

THE DYNAMIC M G R

A. P. JANARTHANAM, M. P.

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By

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since my entering the RAJYA SABHA in July '77, I have been closely questioned on the political roles of PURATCHI THALAIVAR M. G. Ramachandran, the grim struggle in the Dravidian movement from 1972 and the politics of south India.

Since the struggles between leaders are the engines of history, especially, in our hero-worshipping land, I have given my reactions. I like to be frank, free and fearless. In this, my model is Periyar Ramasamy, the Socrates of the South, who has been the greatest influence in my life since 1934.

Dr. Anna, my affectionate elder brother gave me a good grounding in great masters and regaled me with anecdotes about leaders who changed the destinies of nations. He is my model for magnanimity, maturity and style of speech. He shaped me from 1937. He gave strong Erode stuff in nice, alliterative Tamil and took us to power in 1967.

Kalaignar Karunanithi, whom I encouraged eagerly in 1944 and 1945, whose scintillating '*PARASAKTHI*' dialogue I always admire and who rose from scratch to great power, shocked me in 1970 by abandoning Anna's approaches. I told him personally that his flatterers were digging a pit for him. In a fit of vindictiveness, he took action against MGR. This was a suicidal step.

I warned against ostentation and orgies by the power-drunk. I was blacked out and not allowed to

address important conferences. On March 14, 1974, I wrote a strong letter to Mr. M. Karunanidhi, pin-pointing the blunders. I did not receive a reply. So, after my sincere efforts were spurned, I joined the A. D. M. K.

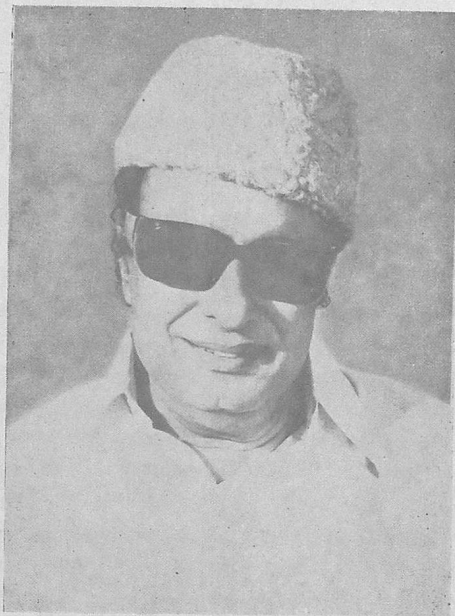
Within a short span of three years, MGR has far exceeded my expectations. He has listened to me patiently, sent me to Delhi and conquered even the bitterest opponents with due recognition and strokes of magnanimity in the true Anna tradition. He is very eager to give a clean administration, and uplift the vast rural masses. He is a master of mass psychology and Heart power is his secret weapon.

To the Scores of young Lions of my party who thunder and write daily, I always give my encouragement. I must record here my thanks to Mr. S. A. P. Annamalai, editor, '*Kumudam*' for the telling cartoons, the Ace-Journalist, Mr. T.R.R. of '*Makkal Kural*' for his '*Ali Baba and Four hundred thieves*' and veteran Manian for serialising MGR's own life-story in '*Ananda Vikadan*'.

Thanks are due to my friends Mr. Alagiriswami and Mr. Thangadurai, and my wife, Mrs. A. P. J. Manoranjitham, for constantly urging me to write. My thanks to Messrs. Porus Printers for printing this in a very short time.

Madras, }
2-4-78. }

A. P. JANARTHANAM.



A GOOD SAMARITAN
DARLING OF THE MILLIONS
THIRU. M. G. RAMACHANDRAN

THE DYNAMIC MGR

MGR'S REMARKABLE MOTHER:

MGR's father, Mr. Gopala Menon was a Magistrate and later on, a Professor. MGR was born in Kandy on January 17, 1917. When he was a mere child of two, MGR lost his father. This was a stunning blow to his mother Satyabhama. The dire necessity of bringing up Mr. M. G. Chakrapani, the elder brother of MGR and the sudden death of her husband, faced her. A strong sense of duty and a remarkable degree of self-respect and self-reliance saved her from bitter collapse. She brought the kids to Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu and kept the pot boiling by doing odd domestic jobs in several homes. Charming, rosy, fair MGR, had to go without meals sometimes. Good-hearted neighbours sometimes helped. With untiring zeal, sacrificing her life bit by bit, Mrs. Satya brought up the kids. They were sent to learn the Tamil alphabet in a small school. Maintaining her self-respect, fighting like a tigress for elementary rights and character, bleeding at the chill penury and the tattered clothes and harsh life, she brought up the children with remarkable self-will. Hunger and poverty were the lot of MGR. But the mother's milk of love sustained him.

At the age of seven, his fair complexion and the challenge of life made his mother take the plunge. She allowed her boys to join a dramatic troupe.

The life in Drama Companies taught MGR many valuable lessons. Harsh, heartless masters who caned and thrashed; good-hearted elders who patted and encouraged; the bickerings; quarrels; jealousies; plots and counter-plots; the antics of Villains behind the stage; the good and the bad; the pure and the besotted; the clean and the debauched; the applause and the boos and the catcalls of crowds, all had their effect. He got at first minor roles, then slowly, major roles and at last popular recognition. Bitter lessons in a world of make-up and make-believe!

GANDHI'S SPELL:

There came the days of Satyagraha. Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement, the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, the Dandi March, the arrests, the shootings and the lathi-charges, all convulsed the country. They had their echo on the dramatic stage also. The daring singing of patriotic songs, police ban on such singing, the staging of patriotic dramas, the great impact of the patriotic actor Viswanathadas, all had their effect on the MGR brothers. Khadi and

prohibition had an irresistible attraction for them. By 1934, MGR, was a regular member of the Congress. He venerates Gandhiji to this day.

