

CHAPTER - V

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The Quit India Movement which broke out in the year 1942 was the last all India Satyagraha conducted by Gandhiji on the Indian soil. The beginning of the movement can be traced back to the World War II. The breaking out of the War in 1939, when the country was being ruled by the popular ministries in the provinces under the Government of India Act, 1935, created confrontation among the Nationalistic and Imperialistic forces.¹ Nazi Germany invaded Poland in pursuance of Hitler's scheme for German expansion. Earlier, he occupied Austria in March 1938 and Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Britain and France were forced to join hands with Poland to unite Hitler. Immediately the Indian Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, declared India to be a party to the war without consulting the congress ministries in the provinces and the elected members of the Central Legislature.²

This was a challenge to the congress to declare an imperialistic war and in the Working Committee meeting of the Congress in August 1939 to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India. Linlithgow, the Viceroy, however, started consulting Indian leaders to seek India's support for war effort. On receiving a telegraphic invitation Gandhi met the Viceroy at Shimla.

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1. Alladi Vaidehi Krishnamurthy, *Freedom Movement in India 1858 – 1947*, Hyderabad, 1977, p.226.
 2. B.S.Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration Government of Madras*, 1960, pp.20-22.

He made it clear in his letter that if at all there could be any negotiation for support, it could be only between the Government and the Congress as he hardly represented the national mind on account of his doctrines, to non-violence. At the same time Gandhiji told him that his own sympathies were with Britain and France from a purely humanitarian point of view.³

In an emergency session at Wardha on 14 September 1939 it was declared that a free democratic India would gladly associate itself with the free nations for mutual defense against aggression. Therefore, it invited the British Government to declare without any terms and condition regarding their war aims and views about democracy and, in particular, how those were to apply to India before and after the war.⁴

But the response of the British Government was entirely negative. Linlithgow, the Viceroy in his statement dated 17 October 1939 stressed on the differences among the Muslim League, and the Princes against the congress and refused to define Britain's war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression. Thus the ground was set for collision between the Government and the Congress. To Gandhiji, the Viceroy's statement revealed only the reiteration of the policy of divide and rule, which

3. Bharti Thakur, *Women in Gandhi's Mass Movements*, New Delhi, 2006. p.136-137.

4. Jitedra Prasada (ed.), *Congress Varnika*, Vol.II, New Delhi, 1985, p.71.

eliminated the possibility of any immediate friendly relationship between the congress and the Government. About this Gandhiji commented that the congress, asked for bread and it has got stones.⁵ Thus, the Working Committee, finding the statement wholly unsatisfactory took decision not to participate in the war effort. It also instructed all the Congress Ministries in the provinces to resign.

The Congress, at its Ramgarh Session in March 1940, resolved to launch some kind of a Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. The congress leader authorised him to decide the time and strategy of such a movement. Gandhiji, who was initially reluctant to start a Civil Disobedience Movement. Finally he agreed to launch it. But still being absorbed with the ideas of difficulties of Britain, he did not want to start a mass movement. Instead, he opted for limited Satyagraha. The issue underlying the Satyagraha was confined to the demand for carrying on anti-war propaganda and preaching non co-operation with the Government in their war efforts.⁶

The Individual Civil Disobedience Movement, thus, began on 17 October 1940. Only persons having faith in non-violence and constructive programmes were eligible for offering Satyagraha and they were selected by

5. The *CWMG*, Vol. LXX, *op.cit.*, p.267.

6. The *CWMG*, Vol.70, *op.cit.*, p.440-442.

Gandhi himself.⁷ Vinoba Bhave was the first to offer Satyagraha by making anti-war speeches in the village Panaur and he was arrested subsequently.⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru was to follow Vinoba Bhave on 7 November 1940, after giving due notice to the authorities. But he was arrested a week in advance and was sentenced to four year imprisonment for his speeches delivered early in October.⁹ Then the third person chosen to offer Satyagraha was Brahmoo Dutt, an inmate of Gandhi's ashram. He was also arrested and sentenced to six month imprisonment for delivering an anti-war speech in the neighbourhood of Wardha on 7 November. On November 17 Sardar Vallabai Patel was taken into custody. He was not tried on any particular charge, but was arrested and detained indefinitely.¹⁰ There was a huge rush of people conducting Satyagraha in the different parts of the country. Similarly, one by one all the congress leaders, who offered themselves for the Individual Satyagraha against the Government, were imprisoned. These mainly included the members of Congress Working Committee, All India Congress Committee, Provincial Congress Committees and the members of Central and Provincial Legislatures.¹¹

7. Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi – A Study in Revolution*, Bombay, 1968, p.346.

8. B.Patabhi Sitaromayya, *History of the Indian National Congress 1935-1947*, Vol.II, New Delhi, 1947, p.221.

9. B.R. Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi A Biography*, New Delhi, 1958, p.444.

10. Mazhar Kibriya, *Gandhi and Indian Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi, 1999, p.324.

11. Bharti Thakur, *op.cit.*, p.138.

There were meetings and demonstrations in every district in the Presidency of Madras protesting against the trial and conviction of Nehru. Even the Moderates of the presidency were unanimous in their opinion that the British Government should make a positive declaration that it would give India freedom to determine her own constitution after the War. As a proof of her earnestness, they wanted Britain to form forthwith a national Government at the centre and responsible Government in the Provinces.¹²

The main feature is the comment of Gandhi's individual Satyagraha movement. Satyagraha has been made for the offering Satyagraha in twelve more districts. The actual prescribed for the Satyagraha to begin war from district to district. The method adopted has, so far, been either by writing delivering of letters to selected persons, usual members of District War Committees, urging that refrain from assisting Britain War efforts in the way, or by shouting slogans of a similar. The campaign was started by T.S.S. Rajan Ex-Minister for public Health. He was convicted and sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment and fine of Rs. 1,000/- or in default to undergo six months further imprisonment. They were sentenced and convicted. Notable among these are Rukmini Lakshmipathi Deputy Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, T. Prakasam, ex-Minister for Revenue, and Gopala Reddi, Ex. Minister for local Administrative Department.

