is walking along the street with an oil-lamp in her hand, a wind starts blowing and if, thereupon, she seeks

shelter in a hall nearby, what is the reason for that? Is it because she fears that she herself might be knocked down by the wind? No. She takes temporary shelter in the hall, only because the lamp in her hand would otherwise be extinguished.

"Likewise, if I am stepping a little aside and taking shelter in the hall for a while, it is only because I want to ensure that the lamp, which is the DMK, entrusted to my care, is not extinguished by the wind that is blowing today! This is what I would like you all to realise, O my friends of the Kazhagam!

"The Lamp in our care — is it an ordinary lamp? In the oil poured by Periyar E.V. Ramasami, in the wick placed by Anna, the assemblage of the people of Tamil Nadu lit this Lamp — this Lamp which Anna entrusted in our hands.

"It was in the year 1949 that this sacred Lamp was lit — the year when the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was founded. At that time there were many reviewers, critics and detractors, in the politics of Tamil Nadu and other States outside, who proceeded to compute the probable life of the DMK and who set themselves the purposeless task of assessing whether the DMK would survive at all or, in the event of its surviving, whether it would grow to any appreciable extent. But Anna, who brought us all up in loving care and made us what we are, endured and stood up to all this insensate opposition, abuses and assaults and he nurtured the DMK in boundless devotion and dedication.

NOT FOR CONFRONTATION

"In the history of the DMK we have crossed any number of difficult situations and we have become habituated to tackling ordeals.

"In regard to the political conditions prevailing in India today, people in the country are silently exchanging views, through the expressions in their eyes and face. We in Tamil Nadu, however, have the opportunity and facilities to talk about the present-day situation in the country, through Conferences such as the present one.

"We are very particular that this opportunity and facilities should be such as not to destroy the atmosphere that we desire to bring about or come in the way of the emergence of the normalcy that we are looking forward to.

"Confrontation is easy to get into. What the outcome and consequence would be is what is to be considered in depth. Some ten persons might be injured in the event of a clash; we are not anxious on that account because, as far as the DMK is concerned, we the leaders would be in the forefront to bear the brunt of any attack. In the case of certain other Parties, the leadership might be in the habit of staying at a safe distance behind the lines and allowing ten of the followers to take the knocking! But here in the DMK, when the call goes forth for preparedness for any sacrifice, it is the leaders who hold themselves in readiness in the first instance.

"In other Parties — not in all other Parties — the practice is to despatch the followers to the field of Struggle, while the leaders become preoccupied with other affairs. But in our method of Struggle — right from those days when the DMK was in the Opposition — the leaders take their place in the front-lines and the followers march behind them in discipline.

"Thus, it is not as if we are afraid of embarking on Struggles or Agitations. We have, however, to appraise the situation in a realistic manner.

CONSTITUTION TO BE REVISED?

"Today, the very Constitution of India has become a question-mark. Who is it that has raised this question-mark? — None other than the Law Minister of the Indian Union, Mr. H.R. Gokhale.

"We of the DMK had raised the very same query a long time ago, but only today has it assumed *Visuvarcopa* and generated a situation in which the Central Law Minister Mr. Gokhale has had to declare on the floor of the Rajya Sabha in Delhi that the Constitution of India itself is one that needs to be altered. Let us leave aside the objective with which he has said this. *What is*

important is that they at the Centre have accepted one thing — that the Indian Constitution requires to be put through a revision.

"As Mr. Manali Kandasami of the Tamil Nadu Communist Party pointed out pertinently, in the course of his speech here yesterday, when we all expressed our opinion that the Constitution has to be reviewed and changed suitably, they threw up their hands in holy horror and exclaimed that it was a sin even to talk on those lines!

"But today, when as many as 41 Amendments have been incorporated in the Constitution of India, the Law Minister of the Central Government has announced, albeit in an implied manner, "Howevermuch we may amend this Constitution, it does not seem to get corrected to a satisfactory extent; in the circumstances, there appears to be no alternative but to cast it away lock, stock and barrel and get down to the task of writing out a brand new Constitution!"