He was interested in reading a lot of Tamil political works. The writings of the Socialists were swallowed eagerly by MGR. The heroic deeds of Lenin had a deep impress on him.

The "Kudi Arasu" was Periyar's weekly which preached against high-caste dominance and bigoted orthodoxy. Mr. N. S. Krishnan, in the drama company fought against separate treatment to different castes in the kitchen and dining place.

All these were formative influences, imprints on the mind of MGR. Basically, he remained a Gandhian. The necklace of beads proclaimed his strong religious bent.

Having secured name and fame as a hero on the stage, MGR was attracted to the cine field. Minor roles at first, then gradually he got the hero's role.

All the while, he was mixing with congressmen, socialists and communists. He read a lot of books on every ism and the quest for a sound political ideal was on.

ANNA ATTRACTS

From 1944, the Dravida Kazhagam was attracting the youth of Tamil Nadu like a magnet. Mr. C. N. Annadurai (Anna), the Dravidian Demosthenes, held the audiences spell-bound. Progressive ideas and the fight against monopoly by birth and monopoly by capital, assumed new dimensions. By powerful pen and still more powerful tongue, the Dravidian Movement converted a young generation. In spite of strong repression by the Congress rulers, the movement gathered irresistible momentum. MGR was observing all this.

About 1952, he read "*Panathottam*" or "Garden of Money" written by Anna. This was a turning point in his life. He became convinced that Anna had the answer to all his doubts and problems. So he was attracted to the DMK, where he later on assumed important roles.

THE D M K MISSION

The DMK stood for the uplift of the backward and the depressed classes; The DMK stood for a Socialist, Democratic society, based on Rationalist humanism. The DMK opposed the compulsory imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people.

The DMK wanted strong States. The DMK pointed out that the physical and psychological distance of Delhi worked to the detriment of the people. Planning and authority in distant Delhi were not adequate to the needs of the local people. The DMK opposed Congress misrule. The political genius of the Justice party, the social revolutionary stand of the Self-respect movement, the stirring saga of Dravidian Civilisation and Culture depicted by the Dravida Kazhagam, provided the ideal foundation for the DMK. Anna had a brilliant record in these movements. He had made them attractive to the educated youth and even the opponents were impressed by his niagaral eloquence and magnanimous gestures. He was the finest flower of Dravidian genius. Periyar was the Lion who roused the people from age-long slumber and Anna was his best lieutenant who electrified the youth with his super-eloquence and alliterative Tamil. Above all, he encouraged the youth and his lieutenants caught the imagination of the people. Progressive ideas suited to the modern age were spread by Periyar and Anna. Without recourse to violence, based on the ethical precepts of Thiruvalluvar and Buddha, utterly earthy and practical, suited cent percent to the Southern aspirations and longings, relying

entirely on persuasion, through the spoken and the written word, with a comraderie, which was matchless, the builders of a new era, the heralds of a Dravidian renaissance, the champions of the down-trodden, the exponents of humanism and rationalism, no wonder they became the charismatic leaders of the land.

THE BIG STICK

Congressmen, intoxicated with power, ridiculing the Dravidian movement as narrow-minded and unpatriotic, wielding the big stick and jailing thousands, only gave greater strength to the movement. The DMK, under the sober leadership of Anna, pinpointed the ruling party's misdeeds, provided alternatives and gave political, economic and social solutions to all the problems. The sight of youth flocking to Anna, people gathering in lakhs to hear his scintillating speeches, all enraged the Congressmen. The monopolist press sought to ignore the impact of the DMK.

144, 121A, 153, proscribing of books, jailing, torturing, harassing, all strengthened the DMK. Local congressmen told the Delhi leaders that the DMK had no following at all, that it would fizzle out.

THE STAGE AND THE SCREEN

Anna, with exemplary patience, with mature foresight, restrained his followers from retaliation and forged his own weapons of propaganda to conquer the hearts of the people.

Not content with the platform and the magazines, Anna evinced keen interest in exhibitions, dramas and films as media for the movement.

Besides writing stories and dialogues, Anna himself acted on the stage, and his "*Chandramohan*", "*Velaikkari*", "*One Night*", and "*Neethi Devan Mayakkam*" all had social revolutionary themes. He gave leading roles to his lieutenants. K. R. Ramasamy, Sivaji Ganesan, S. S. Rajendran and D. V. Narayanasamy had made their mark as great actors, who all excelled in using Anna's sweet alliterative Tamil. The Dravidian case was presented on the stage with such gusto and effect that people flocked to see their favourite Anna and his comrades perform. The idioms, the cliches, the telling phrases, the ringing challenges, the punch-packed dialogues of Anna reverberated throughout the land. The Villains in the dramas were the parasites, graspers, monopolists of the land for thousands of years. The heroes challenged the capitalists, the reactionaries.

the obscurantists, traditional oppressions of the people. The younger generation was terribly impressed and easily, completely won over. The Anna style was imitated even by the opponents.

Kalaigñar Karunanidhi, quite young in Tiruvarur, staged his drama "*Santha*" or "*Palaniappan*" noted for its racy, breezy dialogue. Mr. C. P. Chitrarasu's "*Porval*" was widely appreciated. The Drama "*Hiranyan*" by the great revolutionary poet Bharathidasan, depicting the Aryan-Dravidian struggle was banned by the Congress Government.

Anna, who studied, with great interest, the potentialities of the silver screen as a powerful medium, who was impressed by Russian Eisenstein, the great English tramp Charlie Chaplin, and the efforts of Mr. K. A. Abbas and Mehboob to project proletarian themes, wrote dialogues for "*Nalla Thambi*", "*Velaikkari*" and "*Sorgavasal*". People flocked to see these films repeatedly. Anna's self-respect and anti-capitalist clarion calls entered the hearts of all people, illiterate and literate. The Dravidian movement conquered the minds of the young. Kalaigñar Karunanidhi's "*Parasakthi*" was immensely popular. The court scene, where the villains of society were stripped of all their pretences, simply electrified the land!

