

SWARAJYA

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CONGRESS REUNION

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THE SAD and sudden demise of Mr Kamaraj deprived the Organization Congress in Tamil Nadu of a colossus whose wisdom, statesmanship and guidance gave it a massive mass base and strength. After him, the Organization Congress was left captainless and rudderless in the eddying currents of conflicting pulls. The debacle of the 'grand alliance' all over India and the severe jolt which the Congress (O) received in the 1971 general elections in Tamil Nadu had set Mr Kamaraj thinking whether the domestic quarrel was not, in fact, helping the continuation and perpetuation of the maladministration of the State by the DMK Government. It was well-known that on issues like nationalization of banks, abolition of privy purses, etc., the views of Mr Kamaraj were more in unison with the Congress than with some of his own colleagues in the Organization Congress. From the trend of polling in the Dindigul by-election, Mr Kamaraj foresaw fresh dangers in the deteriorating politics of Tamil Nadu and further demoralization of administration by forces no different from the DMK. It was in this context that Mrs Maragatham Chandrasekharan played a quiet but difficult role of a messenger-mediator between Mrs Gandhi and Mr Kamaraj that culminated in the electoral alliance between the two wings of the Congress in the Coimbatore and Pondicherry elections. When the move was criticised by the leaders of the Congress (O), Mr Kamaraj rejected the criticism asserting firmly that the situation in Tamil Nadu justified his stand and dared the Congress (O) High Command to take any action against the TNCC (O). Why the electoral alliance did not fructify into a re-union shortly thereafter is anybody's guess. That Mr Kamaraj was keen on taking at least some of

his colleagues from other States along with him in the move for a re-union and that his lead in the matter was sought by some leaders of the Organization Congress of the neighbouring States was not even then much of a secret. The proverbial plain and blunt Mr Kamaraj, in his dealings with the masses, was in fact the most sophisticated diplomat on political issues, seldom disclosing his mind to anyone and doing it only suggestively even when he wanted. It was evident that he had lost hopes of bringing about a *rapprochement* at the national level and had decided to meet the Prime Minister for discussion in the second week of November but that was not to be.

Several factors contributed to the land-slide in favour of the merger. Obviously, the Organization Congress could not survive as an independent political unit in Tamil Nadu. When called upon to make the choice, Congressmen could not contemplate with equanimity their complete dissociation with Gandhiji and his ideology, which an alliance with a front consisting of the DMK and the Jan Sangh meant. The reverence which Mrs Gandhi showed to the departed leader, coupled with a timely appeal welcoming the Organization Congress members and assuring them of an honoured place in the united organization had a great impact on them. All these combined to turn the tide of opinion among Congress (O) leaders in Tamil Nadu in favour of merger with the Congress. It is a pity that instead of calling the PCC and obtaining a verdict, the TNCC (O) President resorted to the dissolution of the PCC itself, the legality whereof is in dispute. In all the 90 years' history of the Indian National Congress, the PCC or the TNCC has never been superseded or dissolved. This precipitate action

infuriated another section and whatever hesitation remained with some Congress (O) members soon evaporated and the merger move gained further momentum. Finally, the dismissal of the unwanted and unpopular DMK Ministry had its own effect in rounding off the merger campaign and completing the process.

The mammoth gathering on the 15th February, stretching over a mile along the sandy beach from Mahatma Gandhi statue to Presidency College, the biggest ever in Madras, by far bigger than the previous best at the Avadi Congress over twenty years ago, gave a massive endorsement to the re-union of Congress (O) and the Congress, ending a six-year-old rift among colleagues and comrades who had suffered together during the freedom struggle and worked together since Independence. The lusty cheering that greeted the denunciation of the DMK Ministry by the Prime Minister was a demonstration of the popular sentiment in this behalf. Mrs Gandhi took the masses into confidence and explained that it was the projected agitations on the 1st, 3rd and 5th February in Tamil Nadu that occasioned the peremptory dismissal of the DMK Ministry even a few weeks before the expiry of its tenure.

Now that the merger is complete, the task of reconstruction must begin. Distrust and disharmony arising from past affiliations should yield place to

a new spirit of dedication and service to the country. All the sweat and toil of the past several weeks will be turned to waste unless Congress learns from the mistakes of others in recent times. Interference with the day-to-day administration by partymen has spelt the ruin of the DMK and will do so again in the case of others also. It should be realized that when elected representatives overstep their legitimate function of bringing hardships and injustice to the notice of the administration and try to procure the deviation of public servants from their path of duty by threat or inducement, they are guilty of a crime against society. In the task of cleansing public administration from the evils of corruption and nepotism, the Congressmen have to set an example to the country. Fortunately, the responsibilities of the conduct of the unified organization has been entrusted to Mr G. Karupiah Mooppanar, whose reputation for integrity, modesty and sense of dedication is well-known throughout Tamil Nadu. The task he has undertaken is by no means an easy one. Apart from reconciling the two wings in the Congress, he has to set a pace and tone for men in public life and regain for them the prestige they had enjoyed during the days of the freedom struggle. The nation wishes him success in the great task of re-building not only a strong and unified Congress organization but in restoring decency and morality in public life.

CALCULATORS INVADE U.S. CLASSROOM

BEHOLD the wondrous mini-calculator! Small enough to be held in the hand, it performs prodigious mathematical feats for everyone from grammar school students to top level engineers and scientists. A few years ago, such electronic gadgets were expensive novelties, used primarily by professionals. But no more. Production has increased, prices have plummeted, and throughout the United States, where more than 100 companies are now producing them, mini-calculators now cost less than \$20. Some 12 million of them were sold in 1974. Housewives use them to balance cheque books. Their husbands use them to figure their income-taxes. And even small school children now use them to help fathom the complexities of beginning arithmetic. Indeed, the growing popularity of calculators among students and teachers adds up to one of the hottest fads in US education.

At first, kids borrowed the family calculator, but now several

school systems in the United States have begun providing them.

The vital working heart of every mini-calculator is a tiny chip of synthetic crystal, acting as a semi-conductor. On a single chip smaller than a fingernail are etched thousands of complete electronic circuits enabling even the simplest of these machines to perform four basic functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. More sophisticated calculators are available for several hundred dollars and up, that will also handle square roots, logarithms, trigonometry and other such abstruse matters. These machines, like the others, are small enough to be carried in a shirt pocket.

The introduction of classroom calculators has not been met with universal joy among US educators. There is the worry that calculators—like the new maths—could create more problems than they solve. Some teachers—usually those who have not used

them—fear that the calculators may produce a generation of mathematical illiterates who will be lost without their machines.

In any case, there is no doubt that calculators have enhanced the study of mathematics by simplifying dull and time-consuming calculations, and more widespread use of calculators in the classroom appears inevitable. There is talk of mini-calculators soon to be available for only a few dollars. By that time, they may well take their place with notebooks and pencils as standard school supplies. In fact, there seems to be no end to the wonders ahead. One California scientist, David Hodges, predicts that by 1980, 50 million bits of information will be stored in a single miniature computer evolving from present-day calculators. Such a machine will not only help students do mathematics but also help them learn to spell or master a foreign language. In the meantime, some of America's best mathematicians are developing a whole new system of teaching to make the optimum use of the ubiquitous mini-calculators.—(USIS)