MR. GOKHALE'S SPECIALITY!

"The reason I accord importance to Mr. Gokhale's announcement is that, from what we have been able to observe during the last few days, it is apparent that when the Central Law Minister says something, it becomes a reality on the very next day or the next week or the next month. For instance, he stated in the Parliament one day that the matter was under the consideration of the Government as to whether disputes relating to the election of the Prime Minister could be placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Courts of Law. And within two days of his statement, came the Constitution Amendment Bill giving legislative shape to that intention. Further to this, another Constitution Amendment was brought forward providing total immunity to the Prime Minister from any Civil or Criminal Proceeding and also extending legal protection from the process of arrest or imprisonment. *And now the Central Law Minister says that the time has come to have a fresh look at the whole fundamental structure of the Constitution so that it could be altered to meet the requirements of the changed situation!*

"The DMK had expressed exactly the same view at the meeting of the Party's General Council held in the year 1951. This meeting was held on 17th November 1951 and on that occasion, views on the Indian Constitution were exchanged. Anna provided the elucidations and clarifications on the points raised. He explained the structure of the Constitution and related the manner in which it was drafted.

CHARACTER OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

"We of the DMK had expressed our dissatisfaction with the Constitution on the ground that it did not echo the voice or reflect the aspirations of the people of India in their entirety. The Members of the Constituent Assembly had been elected on the basis of the Britisher's Government of India Act of 1935 — much in the Members of the several Legislative Assemblies. The Members so manner of the Elections to the present-day Rajya Sabha by the elected to the Constituent Assembly were 202 in number. Apart from these, the ninety-three princely States in India nominated a Member each to the Constituent Assembly.

"*Do you know what the representative character of the Members of the Constituent Assembly was? These Members of the Constituent Assembly were elected by the Members of the Legislative Assemblies who, in their turn, had been elected by those citizens of the upper strata in society who formed but 20 per cent to 24 per cent of the population of India.* The General Council of the DMK, at its meeting on 17th November 1951, passed a Resolution to the effect that, inasmuch as the voice of the Members of the Constituent Assembly was not the voice of the totality of the Indian people, it was not acceptable to us; and as a token of our condemnation of the same and by way of displaying our dissatisfaction and discontentment over the Constitution, the DMK would not set up its own candidates for the General Elections scheduled to be held in 1952, but only extend support to individual candidates who affix their signature to a Pledge containing the policies of the Party.

"*What is the Indian Constitution? It is merely a rehash of about 75 per cent of the Britisher's Government of India Act of*

1935. It was such a document that the people of India were brought under the control of.

UNION IN PLACE OF FEDERATION

"Even in the Government of India Act of 1935 drafted by the Britisher, the principle of "Federal Government" had been accepted and incorporated by the British regime. But this expression was excluded altogether in the Indian Constitution. The expression substituted in its place was "Union of States." In regard to this, two of the Members of the Constituent Assembly brought forward Amendments at that time. The first was Prof. K.T. Shah whose Amendment was to the effect that the adjective "Federal" should be placed before the word "Union" in view of the distinct possibility of the "Union" becoming "Unitary Government" in course of time. This Amendment was rejected by the Constituent Assembly.

"The second Amendment, moved by a Muslim League Member belonging to the-then Madras State, by name Mehboob Ali Baig Sahib Bahadur, proposed that the term "Union" should be deleted altogether and in its place the expression "Federation" should be included. Let us see what he said in the course of his speech in the Constituent Assembly: "If you mean that the Government must be a Federal Government and not a Unitary Government and if you want to prevent in future any power-seeking Party to convert it into a Unitary form of Government and become Fascist and totalitarian, then it is up to us now to use the correct word which is "Federation." Therefore, Sir, I move that the word "Federation" may be substituted for the word "Union." This Amendment too, was rejected by the Constituent Assembly.