The opponents, jealous of the popularity, dubbed the DMK as a cine make-up party. The DMK, under the sober, brilliant, big-hearted leadership of Anna, worked on the writing front. Many journals, spearheads as of Reason and Revolt were published. Anna's "Dravida Nadu" and Kalaingar's "Murasoli" became the rage of the youth. On platforms, hundreds of young lions, all modelling on Anna's alliterative Tamil, fired their broadsides against bigotry, superstition and the misrule of the congress. Banning party literature, jailing Anna and his lieutenants by thousands, the shootings, the brutal repression in 1953 during the three-pronged agitation, all gave a great momentum to the DMK.

MGR IN DMK

At this stage, in 1954, when MGR entered the DMK, Anna was mightily pleased. MGR had a great admiration for Anna.

Steadily he rose to the top in the cine field. The powerful medium made him a house-hold name. He became the champion of the underdog. His roles in "*Nadodi Mannan*" and "*Rickshawkaran*" endeared him to the have-nots. His songs symbolising the ideals of the DMK were on the lips of everybody.

The very sight of the DMK flag, the symbol of Emgeeyar Pictures on the silver screen, was the signal for thunderous clapping. MGR's first appearance in the film was greeted with emotional elation. The ladies enthusiastically patronised his films and his role of the good Samaritan, the deliverer, the champion of the wronged and the suppressed against the wicked, all made him a pattern, a model for the proletariat.

His clean habits touched everybody. His ready, on the spot relief measures during floods, cyclones and fires touched the hearts of the people. His help for the deserving students, the ailing patients, the poor party workers, rain-coats for rickshawmen, all earned him the name of "Paari" a great Tamil patron. His bleeding heart at the sight of suffering, his feeling heart at the sight of the victims of repression and tyranny his big-hearted donations which went for many worthy causes, all made the poor flock to him for succour. His warm-hearted gestures, his endearing smiles, his fair complexion, deliverer's role, all made him a magnet. Charisma came and his popularity mounted everyday.

Not only an actor, he was a politician too. He addressed huge meetings along with Anna and the

comrades. He was an emotional orator who challenged the rulers. The DMK units provided the platform and people flocked to his meetings.

In the DMK conferences, he took part with great enthusiasm. His appearance on the platform was the signal for a surge of emotion, a thunderous ovation. Party workers in distress approached him for help. "Go to MGR, He will help", was the advice to the needy. Many partymen were rescued from crushing debt and chill penury. DMK leaders like Kalaighnar Karunanithi booked him for the film. He was a sure box-office hit. He is still Minimum Guarantee Ramachandran, to the producers! (MGR).

MGR, with the enthusiasm of a fiery volunteer, rushed to election campaigns. He canvassed for votes even in the blazing sun. All left their work and rushed, just to have a glimpse of their idol. Ladies with babies in arms, screaming with frenzy and gay abandon, just milled with one another, pushing, jostling, crowding, all to have a look at MGR. Scenes of the highest enthusiasm, unparalleled hero-worship, all continue to this day. The Charisma is increasing. Even today people flock from many places in Tamil Nadu to Fort St. George, just to have a glimpse of MGR, the popular Chief Minister.

Thanks to MGR's magnetic pull, the DMK's mass-base improved. He became an ace vote-getter. Anna complimented him saying, *"By merely showing your face, you can get thirty lakhs of Votes"*. In the crucial Tiruvannamalai bye-election, MGR's contribution clinched the issue. In the corporation and Mayoral elections, MGR played a significant role. MGR's voting campaigns were so effective that even the great congress leader Kamaraj warned the people against succumbing to MGR's charisma, to beware of the "Hunter" of votes.

Anna was very proud of this great asset to the DMK. MGR was very much struck by the sincerity and simplicity of Anna and day by day he developed such an admiration for Anna, that he enshrined Anna in his heart, alongwith Gandhiji and his own mother. The DMK advanced on all fronts.

ANNA WINS

Anna, by his brilliant, political strategy, forged the united front with leaders like Rajaji, Mr. Mohamed Ismail and Mr. Ma. Po. Si. to fight the 1967 elections. Suddenly on January 12th, the stunning news that MGR was shot, spread like wild fire. The poor masses, crying, lamenting, made a bee-line

for the Royapettah hospital where the doctors were waging a grim struggle to save MGR. Had the bullet penetrated half-an inch more, MGR would have been lost. The DMK rank and file was dazed with grief.

MGR, bandaged around the neck, lay in a nursing home, candidates to the assembly, with tears in their eyes, cried out, "Dear hero, had you just set foot in my constituency, I would have won". MGR had to comfort them and even in that state, some were recipients of his patronage.

But MGR's bandaged pictures went to the constituencies. Anna, with his usual restraint, did not expect that the DMK would be returned to power on its own! The defeat of the great Congress leader Kamaraj pained him, for he felt that such great figures should sit in the Assembly and watch the DMK's performance and point out the shortcomings. Democracy in Tamil Nadu would be savourless without Congress giants like Kamaraj and Bhaktavatsalam.

MGR was overjoyed at the success of the DMK. He was elected to the St. Thomas Mount Constituency. Anna, noting his great mass pull, made him Vice-chairman of the National Savings Movement.

Anna's regime was noted for the World Tamil Conference, the rupee-a-measure scheme, the naming of Madras State as Tamil Nadu, the validation of Self-respect marriages and his masterly performance on the floor of the Assembly.

But within two years Anna had to go to America for treatment for the malignant disease. Despite the best medical attention, on 3rd February, 1969, with millions forming the funeral procession, the poor people feeling helpless and hopeless, and the DMK stunned by the death of its big-hearted founder and Statesman.