12. Letter form G.A. Natesan to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri 23 November 1940. (Refer G.A. Natesan Papers).

Among the less important people the case of P.R. Thevar of Trichinopoly was noteworthy because he was definitely an unwilling participant. Prior to his selection by Gandhiji, he was actively engaged in arranging an extra cricket match, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the War Fund.¹³

Rajaji was arrested on 3 December. Magistrate Abbas Ali who tried Rajaji sentenced him to one year imprisonment, although he had only performed his duty as a Magistrate.¹⁴ Satyamurthi offered Individual Satyagraha on 13 December by shouting anti-war slogans. He was arrested to nine month simple imprisonment. His statement before the Court was: "the least one can do without deliberately seeking to embarrass the Government is to say to the world and to our people that until India's freedom is assured, India can have no part or lot in the War".¹⁵ While serving his term in the Vellore jail, Satyamurthi fell seriously ill and was shifted to the General Hospital in Madras still a prisoner under police custody for treatment. After a stint of treatment, he was once again confined to the penitentiary. When G.A. Natesan sought the permission of the Madras Government to see Satyamurthi who was very ill, the Government warned him against such a call. It asked whether Natesan as chairman of one of the War Sub-

13. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of November 1940.

14. *The Hindu*, dated 04.12.1948.

15. *The Hindu*, dated 14.12.1940.

Committees could associate himself with people who had deliberately indulged in anti-war propaganda to have themselves committed to prison. Reminding him of the unpleasantness which his visit to Rajaji on the eve of the latter's departure to jail had created, it stated that a "visit to convicts in jail might provoke an even wilder storm".¹⁶

All the former Ministers of the Rajaji Cabinet offered Individual Satyagraha and courted imprisonment. The burden of their anti-war speeches was against India being drawn into the war which served no purpose for her and which meant the "moral and material ruin of the nation". The satyagrahis attacked the mobilization of the war fund which was often raised on coercion. T.S.S. Rajan was jailed even before Rajaji. He opened the campaign in Trichinopoly in November. He was convicted and sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.1000/- or in default to undergo six months further imprisonment.¹⁷ Except Yakub Hasan who was no more, all the Ministers "jumped from their Secretariat to the Prison House". Among the members of the Central Legislative Assembly who were arrested, the most popular leaders were C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar, T.S.Avinashilingam Chetty and P.S.Kumaraswami Raja, B. Samba Murthi, Rukmini Lakshmipathi (Deputy Speaker of the Madras Legislative

16. Letter from Government of Madras to G.A. Natesan, 14 February 1941, (Refer G.A.Natesan Papers).

17. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of November 1940.

Assembly), K. Venkataswamy Naidu, M.Bhaktavatsalam, N.S.Varadachari, M.Bapineedu Ahmed Thambi Mohideen Maricas, Kaleswara Rao, K.R.Karant, P.S. Murthi and A.B. Shetty were the other Public figures to court arrest.¹⁸

The Individual Satyagraha Movement in the Presidency continued unabated into 1941 although many leaders were already in jail. Persons from the commercial and land owning classes as well as publicists went to jail in 1941. Among them Pallikkottai Nadimuthu Pillai, Nachiappa Gounder of Salem, T.S. Chokkalingam the Editor of Dinamani, S.S. Vasan the Editor of Ananda Vikatan and R. Krishnamurthi the Editor of Kalki deserve special mention. Among scholars who were jailed may be mentioned T.P.Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, Tirunavukkarasu the son of Maraimalai Adikal, Nilavati Ramasubramani and M.P. Sivagnanam.¹⁹ The sentences awarded to the satyagrahis were severe, the fines heavy. And they were not uniform. In the initial phase of the Satyagraha itself, there were glaring contrasts between the sentences awarded to Vinobha Bhave and Jawaharlal Nehru. Later, however, the sentences were less harsh, the duration not

18. Saroja Sundararajan, *March to Freedom in Madras Presidency 1916-1947*, Madras, 1989, pp.576-577.

19. M.P. Sivagnanam, *Viduthalai Poril Tamilagam*, (Tamil) Vol.II, Madras, 1983, pp. 407-408.

exceeding two to four months. In Coimbatore, a satyagrahi was sentenced to six month imprisonment for his speech delivered at a reception got up to celebrate his release! The number of arrests and fines imposed on satyagrahis arrested in the Madras Presidency as issued by the AICC office at Sevagram.²⁰