"Naturally we were dissatisfied with such a faulty Constitution; and it was by way of giving vent to that dissatisfaction that we rejected the Legislature in 1952.

DMK ENTERS LEGISLATURE

"It was some four years later — in 1956 — that Anna placed a request before the Tamil people, at the forum of the State DMK Conference, held at Tiruchy, seeking their verdict as to whether the

Party should participate or not in the Second General Elections scheduled for 1957. The people who attended the Conference gave their opinion in the form of a verdict that the DMK should participate in the General Elections. The DMK did so and fifteen of us, under the leadership of Anna, were elected to the Legislative Assembly.

"Friends, it was at that time — that is, in 1957-58 — when we of the DMK were seated in the State Legislature as an Opposition-group led by Anna, that a Communist Government emerged in Kerala with Mr. E.M.S. Nambudripad as Chief Minister. Incidentally, there was only a single Communist Party in our State then; today there are three — the Left, the Right and the Tamil Nadu Communist Party. When Anna happened to be speaking in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, he expressed the view that we of the DMK would also come to power one day. This was too much for the ruling Party, a spokesman of which intervened to comment, in characteristic fashion, that 'Aunt' could not become 'Uncle'! Anna pointed out such a transformation or metamorphosis had materialised in neighbouring Kerala. That was a reference to the erstwhile Communist Opposition in Kerala which had been returned to power in 1957.

"What became of that Government? In the Indian sub-continent, it was the lot of the-then Kerala Government and the Kerala State to be the first to feel and understand how sharp indeed is the point of the sword that is the Constitution!

TOPPLERS' TECHNIQUE

"A "massive" agitation led by a Sanatana leader by name Mannath Padmanabhan was got going with the avowed objective of toppling the Nambudripad Government. It was described as a "massive" agitation in the newspapers, but don't we know how really "massive" it was! In the course of that agitation the flag flying atop the Secretariat there was burnt and replaced; and a big procession was taken out. On receiving the news that lawlessness had spread in Kerala, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, our present Prime Minister, proceeded to the scene on behaif of the Congress Party for

the purpose of viewing and assessing the situation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru happened to Prime Minister at that time.

"Accepting the view of Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan that the people of Kerala were not in favour of the Communist Government and that President's rule should be promulgated and the State administered through the Governor, the Central Government dissolved the Nambudripad Ministry.

"Recently our Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi cited a reason for the proclamation of Emergency. It was that a democratically-elected Government should not be sought to be toppled through short-cuts.

"*On that occasion when the Communist Government in Kerala was toppled on the pretext of the agitation organised under the leadership of Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan, the only political Party to voice condemnation of the toppling was the DMK; and the only Leader to do so was Anna, to whom we owe our all. This is something that cannot be forgotten.*

"We said even at that time that the toppling was unjust and undemocratic. In the manner of a sadist who offers toffees and other sweets, kindling one's yearning thereby, and says at the last moment that he would actually part with the edibles only if it suits his fancy, the President of India, drawing his authority from one Section of the Constitution which empowers him to do whatever he wants, toppled the State Government in summary fashion. When that sharp-pointed sword in the Constitution pierced Mr. E.M.S. Nambudripad in the back, we voiced our condemnation of the incident in unequivocal terms.

"*The voice that we raised then to proclaim that it was unjust to have toppled the duly-elected Government in Kerala — that very same voice came from Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the year 1973* when Mr. Jayaprakash Narain proceeded to organise all the people in one rally for the purpose of bringing about the ouster of the Bihar Government. Mrs. Gandhi stated that she could not accept the view of Mr. J.P. Narain that the democratically-elected Bihar Gov-

ernment must be toppled through short-cut. We are in agreement with Mrs. Indira Gandhi as far as this line of opinion is concerned.