MGR and party elders like Madurai Muthu threw their weight and Kalaignar Karunanidhi was elected the leader of the party in the legislature. They thought that Mr. Karunanidhi, who was noted for his brilliant writing and speaking, who edited the powerful daily "Murasoli" would follow the foot-prints of Anna and give a good lead.

We, the veterans of the Movement, felt elated that like Lloyd George, Mr. Karunanidhi, without degree or high-caste, had come to the highest place in Tamil Nadu.

ANNA PLAYED DOWN:

Mr. K's blunder was that he failed to spread the teachings of Periyar and Anna to the nook and corner of the land. Anna's works remained unsold. Even when Mr. K. went abroad, he took his own "pearls".

Anna's approaches to men and matters were big-hearted, mature, never wounding the opponents, magnanimously accepting the merits of the other camps, encouraging all his comrades even when they criticised and at times attacked him.

Mr. K. gave up this approach. He needlessly clashed with the centre; he posed as the champion of state autonomy, simply to divert the attention of people from his naked fascist tactics. He declared that he had got trained in the Erode School of Periyar, but had the heartless audacity to ban Periyar's procession in Tiruvarur. This was in direct contrast to Anna, who, despite Periyar's scathing attacks, was brimming with humble respect and gratitude to the Grand Old Man. Anna would have shuddered, rather resigned, than ban Periyar's Procession. Anna, out of great veneration for Periyar, left the leader's chair vacant, when he formed the DMK. But Mr. K. coolly stepped into the chair.

Anna was averse to repression. Even at the height of the student agitation, despite being denied even a glass of water by Medical College Students, Anna never took it to heart. But in Mr. K.'s regime, the students of Annamalainagar, Palayamkottai, and Tiruchi were thrashed and thrashed. Mr. K. declared that he would use the "Iron Hand" and in the Agriculturist agitation 16 people lost their lives. Labour leaders comrades Chinthan and Kuchelar were targets of physical attacks.

THE GUTTER IN POWER:

The scum got power-drunk and the short cut to secure favours was to sing the praises of Mr. K. His birth day posters were grand, glittering and the sceptre and flower crowns completed the picture. Comrades who once preached socialism paraded their new found affluence. The style of living changed. The sychophanic scum rushed in brand new Ambassadors, throwing dust in the eyes of humble volunteers.

Simple, sincere Anna was coolly forgotten in the revelries. These saw-dust machiavellis kept Mr. K. in a fool's paradise. Honest, straight-forward, sterling officials and party men were subjected to

insults and ridicule. Juicy stories about the legislators went the rounds.

Brilliant, straight-forward, clean officials who refused to pander to the whims and fancies of Mr. K. his ministers, the vattams (The Taluk DMK Secretaries) and the Mavattams (The District DMK Secretaries) were embarrassed.

Mr. K. poses as the Champion of Tamil and cashes on Tamil renaissance and Tamil upsurge. But, this is also make-believe. Sterling Tamil Scholars like Dr. C. Ilakkuvanar, Pandit Devaneyya Pavanar and the brilliant Pavalareru Perunchithiranan were singled out for insult, neglect and black-out. Third-rate poets who sang in praise of Mr. K. were catapulted to high positions. Mr. K. always polishes pebbles and dims diamonds.

Mr. K. poses as the champion of the backward and the depressed classes. Had he backed sterling merit and honesty, things would have been different. Tamilnadu would have marched ahead.

Willing tools were preferred to decent, upright gentlemen. The very long bit of cloth became the symbol of Mr. K.'s DMK worthies. Like old Gandhians who hung their heads in shame at the antics of unworthy rulers in Delhi and the State

Capitals, the veterans of the movement were sad every day at the great betrayal. The Spartan camp of Periyar and Anna became the reveller's paradise. Those who were very near to Anna were all coolly neglected, cold-shouldered and forgotten. The followers of Periyar and Anna are decent, strong, mature comrades.

MGR'S VOICE OF PROTEST:

MGR, who was a stout champion of Mr. K. and his ministry, who was the treasurer of the DMK, faced a great crisis of conscience. The fear that vanity might steadily dynamite DMK strength, made him very sorry. He wanted to stop the rot before much harm was done. So, as treasurer, he demanded accounts. He held that the style of living of many Vattams and Mavattams led the people to suspect the integrity of the DMK people. The opposition, especially Mr. Kamaraj, mounted strong attacks and the syndicate congress made a great impression on the students.

Mr. K. and his set did not heed to MGR's warnings. They were very jealous of MGR's charisma. In the Madurai Conference, as soon as MGR had spoken, the conference venue became almost empty.

MGR's demands having been ignored and slighted, he became furious. He held that as treasurer, he was also accountable for DMK lapses. He wanted to stop the headlong rush to political eclipse. As an architect of the DMK victories, as a responsible office-bearer, he could not understand the dilly and dally over showing accounts to him. When he found that he was sought to be neglected, and his demands were not met, he said that he had no option but to go to the people.

Mr. K. set sought to cut at the root of the thousands of MGR fan clubs which fought for MGR and the DMK like lions. Attempts were made to disband these manrams. Instead, manrams in the name of Mu. Ka. Muthu, the son of Mr. K., a new actor, were formed. But Mu. Ka. Muthu and his manrams could not make a mark.

MGR told a public meeting in Tirukalikundram in Chingleput District, 45 miles from Madras that the DMK celebrities should have to produce their Accounts. He repeated it in the Lloyds Road meeting.

Mr. K's GREATEST FOLLY :

Mr. K. and his set suddenly pounced upon this.

MGR was suspended from the DMK on October 10, 1972.

I hear that some comrades, especially Mr. Chezian, Mr. Maran, the nephew of Mr. K. and Mr. Arangannal, all cautioned against this suicidal step. But wish was father to thought !