To start with, the Satyagraha was offered in Madras city and eight districts. Later, it was extended to twelve more districts. Prosecutions under the Defence of India Act were launched in the Madras city and the districts of South Arcot, Coimbatore, Chingleput, Madurai, Ramnad, Salem, Tanjore, Tiruchirapalli and Tirunelveli.²¹ The women Satyagrahis also responded remarkably for Individual Satyagraha and courted arrest. One of the first to do so was Sucheta Kirpalani who had been incharge of the women's department of the All India Congress Committee since 1939. Bhag Devi (M.L.A), Priyamvada Devi and Mahadevi Kajariwal took, the initiative of offering "Individual Satyagraha" in Punjab, Orissa and Bihar respectively. Several women from all over India, who courted arrest for taking part in the Individual Satyagraha were Sardakumari Devi, Primba Devi, Vijayalakshmi Kanuja, Bibi Raghbir Kaur (M.L.A) Premabehn Kantik, Priyamvada Nandkeoliar, Savitri Devi, Bhakti Lakshmi Desai, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi,

20. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op.cit.*, p.264.

21. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of December 1940.

Deputy Speaker of Madras Assembly, notified to the Commissioner of police to offer Satyagraha in Madras.²²

Individual Satyagraha has been continued in most districts during the past fortnight. The most part of the programme appears to be coming close but it is understood that Gandhiji will be extend the scale of operations by nominating the Congress Committee Members. Members of Municipal Councils and others of the same status to participate Satyagraha. The chief leaders who have been convicted or detained during the fortnight are C. Rajagopalachari. ex-premier, Subbarayan, V.V. Giri, V.I. Munisamy Pillai, ex-Ministers, Radhabai Subbarayan, M.L.A (central); S.Sathyamurthi; M.L.A. (central), Anantasayanam Ayyangar, M.L.A., Avanshilingam Chetti, M.L.A (Central) and K. Venkataswami Naidu some cases simply through fear that if they disobeyed the mandate, they would be made to suffer for it when congress returns to power some future date. In addition to Pattabhi, mentioned in his last report, two other of Gandhiji nominees are struggling to avoid the mandate despite severe pressure.²³

Among the most prominent Congress leaders in the Presidency who were arrested and sent to jail for offering Individual Satyagraha, were Rajaji and Satyamurthi. On 1 December 1940, Rajaji wrote letters to all the

22. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, Madras, 1985, p.381.

23. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of December 1940.

members of the Provincial War Committee including the Mayor of Madras, Muthiah Chetty, (leader of the Opposition in the Madras Legislative Assembly), and Abdul Hamid Khan (leader of the Muslim League group in the Assembly) requesting all of them not to help the British War with men and money. Rajaji sent a copy of his letter to the British authorities also so as to provoke and enable them to take action against him.²⁴ Moreover, Anjalai Ammal M.L.A of South Arcot, Lakshmi Ammal, M.L.A. of Tirunelveli, Lakshmi Bharati M.L.A of Madura District. All of them were convicted and sentenced to simple imprisonment under the classification of "A" class.²⁵

In the Annamalai University, the administration had a tough task in holding back the agitators. On receiving information that the students had affiliation with the Communists, the Police went to the University to make searches. In the meantime, the students got to know what was afoot and assembled in a body to decide their next course of action. Their attitude being so definitely hostile, the police withdrew without achieving its object lest it should run into risk of a riot.²⁶ M. Meenakshi student, who was acting in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and was Retained in the Presidency Jail for women, Vellore under rule 26.²⁷

24. Saroja Sundararajan, *op.cit.*, pp.575-576.

25. Government of Madras, G.O.NO.208, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.01.1941.

26. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of November 1940.

27. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Fortnight of December 1940.

A number of Women in Madras city vigorously participated in the Individual Satyagraha Movement. The prominent among them were Rukmini Lakshmipathi, Rajam Bharati, N.S.Rukmini, Rajeswari Ammal, M.S.Balammal, J.Navaneethammal, Sitalakshmi Kumaraswamy, Thayarammal.²⁸

Rukmini Lakshmipathy was one of the outstanding members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and Deputy Speaker of Madras Legislative Assembly.²⁹ As she was deeply interested on political movements, she made up her mind to participate in the Individual Satyagraha, which she considered as a necessary one, took part in the agitation which broke out in the year 1940-1941. As her activities were so vigorous during the agitation along with others, she was convicted and sentenced to simple imprisonment of one year. Knowing fully well that she was one of the prominent members of the Indian National Congress, she was placed in "A" class prison.³⁰ She was the first woman Satyagrahi in Madras. When she was taken to jail, she declared that, "Let the women in India follow the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and maintain the honour and dignity of our Motherland".³¹

28. P.N. Premalatha, *Nationalism and Women's Movement in South India 1917-1947*, New Delhi, 2003, p.146.

29. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, November 1940; Second Half of December 1940.

30. Government of Madras, G.O. NO. 4941, Home Department, dated 07.12.1940.

31. *Indian Express*, dated 09.12.1940.

After the imprisonment of Rukmini, another woman participant in the Individual Satyagraha who shouted anti-war slogans was Rajam Bharathi. She was also convicted and sentenced to three month simple imprisonment failure of it she was asked to pay a fine of Rs.250/-. Like Rajam Bharati, N.S.Rukmini also shouted anti-war slogan for which the government gave her punishment of three month simple imprisonment, failing which she was also forced to pay a fine of Rs.250/-. Immediately after the imprisonment of Rukmini Lakshmipathi, Rajam Bharati, N.S. Rukmini one M.S. Balambal and J.Navaneethammal, who belonged to Madras were also courted arrest and kept in the Presidency Jail for women, at Vellore. They were put in jail for only three months.