CONSISTENT POLICY OF DMK

"We do not say this because we happen to be the ruling Party. Our pattern of thinking has been consistent right from the time we were in the Opposition, as I illustrated earlier while referring to the toppling of the Nambudripad Government in Kerala. More recently I happened to be in Bangalore — only for the purpose of participating in a Party-meeting and nothing else; and let me hasten to add that I stayed there only for a day *(Laughter)* — when Mr. Jayaprakash started his Movement for the ouster of the Bihar Government. In reply to a query from Press Correspondents seeking my view on Mr. Jayaprakash Narain's Movement, I said: "Five years' time is there to change a Government elected democratically, on majority votes. Only after that duration should the people change that Government through the ballot. Any effort to bring about such a change of Government in the meanwhile, through agitations along short-cuts, would not meet with the approval of the DMK. Do not for a moment think that I say this because I happen to belong to the ruling Party now. This has been the policy of the DMK right from the time it was an Opposition Party."

"That is what we reiterate even now. After coming to power too, what all was the opposition that the DMK had to encounter? At a time when Anna was seriously ill, Congressmen took out a procession in Madras city, in the course of which they scattered pieces of black cloth all round the Anna-statue, before proceeding to smash up some newspaper offices. Commenting on the incident later, Anna said in the Legislative Assembly; "All along I had been wondering as to how exactly the Opposition Partymen would observe mourning, in the event of my death. They have been good enough to demonstrate that, even while I am in the land of the living; and my gratitude goes out to them for their kindness!" Such was the reaction of that large heart, the very recollection of which fills our chest with poignant pride.

"It was opposition of this category that we had to endure — opposition of a mean order, calculated to cause hurt somehow, unmindful of the methods adopted for the purpose.

ALLIANCE OF CONVENIENCE

"I come to another point. The electricity-rate was 17 paise per unit in Karnataka; 16 paise in Andhra; over 20 paise in Orissa; and in other States of India it was between 16 paise and 22 paise. The Central Government keeps on asking us to step up taxation on the agricultural front. The Centre wants to know why the tariff for pump-sets is on the lower side in Tamil Nadu while the Electricity Board is not making both ends meet. In view of all this, we raised the rates for electricity by a single paisa or two. And for that, a tumultuous agitation was engineered. Who all were the participants in that agitation? — The Congress; the landlords, the mirasdars and the Palayakottai Manradiars under the garb of agriculturists; and added to these were the comrades of the Communist Party. Thus the occupants of bourgeois mansions and the strollers in the park of Communism came together in a strange alliance of convenience for the sole purpose of showing opposition to the DMK Government.

"Don't you all know the manner of the agitation they organised by way of expressing opposition to the marginal rise in electricity-rates? Trees were felled and laid across roads, preventing thereby the plying of buses; and when the Police went to clear the obstructions, there was stone-throwing which, in turn, led to shooting resulting in some deaths, for which I express my grief and sympathies even today.

"Before this, in another aspect of the agitation, nearly 3000 bullock-carts were brought to Coimbatore city overnight and these carts were left on the roads and streets and lanes, as a result of which people were put to untold hardship for three days as they could not move about; and even patients suffering from serious illness could not be transported to hospitals.

"On that occasion did the Policemen brandish their rifles? Did they indulge in lathi-charge? On the contrary, the Police met the cartmen and the agriculturists and held talks with them. It was only thereafter that the 3000 carts were removed from Coimbatore city. This would go to prove the extraordinary patience and tolerance shown by our Government.

"When Pressmen asked Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to give her view on the agitation, you know what she said ? She said: "We have no difference of opinion as regards the need to raise electricity-rates ; what we cannot appreciate, however, is the manner of approach of the (State) Government."

WAS IT NOT LAWLESSNESS ?

"It was in the year 1972 that our dear friend Mr. M.G. Ramachandran parted company with us. What all occurred when he was suspended from the DMK ! Could our Ministers go anywhere to address public meetings ? How many indeed were the incidents of stone-throwing ? Numerous were the buses of the Government Transport that were set on fire. Mr. Vezhavendan's car was literally reduced to dust and ashes. Our Minister Mannai Narayanaswamy sustained a bleeding head-injury as a result of stone-throwing at a public meeting in Ramanathapuram. In this manner, commotion was created at the public meetings addressed Ministers; and even at the meetings of the Chief Minister. All this occurred towards the close of the year 1972.