Mr. K. and his toadies were a mutual admiration set. Meeting in a room in the party legislature office, and on the sands of the Marina, they imagined that none could shake them for years and years. They dismissed MGR's charisma as mere cinema make-up! They failed to note that MGR knew them and their bullying tactics very very thoroughly. People recognised the leader MGR and were eager to reject the misleader Mr. K. They found out the gap between the rhetoric and the record. The DMK rank and file, those who had no axe to grind, those who did not bask in the sunshine of Mr. K., the millions of MGR fans, all got stunned on hearing that MGR had been suspended from the DMK. They registered their protest in various forms. An irresistible avalanche of mass support in favour of MGR rocked Tamilnadu. It was spontaneous, very natural, stirring and thousands of DMK youngsters flocked to Sathya Studios to urge MGR to take a stand, to start a new

party to rescue Anna, from black-out, to strive and fight for Anna's ideas, pledging their very lives, MGR counselled patience and assured them that he would take their feelings into account.

Periyar offered that he would heal the breach. MGR, out of great veneration, went to Periyar. But at that very moment, Pearl-Harbour fashion, Charlatans were slashing MGR film hoardings and threatening ladies in the Plaza theatre. Nasty posters ridiculing MGR were pasted. A deliberate attempt to dub MGR as anti-Tamil was made.

MGR, himself, pleasantly surprised at the overwhelming support of the workers and the people, took the plunge. With calm resolve, knowing full well that Mr. K. and his set would stoop to any level, would do anything and everything to damage, tarnish him and his gallant workers, he decided to start the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on October 17, 1972.

THE ADMK

THE SPECTACULAR GROWTH:

The sheer, dire necessity to save the ideas, ideals and image of Periyar and Anna from being tarnished in the People's fury against the DMK, the

possibility of Mr. Kamaraj romping back upon DMK unpopularity, the need to save genuine volunteers from becoming disheartened and desperate, all compelled MGR to start the ADMK.

On December 5, 1972, in the Tamil Nadu Legislature, when MGR was speaking, the mike was switched off. Democracy became mockery, when there were attempts to throw missiles on MGR and his MLAs.

MGR and comrade Kalyanasundaram presented a memorandum to the Governor and to Rashtrapathi Giri, cataloguing their charges of corruption against Mr. K. and his colleagues.

Had a Commission been instituted in 1973 itself, the people of Tamilnadu would have been satisfied. But, perhaps Mrs. Indira Gandhi preferred not to embarrass Mr. K. who had given his support in Parliament and voted for Mr. Giri in the Presidential election.

Mass demonstrations, fasting, petitions to MLAs, black flag demonstrations and agitations by the opposition parties, all had no effect on Mr. K.

MGR, despite heavy call-sheets, discharged his political responsibilities well. "Thennagam", The

ADMK Daily run by Mr. K. A. Krishnasami, M. P., carried his message to the nook and corner of the land.

The ADMK, in 2 years, had 40,000 branches and 17 lakhs of members. MGR, aided by able secretaries, executive committee, General Council, labour, students and advocates and ladies fronts, as General secretary, took the party from success to success.

THE DINDIGUL VICTORY:

In April 1973, in the Dindigul Bye-election, despite naked DMK rowdyism, murder of Batlagundu Arumugam, despite lavish expenditure and concentration of ministers, despite attack from all parties, the ADMK candidate, Mr. Maya Thevar was returned with a thumping majority. The candidates fielded by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Kamaraj, Mr. K., all got defeated by the 6 month old ADMK.

In the Coimbatore Assembly bye-election, in the Pondy State election, the ADMK emerged victorious.

Mr. K. was furious at the mounting popularity of the ADMK.

MGR's MAGNETIC LEADERSHIP :

Prominent among those who cast their lot with MGR were Mr. Nanjil Manoharan, Mr. S. D. Soma-sundaram, Mr. K. A. Krishnasamy, Mr. Munu Adhi and Mr. K. Kalimuthu.

As the founder of ADMK, MGR had to make mature decisions, give a good lead, meet the press, tour the country, face severe repression, and build the party. It has to be noted that MGR, in running the ADMK, exhibited mature political sagacity, faced the full fury of Mr. K.'s repression and slander and took the Party from success to success.

Even the ministers had to face the fury of the people. Canute like, Mr. K. sought to repress the surging waves of MGR's popularity with his bombast and noise-making.

BRUTAL TYRANNY :

By brutal repression, by foisting false cases on thousands from MGR to the workers, by a barrage of vituperation and slander, the ADMK was sought to be crushed. But these measures only strengthened the ADMK. It steeled MGR and his comrades, galvanised them to greater efforts and every street, every home, had ardent MGR's supporters.

Mr. K.'s henchmen wrongly calculated that by picketing theatres where MGR's pictures were to be screened, the public would withhold their patronage and ultimately the producers would not book MGR in their films. Once MGR's film market fell, MGR would be defeated and lose his strength. These threats reached their height when his film "*Ulagam Sutrum Valiban*" was released.

Poolavari Sukumaran, his father, student leader Balasundaram and Kallukkuzhi Kandan, were all killed in savage fashion.

MGR and comrade Kalyanasundaram were the targets of attack in Avadi.

MGR and his followers were branded as traitors, enemies of Tamils.

MGR's political victories were dismissed as just cine-glamour effect.

MGR was held to be a political zero, though a cinema hero.

Bathed in blood and persecution, subjected to the full blast of Mr. K.'s ridicule and attack, the ADMK became more and more popular.

The ADMK executive and general council were

marked by serious political discussion, a high sense of responsibility, and an awareness of all the burning problems of the land. The constitution drafting committee under Mr. K. Manoharan did a fine job.

MGR's golden heart which felt for one and all is the greatest asset of the party.

In the Madras DMK general council meeting I declared that the volunteers were watching with X ray eyes the revelries of the dandies and that if they reached breaking point, they would stage a big revolt and throw overboard all misfits.