The participants of the Individual Satyagraha generally raised only anti-war slogans. One such agitator was Seethalakshmi Kumaraswamy, who was the Secretary of the Congress Committee. As she vigorously participated in the Satyagraha, the government took action against her. After a trial, the government imposed fine on her Rs.250/-. She was followed by Thayarammal who was arrested thrice and kept in the central Jail at Madras, Vellore and Cuddalore. Like-wise one Neelavathiammal, T. Jegathambal, T. Thirupura Sundari Ammal, A.C.Jeyalakshmi also shouted anti-war slogan. Therefore they were all arrested. Jegathammal was kept in Vellore and Cuddalore jail for nine month imprisonment. Three month simple imprisonment was given to T. Thirupura Sundari Ammal and A.C.Jeyalakshmi

Ammal respectively.³² Subsequently in Coimbatore district A. Lakshmi, A.K.Panjali, Lakshmi (Vice President Taluk of Coimbatore), Pankajathammal, Savithri Ammal, Padmavathi Asher, Bagavathiammal, Sundarammal and others entered the Individual Satyagraha and courted arrest and imposed, fine an amount of Rs.1,000 and imprisoned for three months under Defence of India Rules of 1941.³³

The Individual Satyagraha had never stopped with Madras itself, but it had a spread like wildfire in other districts of Tamilnadu. As for as Tanjavur district is concerned the Individual Satyagraha Movement had taken its shape in a large measure, because of the participation of the women participants like Siva Saradammal and Rajammal. They took leadership for spreading the Satyagraha movement in and around in Thanjavur District. With blessings of Gandhiji, they conducted meetings in the different parts of the district. In order to create an interest to participate in the movement. With their leadership they instigated people to shout anti-war slogan against the British. When the government came to know that Siva Saradammal and Rajammal were the ring leaders the government took decision to arrest them. However, both of them were taken into prison, when they shouted anti war

32. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, 3rd February, 25th February, 4th March, 3rd April, 18th May 1941.

33. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Fortnight of July 1940; First Fortnight of September 1940 ; First Half of January, 1941; Second Fortnight of January 1941 ; First Half of February 1941; Tamil Nadu Archives, *History of Freedom Movement*, No.108; V. Rajalakshmi, *The political behaviour of women in Tamilnadu*, New Delhi, 1985, pp.27-38.

slogan. Both of them kept in the State Jail for Women, Vellore for six months rigorous imprisonment.³⁴

The Individual Satyagraha had spread from Thanjavur to Trichinopoly District. Where, the women's participants in the Individual Satyagraha Movement was vigorous.³⁵ The noted women participants their Janaki, Rajamani Devi and Piyari Bibi. It is seen from the fortnightly reports that these women leaders very active in the movement and they were mainly responsible in the district to stimulate. The young minds of the students as well as people by conducting several meetings in the different parts of the district. Their speeches were mainly based only on anti-war. Knowing fully well the government advise them not to take part in such meetings, but they disliked and continued their war speeches. This made the government put them imprisonment so that the movement could be stopped them and there. However, Janaki and Rajamani Devi, they are imprisonment for simple imprisonment for four months. And Piyari Bibi, Jagadambal they were rigorous imprisonment for three months.³⁶

South Arcot district was also important for the Individual Satyagraha Movement initiated by Gandhiji. In it, a number of women who

34. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, January to December, 1941 ; First Half of January 1941.

35. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of December 1940.

36. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, January to December 1941.

loved India participated in the movement. The prominent among them are Anjalai Ammal M.L.A, Lakshmi Ammal, Pathanji, Krishnaveni Ammal, Muthulekshmi Ammal, Aranga nayaki Ammal and Jagadambal.³⁷ Among them Anjalai Ammal was the Member of Legislative Assembly, and Krishnaveni Ammal was a member of District Congress Committee.³⁸ The participants mentioned above were imprisoned for six month three month and two month. Most of them were kept in the jail at Mayuram, Thanjavur and Vellore.³⁹

In Madurai District the active political workers of the Individual Movement were K.P. Janaki, Lakshmi Bharati M.L.A., V. Ahilandammal, Alamelu Sundararajan, Rangammal and Lakshmi. They began their programme by addressing public meetings in the deferent villages of Madurai district.⁴⁰ However, they were arrested by a circle of Police Inspector and soon after awarded one year, six month, three month and two month of serious imprisonment.⁴¹ Some women who actively participated in the

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37. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of January, 1941 and January to December 1941
 38. *The Bombay Chronicle*, October 1942; Government of Madras, G.O.NO.208, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.01.1941.
 39. *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 17.12.1943.
 40. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of January 1941; Second Fortnight of January 1941 ; 25th February ; 4th March ; 3rd April and 18 May, 1941.
 41. Government of Madras, G.O.NO.208, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.01. 1943; *Fort Nightly Report*, January to December 1941.