"At that time, how gratified we would have been if the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who is occupying such a place and is having such authority as to ask a particular question, had actually given word to it in the following manner, "Could such things be done to bring down a Government ?"

"Instead of that, did not the Central Ministers, the late Mr. Mohan Kumaramangalam and Mr. C. Subramaniam — that "grammar of gratitude" who owes to us his victory in the Krishnagiri byelection to the Lok Sabha and his present position too — go to unseemly lengths in order to instigate the riots ? Being of the opinion that ordinary oil would not suffice for the purpose, they came by plane from Delhi ever so often to pour petrol, so to say, in the fire, thereby kindling it to flaming proportions.

"I would not blame the Prime Minister. She has many tasks and many problems, internal and external, to contend with. Central Ministers of the stature of Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Mr. Y.B. Chavan and Mr. Uma Shankar Dikshit have been gentlemen throughout. But

the two Congress Ministers sent there by us, the two who had waited on aching feet in our antechamber with their petition for Lok Sabha seats — these two were busy fanning he flames of agitation, by way of showing gratitude to us!

"In the face of all this provocation, we still practised patience, as true disciples of Anna.

"Our detractors air-lifted memorandums by casket-loads. It was given out that the cine-actor entrained at Madras in order to present a memorandum to the Prime Minister who was to visit Madurai and that it took a day and a half for the train to reach the destination, the delay being attributed to the factor that the train was detained at many points en route by his admirers. If that was so, did it not amount to lawlessness? Could that be characterised as normalcy?

FRANTIC PREDICTIONS

"If even after all this, the DMK Government is still there, it is because of the patience that we have adopted. How frantic and amusing were the predictions on their part? "The DMK Government is to be toppled today itself." "No, not today but tomorrow at 4-00 p.m. sharp or, failing that, on the day after positively." "All those who desire to become Ministers should rush for advance booking, inasmuch as the allotment of chairs would be mostly on the basis of seniority." "The Prime Minister would take not more than three months to act on our memorandum." "The President is about to pass orders on the same. And when he does that, Mr Karunanidhi is to be lodged in the Vellore jail, Mr Nedunchezhian in the Tirunelveli prison and Mr Anbazhagan in the Central Jail in Madras itself." "Then we would ride to power and hey, you there would be Health Minister; you, Chief Minister; you, Deputy Minister; and you, President of that Cooperative Bank." Their day-dreams ran in this fashion and when they woke up they still saw the DMK in power! *(Applause)*

"We could achieve this success only because we of the DMK, we who are in charge of the Government of the State, we who are administering the affairs of the Party, have been adopting patience

to this extent, have schooled ourselves to be the repositories of endurance. This we have done, not to save our posts, but to utilise those posts as an opportunity to be of service to the people of Tamil Nadu.

DMK HAS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

"Whether we are on the throne or we are thrown into prison, we would remain equally cheerful. Anna had said: "Whether I instruct them to lay themselves across the railway lines or whether I invite them to take up Ministerial posts, my younger brothers are those who would consider both the assignments to be of equal merit." It is that row of warriors that is seated here on the dais.

"The DMK has certain main responsibilities and certain important duties to discharge. I agree with what Mr. Manali Kandasami of the Tamil Nadu Communist Party said here yesterday that to the DMK have been entrusted certain tasks which are such that the Kazhagam would have to show the way to the whole of India. This claim I endorse, not because we feel that we are towering personalities and certainly not out of any ego that we alone are equipped or qualified to handle those tasks.

"As it is said, even a tiny little splinter of wood could help to serve as a toothpick. Would not we serve likewise ?

"Do not think that toothpicking is a small matter. If our Health Minister, Prof. Anbazhagan is called upon to expatiate on the theme, he would tell you about the number of ailments that the abdomen could be afflicted with as a result of dirt on the teeth; he would explain how such infections may spread to other internal organs like the lungs and how, ultimately, even the heart could come to a standstill, all because the teeth had not been attended to in time !