In the Pudukottai DMK council meeting I declared that my models were those who had lost in party service, not those who had acquired cars and bungalows.

Those who had remained in the fold, hoping against hope that all will be forgotten, that the magnanimous approaches of Anna would be made, felt disillusioned, betrayed and insulted by Mr. K. and so they joined the ADMK. Veterans Madurai Muthu, C. P. Chitrarasu and S. S. Rajendran, all hailed MGR as the great deliverer.

MGR toured America and addressed University forums there.

MGR impressed with his sincerity and appreciation for intellectuals. Knowing full well that he would come to power, he requested that he would welcome good schemes to alleviate the sufferings of the common man.

MGR had visited Russia earlier.

THE EMERGENCY :

In June 1975, the emergency and the 20 points came. In the true Anna tradition of supporting the good policies of the Central Government, having already supported Bank Nationalisation, the abolition of privy purses and other popular measures of the Central Government, MGR welcomed these points. The people of Tamil Nadu were not affected by the excesses of the emergency in Delhi and other places. Almost the entire South was free from the son's antics.

THE DOUBLE-GAME :

Tamilnadu had a nasty, vain, bullying DMK regime at hand. People suffered severely in the hands of Mr. K. They pinned their hopes on MGR.

Mr. K., had he been sincere in his opposition to the emergency, should have resigned as soon as the emergency was declared. But, power, power at any

cost, was and is his sole ambition, driving force.

The emergency was a ready stick in the hands of Mr. K. to silence local opposition. He pounced on 'Thennagam' 'Makkal Kural' and other journals which refused to dance to his tune.

Posting as a champion against emergency to Mr. George Fernandes and Mr. C. G. K. Reddy, he was also carrying out the directives of the centre. Mr. C. G. K. Reddy has written in his 'Baroda Dynamite Case' how Mr. K. shirked and dillied and dallied.

Thus, riding on two horses, browbeating all opposition, using the emergency as cover to persecute the opposition, Mr. K. thought that he could rule till March 1977.

In the Coimbatore DMK Conference, a grand show, vulgar personal attacks were made on Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This naturally incensed Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

She should have appointed a commission of enquiry in 1972 itself when the AIADMK and the CPI gave a memorandum of charges.

THE DAY OF DELIVERANCE :

On January 31, 1976, the DMK ministry was

dismissed. Many DMK and other party people were detained. Mr. K. and the ministers were not taken into custody. Perhaps Mrs. Indira Gandhi thought that the Sarkaria Commission would be enough.

The people's joy knew no bounds. The day of deliverance had come and they sang and danced, burnt crackers, garlanded the statues of Anna and hailed MGR as the hero who had saved them from the black, dark stranglehold of Mr. K. and his caucus. They resolved to vote MGR to power.

In the DMK, there was a move by Mr. S. Ramachandran, Mr. S. S. Rajendran and Mr. K. A. Mathiazhagan that Mr. K. should step down from leadership till the enquiry was over. Mr. K. was adamant.

MGR coolly, calmly strengthened the ADMK. Sensing that the time had come for taking an active part in All India politics, confident that Anna's precepts and methods would become popular throughout India, MGR converted the ADMK into the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

The stunning revelations before the Sarkaria commission, the 'James Bond' Boxes in which lakhs of rupees were alleged to have been passed to Mr. K. the shocking tales of DMK shady deals, all provided

sensation and suspense. The people resolved to teach the DMK a lesson as soon as possible.

THE DESPERADO:

Mr. K. desperately rallied the disintegrating DMK. Photographs of lorryloads of admirers, donation lists, tales of sufferings, all filled his daily. The same flatterers welcomed him. People thronged to admire his racy, breezy staccato Tamil and pathetic references to jail conditions of his followers. But he was thoroughly mistaken in imagining that all those who came to his meetings supported him. The people of Tamil Nadu admire his writings and oratory, but are not prepared to forgive his fascist rule and bullying tactics and especially his throwing out MGR! Mr. K. gets admiration, but MGR wins. That is the victory of the golden heart.

Mr. K.'s followers and admirers take great pride in the fact that despite dismissal, despite the spate of cases, despite the Sarkaria Commission, despite the incarceration of his son and nephew in jail, he is quite active and vibrant.

They do not know the composition of the megalomaniac and the desperado, the hardened dictator immune to all feelings, except the urge to be in the limelight anywhere, at any cost.

ELECTIONS AT LAST

On January 19, 1977, the Lok Sabha elections were promised. The leaders were released. The Janata party was formed. The defection of Babu Jagjivan Ram was a great shock to the congress. Jail life chastened Morarji and he displays supreme rectitude, exudes moral fervour and stands for clean life in politics. Jayaprakash cemented the bond of unity amongst the Janata constituents. The mounting fury and anger against emergency excesses, particularly in the North the bitterness against the son Sanjay and Bansilal, all led to the defeat of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Rae Berelly, the defeat of Sanjay in Amethi. The Janata party was returned to power.

The picture in the South was entirely different. There was no Turkman gate, no Tihar jail, no Nasbandhi excesses. Indira was quite popular as the mother who had brought in progressive measures and the 20 points programme became quite popular. Mr. Vengal Rao in Andhra provided stable administration after the Telengana tragedy. Mr. Devaraj Urs in Karnataka endeared himself to the backward classes. Mr. Achutha Menon's clean image, and continuous record in Kerala clinched the issue. Delhi's physical, psychological distance prevented

the common masses from knowing about the excesses in the wake of emergency in the north.

In Tamil Nadu, the people had a bullying, ranting Mr. K., who, despite his dirty, dark record, was bragging and making tall claims. First he tried to have electoral understanding with the Indira Congress. The Janata leaders, blinded to the realities of Tamilnadu, canvassed for the DMK. Had the Janata stood alone, it would not have fared so badly.