Individual Satyagraha Movement was one Lakshmi Ammal. She was the only participant in this movement and as she shouted anti-war speeches. She was sentenced to six month simple imprisonment.⁴² One V.M. Janaki Ammal a leading Congress Member of the District Board was in favour of the Individual Satyagraha Movement in the district. She was kept in Jail for women, Vellore for one and half months for her anti-war speeches.⁴³

As for as Ramanathapuram district is concerned the movement was though not vigorous but the movement urged. Some women to participate in the Individual Satyagraha Movement.⁴⁴ The important active women participants of this movement in this district were Narayanammal, Vishalakshi. They were imprisoned in the Vellore jail for three and nine months respectively. The Congress Working Committee in the North Arcot District instructed its members and their colleagues to participate in the Individual Satyagraha Movement. The active women participants of the movement were Parvathi, Sakunthala Gurjali and Lakshmi Kanthammal. They were courted arrest for six month and two month imprisonment only. Parvathi was put in Alipuram jail for a rigorous imprisonment for six months. The other two were kept in the jail for women at Vellore.⁴⁵ Though one of the smallest districts was Nilgris in Tamilnadu. The women political activists were not in

42. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of January 1941; G.O.NO.208, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.01.1941.

43. T. Rasagopalan, *Perumaikuriya Pendir* (Tamil), Vol.II, Chennai,1995. p.94-95.

44. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, dated 19.04.1941.

45. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of February 1941.

any wave smaller in member. Though there were women Satyagrahis, the noted among them were Bharathi and Lakshmi Venkatram. They were sentenced to one month imprisonment.⁴⁶

On 4 December 1940, the Government of India announced its decision to release all civil disobedience prisoners whose offences were "merely formal and symbolic in Character." This was the effect of seventeen days of debate in the Central Assembly. But many were disappointed for granting a general amnesty to the rebels of the civil disobedience prisoners alone. Gandhiji was also least impressed by this. The discharge of the Salyagrahis had no meaning for him because, as per the new directive issued on 17 June 1941, a released Satyagrahi must seek to conduct Satyagraha again as soon as possible. If he was unable to do so, he must apply to the party High Command for exemption offering Satyagraha mentioning the true reasons there for. It was unable to understand Gandhiji that those who had voluntarily courted imprisonment were to be discharged and not those who were either detained without trial or imprisoned because they held the liberty of their own mother land than their own personal freedom. He proclaimed that he "can not rejoice over the Government of India's decision".⁴⁷

The political prisoners were treated badly in the jails. There food was bad. They were lathicharged inside the prison. In Vellore jail, there

46. Government of Tamilnadu, *Who's Who of Freedom Fighters* (Tamilnadu), Vol. II, Madras, 1973, p.3.

47. *The Hindu*, dated 06.12.1941.

was a hunger strike when the Satyagrahis were treated as ordinary criminals. As a result, the enthusiasm of the Satyagrahis had become weaker completely by the time when they were released. Out of the 2093 Individual Satyagrahis, only fifty nine courted arrest for a second time. Almost of them felt it was high time the campaign was cancelled.⁴⁸

Both Satyamurthi and Rajaji were in favour of giving up even the restricted civil disobedience and they advocated the resumption of ministerial office on suitable political terms. On 23 August 1941 Satyamurthi was released and his health was still indifferent. Even then, he made a speech at a reception meeting held at the congress grounds in Rayapettah to honour him on the day of his release. He advised the congress leaders to call off Satyagraha and permit its members to accept office in the Provinces and resume its legitimate place in the seat of Government. Many congressmen agreed and supported him.⁴⁹

On 30 December 1941, the Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli reaffirmed its adherence to the decisions taken by the All India Congress Committee in Bombay on 16 September 1940.⁵⁰ However, when the session was still on, Gandhiji wrote to Maulana Azad that he should

48. Patabhi Sitaramayya, *op.cit.*, p.275.

49. Letter from Satyamurthi to Gandhiji, 27 August 1941. (Satyamurthi Papers).

50. Saroja Sundararajan, *op.cit.*, p.583.

be relieved of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay resolution.⁵¹ Gandhiji's request was accepted. Hence, the Working Committee laid no specific programme of action. All the same it said that the Bombay resolution still held good.

On 15 January 1942 the All India Congress Committee met at Warda to have a discussion on the matters relating to the Working of the Congress Organization. At last the committee decided to issue instructions to congressmen on the celebration of the Independence Day.

Gandhiji had himself recommended the Bardoli resolution which withdrew the power of attorney for another announcement of Gandhiji.⁵² Though there was a good response to the Individual Satyagraha movement, it gradually lost its momentum. At the Bardoli session, the Congress Working Committee suspended this Satyagraha and offered to support the British war efforts in case the government was willing to effect real changes. In Tamil Nadu, Congress leaders were also in favour of aiding Britain in the time of crisis. In fact, Satyamurthi urged the Congress to resume its Parliamentary activities irrespective of the response of the British government to the Congress Working Committee's gesture.⁵³ Raja Gopalachari also felt that it would be good for the British rule and protection to continue for the present though India should be declared free at once.

51. The CWMG, Letter from Gandhiji to Azad, Vol. LXXV, 30 December 1941, Gandhi, p.189.

52. The CWMG, Letter from Gandhiji to Azad, Vol.LXXV, 30 December 1941, p.224.

53. *The Mail*, dated 05.01.1942.