"And so, do not ask whether toothpicking is so important after all. Only when the tooth is cleared of dirt and dross would the body remain in health. In like manner, only when the dirt that is sticking to Democracy today is washed off — only when the dross that is stuck in the passage between teeth is removed — would the

mouth become clean. And only then would Democracy be able to move about in health. (Loud Applause)

"The DMK is in the nature of that tiny little splinter of wood. And only to that extent have we taken this duty upon ourselves.

NEW LIGHTHOUSE FOR INDIA

"Mr. Manali Kandasami said further that the DMK should not limit its activities to the State-level alone and that it should act as guide to the whole of India. Prof. Anbazhagan pointed out that the DMK is a Movement that strives, with national consciousness and Tamil consciousness, for the people of the State. That is what I would like to tell Mr. Manali too.

"The DMK does not desire to be a moon suspended in the skies and proffering light to the whole of India. On the other hand the DMK prefers to be a column of light in the southern extremity of India — a lighthouse serving as a lamp to the ships floundering on the high seas in India. It would remain only here and be of constant service to the Tamil people.

"Among the national races in India, the one that is renowned, the one that has to its credit a corpus of excellent traditions and a background of glorious history, is the Tamil race. The DMK functions today as an envoy and representative of this race, as its servitor, as the lamp for its abode and as the worker for its land.

"It is in the context of discharging this duty that we have to analyse the problems that have arisen in the country today.

"Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi introduced the proclamation of Emergency on 26th June '75. In the course of a nation-wide broadcast she stated that duly-elected and legally-established Governments were not allowed to function, that with a view to dissolving lawfully-elected Assemblies, force was employed to obtain the resignations of Members and that agitations surcharged the atmosphere, leading to violent incidents.

WRONG COULD HAVE BEEN CHECKED

"In regard to this, the DMK has no different opinion whatsoever. As I have already had occasion to point out, if only

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who says today in the year of grace 1975 that it is wrong to coerce elected Members of the Legislatures to resign, had uttered the same thing in 1972 — if, when Mr. M.G. Ramachandran here called upon his followers to march in procession to the residences of M.L.A.s throughout Tamil Nadu and hand over a memorandum demanding their resignations, Mrs. Gandhi had cared to state that it was wrong on the part of Mr. M.G.R. to do so — would that wrong thing have continued to occur in other States in India ?

"I do not presume to ask why Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not adopt that line. I merely point out that, if only the wrong thing had been condemned then itself, other States would not have followed that course of action.

"The Prime Minister stated further in her broadcast that she hoped conditions in the country would speedily improve so that it would be possible to lift the Emergency at an early date. It is on the basis of this view that Prof. Anbazhagan placed a Resolution before this Conference yesterday, which Resolution was seconded by Dr. Nedunchezhian.

"In order to help improve the conditions in the country so as to enable revocation of the proclamation imposing Emergency, please do accept our assistance; we are ready to extend all cooperation" — it is only on these lines that the content of our Resolution is couched.

EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION

"At a function held in New Delhi on 9th July '75 to celebrate the Independence of Mozambique, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said that Democracy means not only a certain duty on the part of the ruling Party to give certain freedom to the Opposition, but it also enjoins responsibility on the Opposition Parties to go according to the rules of Democracy; and that is, not to obstruct Governmental functioning and not to obstruct working of the nation. Towards the close of her speech Mrs. Gandhi said that the manner in which this Movement (of the Opposition Parties) went on was quite extraordinary.

"It is this word "extraordinary" that finds a place in the Resolution moved here by Prof. Anbazhagan yesterday. What is in our mind is that, since I happen to be occupying a position of responsibility in my capacity as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, I could undertake the endeavour to seek to help remedy the extraordinary situation and usher in normalcy by meeting all the leaders in the country — I mean only those leaders who are still outside; if the Prime Minister permits, I would meet the leaders in detention too — and then the Prime Minister and thereby be of assistance to her in enabling a happy decision to be taken that would restore a cordial atmosphere.