Despite the moving tales of sufferings, tortures and deaths in prison of DMK people, the people of Tamil Nadu were determined to teach a severe lesson to Mr. K. and his set. They would not pardon his Himalayan blunder of throwing out MGR from the DMK. They were eager to install MGR in the seat of power.

MGR'S STAMINA

MGR rose to great heights. His Marathon election campaign was a thrilling saga of physical stamina and alertness.

Men, women and children were waiting patiently for hours together. Due to repeated requests to visit this place and that, MGR had to oblige and so, when he was scheduled to speak at 5 p. m. in one

place, actually he arrived at 5 a.m. the next morning. The crowd remained patiently waiting throughout the night. By continuous speaking his throat became so sore that there was even bleeding. But despite physical exertion, he visited every constituency, except Periakulam where victory was a foregone conclusion. His speeches were telling, dignified, and moving.

RESOUNDING VICTORY :

The results were out and there was a resounding victory for the AIADMK. It got 19 seats out of the 20 it contested. The DMK was trounced, and got only one seat.

True to Anna's tradition, the AIADMK declared that it would be offering constructive co-operation to the Janata Govt. in Delhi. The AIADMK members take lively interests in the proceedings. They draw the attention of the house on all important issues. Our 19 young, energetic dynamoes in the Lok Sabha are alert and active. We are nine gems in the Rajya Sabha, eager to speak and serve. All are petted, patted and disciplined whenever MGR comes to Delhi.

THE PEOPLE'S DARLING :

With the Lok Sabha elections over, the AIADMK braced itself for the next round, the state elections. With a few days left, having already undertaken an exhausting tour in the Lok Sabha elections, MGR had to undertake a second Marathon campaign. There were new electoral allies. But the DMK was the main rival. The people wanted to vote MGR to power and provide a good vigilant opposition by voting for the DMK. So, the AIADMK got 126 seats sufficient majority, and the DMK got 48, a good opposition number. The people expected to witness the clash of AIADMK and DMK members, who would might provide a rich fare in debate, dialectics and oratory.

A HAPPY BLEND

MGR's selection of cabinet colleagues was superb. It is packed with youngsters, all brimming with loyalty to Anna and MGR, the veterans and victims of Mr. K.'s repression, all very eager to exhibit their skills

The people of Tamil Nadu were overjoyed to have MGR as the Chief Minister. They had been waiting for a long time to see their ambition fulfilled. MGR is the sheet anchor, the hope of the toiling

masses! The rural peasantry and the poor and the destitute came to Madras city to see their hero assuming power. The Anna Salai was a sea of heads, and MGR addressed the vast multitudes from a specially erected platform before Anna's statue. Scenes of the wildest enthusiasm and joy were witnessed! MGR in the humble tradition of Anna, dedicated himself to the services of the people.

THE MGR IMPACT:

In the first eight months in office, MGR has discharged his responsibilities with quite efficiency. He makes a meticulous study of files. He was stunned by the shocking revelations of the white elephants and callous disregard for the elements of clean straight administration.

MGR has won compliments for his anxiety to see that temple accounts are correctly maintained, that there is no self advertisement and sickening over-publicity, that poor Tamil scholars are not neglected to pine and suffer, that the ryots should get fair price for their produce, that the workers should not be victimised, and persecuted, that prohibition should be implemented despite the antics of illicit distillers, and Tamil Nadu should be a model state noted for stability, sobriety and sanity.

He works hard and drives the ministers hard. He watches with a thousand eyes the working, habits, the style of living, of all cadres from the ministers to party functionaries.

THE CYCLONE :

In November 1977, an unprecedented natural calamity struck Tamil Nadu. Cyclone and floods took a heavy toll of lives.

Crops, ready for harvest were gone, fertile fields became sand-logged, plantain groves were in shambles, lots of homes collapsed, tens of thousands of cattle perished and the problem of relief and rehabilitation was colossal, to be tackled by the Central and State Governments. MGR, very greatly moved despatched ministers to the affected areas, accompanied the President and the P. M. by helicopter and showed them the magnitude of damage, pleaded strongly for funds, requested the army to take up rescue operations and sanctioned rupees two hundred relief for every family. Construction materials like bamboos were given. The Central Ministers were impressed and complimented the State Government for its earnest endeavours.

Mr. K'S DIRTY ANTICS :

Mr. K's flatterers bragged that MGR would be no match for Mr. K's verbal pyrotechnics and that he would be hard put to reply in the first session of the assembly itself.

MGR, who knows Mr. K. through and through, who knows the mental, psychological, filibustering tactics of Mr. K., declared that he would never oblige Mr. K. by getting rattled, or angry.

The ministry, in 8 months, had to meet a spate of agitations. The Students, the bus workers, the Junior Engineers, the University teachers, doctors and the N. G. G. O's agitated and marched to Fort St. George. A spate of strikes, hunger-strikes, violence in the industrial belt, are to be tackled. Mr. K. who could not stand the spectacle of this 'Traitor' MGR. ruling, makes mountains out of molehills and the DMK speakers go on lampooning, attacking, calling the regime a buffoon regime.

MGR, by his direct talks, by his human touch, conceding the genuine grievances, tackled the agitations with the tact and magnanimity.

The Madurai Black flag incidents, the Madras orgies, all go against the very tenets of Anna, who

never incited his followers. Dubbing MGR as a servant of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, dreaming Alnascar like that by creating a nasty atmosphere, the Centre would intervene, never caring for the thousands of people who were put to much hardship by the pointless campaigns, Mr. K. went on screaming, howling, refusing to come out on bail, threatening a big agitation, conducting picketing when the state was reeling under shattering blows of flood and cyclones. He wanted to make political capital. But MGR's good heart and cool, unruffled stand blasted the tantrums of Mr. K.