When the Second World War broke out, India was committed to belligerency by the British without any consideration for the feelings of Indians or any assurance of Indian Self-Government. In protest the congress ministers in the provinces resigned and Gandhiji commenced Individual Satyagraha to express the country's disgust.⁵⁴ When the pressure of war mounted, particularly with the advances of Japan in South East Asia, Britain became anxious to secure the full and active co-operation of India in the war efforts. The Cripps Missions came with a promise of dominion status and a plan for future constitutional developments. But all the offers would materialise only after the war and not before. The plan was rejected in India and India's demand for immediate self-government to enable her to fight for freedom in other countries seemed just and unequivocal. Accordingly, the congress working committee passed a resolution in July 1942 at Wardha asking the British to transfer power to India and to "Quit India", otherwise it would be compelled to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement.⁵⁵ A meeting of the All India Congress Committee was called in Bombay on 8 August, 1942 to accept the "Quit India" resolution and Gandhiji asked all Indians to act as if they were "no longer under the heel of this imperialism".⁵⁶ The next day, that is,

54. Suruchi Thapar - Bjortert, *Women in the Indian National Movement 1930-1942*, New Delhi, 2006, pp.123-124.

55. Syad Jafar Mahmud, *Pillars of Modern India 1757-1947*, New Delhi, 1994, p.81.

56. Jim Masselos, *Indian Nationalism*, New Delhi, 1985, p.207.

on 9 August 1942, was the day to be launched the 'Quit India Movement'⁵⁷, and the Government arrested Gandhiji along with his wife Kasturba, his secretary, Mahadev Desai, and Sarojini Naidu, all of whom were taken to the Aga Khan Palace at Poona.⁵⁸

On the same day, other members of the working committee and many other prominent congress leaders were arrested by the Government. The Tamilnadu Congress Committee was declared an unlawful association and its office was sealed. Local Congress Committees were also declared illegal.⁵⁹ The Quit India Movement was practically leaderless as all senior members of the congress had been put in jail. However when the news of their arrests spread, spontaneous hartals, protest meetings and strikes took place all over the country. Women joined in taking out processions, holding meeting, demonstrations and organizing strikes.⁶⁰

In the Quit India Movement, numerous women again joined the agitation and courted incarceration. Mahatma Gandhi had informed the people that Quit India Movement would be short and swift. There would be

57. R.C. Agarwal, *Constitutional Development of India and National Movement*, New Delhi, 1984, p.290.

58. A.N. Kapoor, V.P. Gupta, Mohini Gupta (ed.), *An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Freedom Movement 1757-1947*, New Delhi, 2004, pp.352-353 ; Padmini Sengupta, *Maker of Indian Literature-Sarojini Naidu*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1974, p.64.

59. *Dinamani*, dated 17.08.1942.

60. P.N. Premalatha, *Nationalism and Women's Movement in South India 1917-1947*, New Delhi, 2003, pp.147-148.

mass participation of the people. Each one would be his or her own guide. The government would resort to brutal and ruthless repression. People would have to face the challenge non-violently in a spirit of "Do or Die". In his stirring message to the nation on the morning of 9 August, Mahatma Gandhi exhorted the Satyagrahis to seek and face death then only the nation would survive.⁶¹

The Government decided to take strong action. Violence breed violence and passions raged high. With the leaders in prison, individuals and groups interpreted the situation to the best of their ability. Isolated acts of angry defiance of authority were soon organized into an open revolt by the underground leaders. There were strikes in factories and educational institutions. Police offices, railway stations and post offices were attacked, telegraph wires cut and railway lines uprooted. In many areas, the peasants set up alternative governments.⁶² Tamilnadu was no exception. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras, which produced khaki drill for the army, was closed due to strike. The Madras Port Trust, the Madras Corporation and the Electric Tramway were immobilized. The public buildings were attacked.⁶³

61. *Ibid.*

62. Syed Jafar Mahmud, *op.cit.*, p.81.

63. G. Vengatesan, B.S. Chandra Prabhu, *Indiya Viduthalai Poratta Varalaru* (Tamil), Rajapalayam, 2004, pp.210-211.

Satyamurthi was arrested on the night of 11 August under the Defence of India Rules at the Arkonam junction on his way back to Madras from Bombay after attending the AICC meetings.⁶⁴ He was first taken to the Vellore Jail but was soon transferred to Amraoti Jail. He was driven 90 miles from Nagpur to Amraoti in a rickety bus without any supply of drinking water throughout the journey. In about a month, Satyamurthi was brought back to Madras and was admitted in the General Hospital on 10 January 1943. He died on 28 March while still a prisoner.⁶⁵ On 13 August 1942 M.P. Sivagnanam, (Secretary, Madras District Congress Committee), was arrested at Rayapuram. Other prominent Congress men who were arrested on the 13 and 14 August were Kala Venkata Rao, T.Prakasam, Nageswara Arya and Kamala Devi Arya. Kamaraj Nadar was arrested on 16 August at Virudunagar.⁶⁶ V. V. Giri was arrested at Madras on 17 August.⁶⁷

In Tamilnadu, when the leaders were arrested, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi became the acting President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and took the initiative to keep the organization alive.⁶⁸ She

64. *The Hindu*, dated 13.08.1942.

65. Letter from G.A. Natesan to Governor Hope, dated 03.12.1942.

66. *The Hindu*, dated 17.08.1942.

67. *The Hindu*, dated 18.08.1942.