NOT LIKE KRISHNA'S ERRAND

"Prof. Anbazhagan said yesterday that I am being sent as an Envoy. Let me hasten to explain that mine is not an errand like that of Krishna's in *Mahabharata*. Although, when observed from outside, Krishna had all the credentials of an Envoy, he was, in his heart of hearts, wholly on the side of the Pandavas. Krishna Paramatma himself explains at a later stage that the very purpose of his *avatar* was to bring about a terrible war that would result in a carnage which, in turn, would have the effect of reducing the population on the earth. And so, even when he went on an errand grand, holding a brief for the Pandavas, his heart was set on war. The errand I embark on is certainly not of that kind!

"*Puranaanooru* is an anthology of poems belonging to the Sangam classics. In it are included a number of compositions by a poet of standing, Kovoor Kizhar, who was a constant friend of two contending monarchs of the Chola dynasty by name Nalankilli and Nedunkilli. On one occasion the Court-poet of Nalankilli called Ilanthathan comes to Nedunkilli with the simple and honest intention of obtaining some material assistance. Nedunkilli, however, suspects him to be a spy from the opposite camp. Before matters take a turn for the worse, Kovoor Kizhar intervenes to counsel patience with the words:

"*The young poet here*
is of the clan

that goes out in quest
of patrons kind,
just like the birds
that cross terrains wild,
all in search
of a fruit-bearing tree.
Easily pleased
with whatever they get
through the charm
of their dulcet speech,
these poets provide
for their dependants many.
Not having learnt
the craft of hoarding,
they happily donate
what all is left
and take to the road
yet once again.
They know not how
to cause harm to others
and their clashes are confined
to fields academic.
Conquering their opponents
with their superior learning,
they win over those foes
with sweet conduct;
and that's all the pride
their hearts can take on.
Thus, O monarch
reigning over the land
in grace and glory,
let me affirm
that these poets
are your equals
in every aspect
of nobility!"

"This timely and telling intercession on the part of Kovoor Kizhar helps to save the life of the innocent poet Ilanthathan.

FEARLESS ENVOY

"Yet another scene — this too on graphic record in *Puranooru*; Chola Nalankilli declared war on Chola Nedunkilli of Woriyur. It was an internecine war and do you know what the role of the poet Kovoor Kizhar was on the occasion? He did not go like Krishna *Mahabharata* and bargain for real-estate. Standing fearless between the hostile hordes all ready for a fight to-the-finish, Kovoor Kizhar said:

"Your opponent here
is not a Chera
bedecked in flowers
of the palmyra;
Nor is he
a Pandya
wearing the fragrance
of neem-blossoms;
Your garland is made of
'aathi' blooms
and so is that
of your incensed foe.
Whichever of you
is vanquished now,
it is your clan
that suffers defeat.
You know for certain
that both cannot win
and that's why I say
that your stance today
does not bring credit
to your glorious lineage.
This senseless enmity
that you are locked in
would only be a source
of unbounded glee
to the mocking monarchs
of alien clans!"

"Just as the two warring Chola Monarchs were wearing the same category of garlands, what Mrs. Indira Gandhi is wearing today is only khadi; and it is the same khadi that forms the clothes of Jayaprakash and Morarji Desai too! (Loud Applause)

"It is the role of Kovoor Kizhar that I am essaying to play today although I cannot claim to be as competent a poet as he. I am attempting this, not as Karunanidhi in my individual capacity but as a humble worker in the service of and acting on the directives from the DMK.

"Thiruvalluvar has said; "Let none be despised on account of their size; for there are those who are as the linchpin to a gigantic car." Likewise, you might be the massive temple-car of Thiruvarur or Srivilliputtur. All we say is that you could utilise the DMK as the linchpin to help run that car. We certainly do not ask whether the car would run without us. We are not among those who chatter clownishly in the manner of the adorning doll which claimed to hold the entire tower aloft! All we say is that we have come forward to do our bit of duty in the cause of Democracy; do please utilise our services to the fullest extent.