The no-confidence motion against the MGR Ministry in which Mr. K. indulged in theatricals, gesticulations, brandishing lottery tickets, was the height of his display vendetta. MGR, coolly, calmly, in his four-hour reply met all his points and declared that he would tackle things to the entire satisfaction of the people.

THE HUMANE CHIEF MINISTER:

The vigorous defence of MGR by brilliant MLAs like Tirupur Manimaran, Mr. Nanjil Vincent, Mr. S. R. Radha, Mr. Pannai Sethuraman, Mr. Isarivelan, Mr. Musiri Budhan, effectively countered the seasoned veterans of Mr. K. like Professor Anbazhagan,

Mr. P. U. Shunmugam and Pulavar Govindan.

Despite Mr. K's incessant barrage and rabble-rousing, despite natural calamities and the initial misgivings of many whether a matinee idol can prove to be a successful administrator MGR has established himself as a clean, calm, dynamic, responsible human Chief Minister following the footsteps of his mentor, the Great Demonsthenes, Anna.

THE BLEEDING HEART

MGR's greatest asset, and key to the hearts of millions of people, is his Big heart. He is moved by the suffering of the slum dwellers, the rank and file who prepared to sacrifice for him. The worthy causes, the institutions, the individuals, who have been the recipients of his generous help are legion. He has rescued many a party and artiste's family from utter collapse and chill penury. He has been rightly compared, even as far back as 1964, to Paari, the great Tamil patron. The humble folk, the weaker sections, all idolise him as the Good Samaritan. Just as on the screen he has rescued the helpless from the clutches of the villains, so also in real life, he has wiped the tears of many. In the Dravidian Movement he has earned fame as the one who cares, like Anna for the sufferings of the comrades.

In childhood, and till he got roles on the stage, he knew the pangs of hunger. The world was his book. Heart-power or sympathy is the secret of the success of Martin Luther King, Lenin, Attlee, Kennedy and Gandhiji. MGR is becoming more and more popular because, as Chief Minister, he wants to better the lot of the rural masses and workers.

The impress of his mother is very strong on MGR. The Mother's heart is always generous, always caring, always sacrificing. MGR, by worshipping his mother has unconsciously imbibed her virtues of sacrifice and giving all. He has given his heart, sweat and money. That is why he is rooted in the affections of his people.

Having been an ardent Gandhian from his teens, he is a great champion of prohibition. He could not stand the sight of ladies and children getting neglected and families coming to grief by addicts of the bottle.

While he will like to guard the rights of the different states, languages and cultures, and demand greater power for states in the economic sphere, he will not embarrass or collide with the centre. He opines that feelings are vital than formulas, that heart to-heart frank discussions will solve problems.

He wants to co-operate with the centre in its fight against poverty, illiteracy, disease and economic backwardness. When there was threat to the Indian soil in 1962, he donated his gold sword presented to him by his admirers, to the war-effort. He has high respect for pure Gandhians, sterling Labour Leaders, and Progressive writers.

He has a thorough grip over the party, he has a grasp of the fundamentals of sound administration. With a huge mass party to lead, with a big administration to handle, with an eagerness to correct his comrades from falling into the tentacles of easy money and easy living, with the great responsibility of carrying the legacies of Periyar and Anna, he is the picture of composure, devotion and responsibility.

Periyar is noted for Leonine courage, Anna is noted for his affectionate mature-touch, MGR is noted for his feeling heart.

We should give our fullest co-operation to MGR. The party luminaries should not fall a prey to dirty temptations and inducements

MGR wants to give a square deal to the humble, simple millions. MGR is not enamoured of office. He does not want to hang on to power at any cost. The people have given the mandate. The moment

he feels he cannot rule, he will resign and gladly go back to his comrades. Sheer necessity, the imperative need to fulfill Anna's ideas, compelled him to take office.

MGR has great respect for Periyar and he is moved with veneration for the Grand Old Man who fought caste, which is nothing but graded capitalism. MGR wants to spread Periyar's teachings to the nook and corner of India.

MGR was struck by the sincerity, simplicity, magnanimity, maturity and statemanship of Anna. Anna did not like ostentation. Anna hated vanity and parading of power and status. Anna forgave and forgot. Anna conquered even his opponents by love. Anna is the first disciple of Periyar. He gave a political role and goals to DMK. He took the DMK to power. MGR, in true Anna tradition, has forgiven his worst critics, who were parties to his expulsion from the DMK, has admitted them in his party and given them due recognition. He has saved the image of Periyar, the image of Anna from being tarnished and blacked out by the fascists. He has placed Anna in the name of his party and most striking, in the flag of his party. In the committee deliberations, just like Anna, he gives the utmost freedom to the

organisers, legislators and speakers to give vent to their feelings. Just like Anna, he encourages, gives help, gives status to many deserving ones. He cuts to size the haughty and the wily. He captivates all, from VIPs to very humble workers and he has great respect for the intellectuals. He wants to acquire more knowledge. He stands solid, as a rock, by the side of those who have sacrificed, those who are learned, those who sweat and toil, those who are sought to be bullied and blacked out by charlatons.

He does not give up the fundamentals, but on the day-to-day political alignments, adjustments, he is pragmatic and practicalist. He is for true national integration and has changed the name of his party into the "All India Anna DMK". MGR is prepared for the most humble and simple life. He is content even with cold rice. He has prepared his wife Mrs. Janaki for that. He wants nothing and fears nothing.

He has seen the summit, the height of stardom in the cine field. He has shared the tears and joys of the most humble.

Heart-power or sympathy, is the mainspring of his politics. He is not burdened with pedantry. He goes straight to the roots. In politics, ultimately, it is

the mass alone that matters. MGR has that mass pull to a maximum degree.

He is a matinee idol, no doubt. But he is a political hero as well. Not only that he cares, he feels, he bleeds for the people. That is the secret, the hallmark, the stamp of great men who have moved masses, countries, movements and continents!

Long Live MGR

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