"Do not pause to ruminate: "These persons had been our opponents; could they be trusted?" Those who had opposed could certainly be trusted. It is in regard to some of those who support that one should investigate the reason for their solicitude before proceeding to rely on their support!

"Why do some persons extend hurried support even without convening a meeting of the Executive Committee? The reasons are Income Tax Arrears and Foreign Exchange matters! Could selfishness go further?

"Some others among the effusive supporters have their own axe to grind. Their scheme is that our land too could become like the Soviet Union if a particular type of situation persists!

"The support of some others springs from their desire to bring about one-Party rule.

"We did raise our voice and call for a reappraisal. We have not withdrawn from that line and we reiterate what we said. It is by no means wrong to say that.

"Because we have adopted the present Resolution, a gentleman just returned from Moscow has said: "The DMK-men are playing a double-role — (is not this gentleman thick in the company of one who stars in double roles ?). The DMK should first withdraw the Resolution passed earlier by its Executive Committee. And after they do that, we could consider the present Resolution."

"The goddess is yet to vouchsafe her boon ; why should the priest come as a hurdle now itself ? *(Loud Applause and Laughter).* Don't we know this gentleman's antecedents ?

DMK IS FUTURE-ORIENTED

"The DMK has ever approached problems on the basis of the principle 'Let what have already occurred belong to the past ; and let what are to take place be to the good".

"I would like to tell Mrs. Indira Gandhi: "Merely because we have adopted this Resolution, we have not become opponents of your progressive measures".

"You published your 20-point programme. When we said we had implemented fifteen of them, our claim was made out of zeal — it did not spring from ego.

"The reason why we extended support to you at the time of the Presidential Election of 1969 when Mr. V.V. Giri was one of the candidates — the reason why we backed Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, even after bitterness had crept in (in the relations between the DMK and the Congress) — was that we were of the view that you would proceed with the implementation of progressive schemes.

"And so, although there might be obstacles in the way of your implementing those policies — even though there are similar obstacles here too — our sturdy shoulders are equal to the task of clearing those hurdles and we are forging ahead.

"We only seek funds to initiate and implement more such schemes; and we do not boast of our achievements.

WHO IS A TRUE FRIEND ?

"According to the maxim in *Thirukural*, "Friendship is (to be practised) not for the purpose of laughing together, but for that of being beforehand in administering sharp rebukes in case of transgression." A true friend would indeed be of that character.

"On the other hand, if a friend were to be a mere yes-man, second fiddle and instigator, Thiruvalluvar has this to say of such 'Sakuni'-types: "For better are seventy crores of enemies for a King, than a Minister at his side who intends his ruin".

"Mr. C. Subramaniam, ensconced there, says the Emergency does not exist in Tamil Nadu.

"If there is no Emergency in Tamil Nadu, how is it that many things have been done here ? If, for the purpose of nabbing the smugglers in Bombay, the Prime Minister utilises the Emergency, and if there is provision in the law to prevent those arrested smugglers from going to Court, we do acclaim that. We do the same in Tamil Nadu. We are those who are capable of converting even disadvantages into advantages. At the same time, we are those who do not harbour the evil intention to wreak vengeance.

"Many said: Get this person or that person under the MISA. It was not for this that we assumed charge of the Government.

"We would punish the enemies of society, whoever they may be, to whichever political Party they might belong, even if they were to be of the DMK, and even if they were to be our own brothers. That has been the policy of the DMK Government.

"Such being the position, would it not be possible to find out a way to bring about the release of those leaders cast into prison today, in a manner to demonstrate and emphasise the qualities of true friendship ? Would it not be possible to restore the freedom which has been taken away ? — The Resolution that we have

adopted at this Conference is but the embodiment of the intense anxiety that we all feel on this account.

"In order to enable me to implement this Resolution, I request you all to accord to me your blessings, strength and stamina!