68. *The Hindu*, dated 13.08.1942.

continued to play a remarkable role in the congress politics till the end. She kept the movement alive by giving directions to the Satyagrahis after the arrest of main leaders. She also went from place to place appealing people to participate in the movement.⁶⁹ Like Rukmani Lakshmipathi, Dhamayanthi, Ignatius Ammal, Janaki Ammal, Kahalakshmi, P. Padma Singh, Suryavathi Ammal, Solai Bagiyalakshmi Ammal and others also seriously entered in the mass revolution of 1942 and they were also arrested.⁷⁰ Ambujammal started the "Voluntary Corps" of Madras. It played a very important role in helping the refugees with food and shelter.⁷¹

In Madras City, the students both from schools and colleges played a spirited role in accelerating the national struggle. Students from Queen Mary's College, Women's Christian College, Presidency College, Law College, Pachaiyappa College, abstained from classes, and organized hartals, processions and picketing.⁷² The national flags were also hoisted in some colleges and many "Quit India Badges" were distributed on the birthday of Gandhiji. The women students of the Stanley Medical College also abstained from classes in protest of the Government's Policies.⁷³

69. *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 10.10.1942 and 17.12.1942.

70. V. Raja lakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.63.

71. P.N. Premalatha, *op.cit.*, p.148.

72. *The Hindu*, dated 13.08.1942.

73. *The District Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement*, August-September, 1942, p.6 ; B.S. Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration*, Vol.I, Government of Madras, Madras, 1960, p.27.

On 13 August 1942, Maheswara Arya and his wife, Kamala devi Arya, members of the Madras, Andhra District Congress Committee distributed leaflets in the Washermanpet area which exhorted the people to resign their jobs. Naturally, they were arrested by the police thereafter.⁷⁴ Besides these in Madras city, Ammu Swaminathan, Anushya, M.S.Balammal, Devaki Ammal, Maya Joseph, Manjubhashini, G. Janaki, P. Sushila, Thangamma, Thayarammal, Thirupura Sundari, Vasugiammal and others vigorously participated in the mass agitation so that the government punished them by imprisonment.⁷⁵

In Madras, Women's Indian Association of Mylapore passed a resolution strongly protesting against the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues.⁷⁶ When he got seriously ill in jail, Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhashini, members of the Women's Indian Association organized prayer meetings in different parts of Madras. In one of the meetings the Police Commissioner intervened and ordered them that 'nobody should enter the maiden for the meeting'. But Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhasini refused to obey the order and tried to enter in the maiden.⁷⁷ The whole of the country

74. Government of Madras, G.O.No.1130, Public (General) Department, dated 08.04.1942.

75. Government of Tamilnadu, *Who's Who of Freedom Fighters (Tamilnadu)*, Vol.I, Madras, 1973, pp.238-343.

76. *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 24.08.1942.

77. Bharti Thakur, *op.cit.*, p,167.

joined and actively participated in it. In the first phase of movement about 65 thousands demonstrators were arrested.⁷⁸

In the Southern districts the disturbances took a more serious turn. Public offices as well as public servants were attacked. Many patriots were killed in police firings at Rajapalayam, Karaikudi, Devakotai, Tiruvadanaï and Poolankurichi.⁷⁹

During that period Madurai District board under the Chairmanship of N.M.R. Subburaman passed a resolution on 1 September 1942 condemning the repressive policy of the government, authorizing the President to utilize the facilities of the Board for the establishment of a democratic government and certain other related things.⁸⁰ For instance, Meena Krishnaswamy was arrested in Madurai on the charges of shouting prejudicial slogans and picketing. She was kept at the Wardha Jail for one week, Nagpur jail for two months and thereafter Jabalbur Jail for eight months.⁸¹ Ignatius Ammal and Mahalakshmi joined Quit India Movement who belonged to Madurai District.⁸²

78. Ravindra Kumar, *Champaran to Quit India Movement*, New Delhi, 2002, p.74.

79. *The Mail*, dated 18.08.1942.

80. In the service of Humanity – A Tribute to Dr. Soundaram, *Journal of Gadhigram*, 1984.

81. *District Calendar of events of the Civil Disobedience Movement*, August – September, Government of Madras, 1942, pp.81-82.

82. Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, *Who's Who of Freedom Fighters (Tamil Nadu)*, Vol.I, 1973, p.398

Coimbatore was the centre of Sabotage. The sheds in the Sulur aerodrome were destroyed. Trains were derailed. The village offices and toddy shops were set on fire.⁸³ Further more, Coimbatore which had within its limits several mills and factories witnessed agitations, which were carried on mainly by the labourers. Large scale strikes were organized in a number of mills. Women labourers were also quite active in this movement. Antony Ammal, a labourer in Pankaja Textile Mill, joined the strike called by the Mill workers and was arrested and sentenced to one-year imprisonment. She was lodged at the Coimbatore jail for six months and then, shifted to Vellore Jail.⁸⁴ Another woman labourer, Petchi Ammal, also took part in the same strike, and she was lodged in Coimbatore Jail for three months. Apart from these women, Alamelu, Maruthai Ammal, Savithri Ammal, Kuttiammal, Amaravalli Ammal and others participated vigorously in the Quit India Movement on behalf of Coimbatore District and they were arrested and sentenced to various acts and jailed.⁸⁵

On 10 August 1942 about hundreds of women workers assembled at Ondiputhur Garden secretly. There, they formed themselves

83. Saroja Sundararajan, *op.cit.*, p.604.

84. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3454, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 27.10.1942 ; G.O.No.3476, Public Works (Labour) Department, dated 25.09.1942; *Fort Nightly Report*, 7th September 1942 ; *The Hindu*, dated 24, 25.08.1942 ; Janasakthi, dated 14.10.1942.

85. Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras, *Who's Who of Freedom Fighters (Tamil Nadu)*, Vol.I, 1973, pp.34,104.

into several groups in order to accomplish certain acts like destroying ammunition, setting fire to liquor shops, and cutting telephone and telegraph wires, disrupting transport services and so on. On 13 August, a group of 60 workers derailed a train carrying ammunition from Cochin between Podanur and Singanallur stations.⁸⁶ The group which was in charge of setting fire to liquor shops, did so at Singanallur, Porur and Kariyapalayam. In the breaking of railway lines at Singanallur, Kuttiammal, an illiterate woman of Coimbatore was the leader of this group of labourers.⁸⁷ On 27 August 1942 more than 1500 people gathered at Kamampalayam and went to Salur where they burnt the aerodrome and twenty two military lorries.⁸⁸

In the North Arcot, the agitators cut off the telephone and telegraph lines, damaged public property and derailed a goods train. The North Arcot District witnessed protest meetings, processions of congress and National Flags, hartals and demonstrations. In Chengalpet district, it was once again the students played a dominant role in performing prohibited actions. Chengalpet was the nodal point for the distribution of revolutionary literature, pamphlets, leaflets and so on.⁸⁹ Lakshmikanthammal and Lakshmi Ammal from Tiruvannamalai taluk, North Arcot District. Lakshmikanthammal

86. Tamil Nadu Archives, *Avana Amutham*, Madras, April to June 1992, p.23.

87. *Dinamani*, dated 15.08.1942; Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of August 1942 ; G.O.No.3091, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 29.09.1942.

88. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, dated 5 October 1942 ; G.O.No.3091, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 29.09.1942.

89. B.S. Baliga, *op.cit*, p.28.

and Lakshmi Ammal were arrested and rigorous imprisonment for three months for the offence under section 143 I.P.C. of Rigorous Imprisonment for six months for the offence under section 145 I.P.C. dated 13 August 1942. The charges against the accused were that at about 6 p.m. On 12 August 1942 they were members of an unlawful assembly at Tiruvannamalai town and that they continued in that assembly knowing that it had been common in the manner prescribed by law to disperse – offences punishable under sections 143 and 145 I.P.C.⁹⁰

Furthermore, in Tiruchirappalli, it was the students who were mostly responsible for picketing schools, colleges and courts, holding public meetings and organizing hartals.⁹¹ So All India student's federation convened public meetings at Tiruchirappalli on 14 August 1942 and at Karur. On 15 August, Parvathi Kumaramangalam a committee leader spoke in these meetings advising the arrest of their leaders. As a result, on 17 August about 300 excited students thronged at the gate of St. Joseph's College and refused to enter the college buildings but were dispersed by the police as per the orders of the collector. When the police fired, the dispersed students marched to the Town Hall and convened a public meeting.⁹² As the Mass Movement progressed, people of Tiruchirappalli resorted to violence and

90. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3968, Home Department, dated 26.10.1942.

91. Government of Madras, G.O. No 215, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 17.10.1942.

92. Muslimgal, Tirunelveli, *The District Calendar of events of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Government of Madras, August – September, 1942*, p.108.

caused derailment by removing fish plates of rail way, stopped trains by pulling emergency chain cord and conducted meetings inciting violence against the government. Fish plates of railway between Pugalur and Noyyal railway stations were removed which caused the derailment of a passengers train at 3.00 a.m. on 17 August 1942.⁹³ On 19 August at a point 5 K.M. South of Tiruchirappali removing fishplates derailed a goods train. Regarding this F.M.Bajohn, S.N. Rahiman, Karur Piyaribibi, Jagadammal, Kuppammal, Karuppazhagi and others were very vigorously carrying on their derailment incident. So they were arrested and kept in Vellore Jail with V.M.Obayathullakv.⁹⁴ N.Chellam, a native of Kanyakumari District took part in Quit India Movement, who belonged to Kalkulam taluk. She was arrested under section 188 I.P.C. and sentenced to one year imprisonment in Trivandrum Jail in 1942.⁹⁵

Narayana Ammal from Ramnad was arrested and imprisoned for shouting anti-war slogans and distributing leaflets, she was kept in various jails.⁹⁶ In Tanjore town, a public meeting was held in defiance of the prohibitory order and it ended in police lathi-charging and arresting several

93. K.S.K. Velmani, *Tiruchirapalli District Gazetteer*, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras Vol. I, 1998, p.237.

94. C. Dewa, *Viduthalai Poril Tamilaga Muslimgal*, Tirunelveli, 1994, pp.190-192.

95. V. Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.31.

96. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, dated 08.03.1943.

people. At Kumbakonam about 10,000 people consisting mostly of young women and men between ages of twenty and thirty, gathered at Gandhi park defied the ban order, picketed shops, cut off telegraph communications, barricaded streets and surrounded the police. All of these provoked the police into firing at the people.⁹⁷ Up to October 1942, 965 persons were arrested in Tanjore district.⁹⁸

The Government threw the entire responsibility of widespread violence of Gandhiji. It claimed to be in possession of ample documentary evidence to prove that the congress kept a double face. It talked of peace and non-violence in one breath but encouraged armed rebellion in the other. Gandhiji rebutted such baseless charges and decided to observe twenty one days fast to prove his innocence before God. The fast began on 19 February, 1943. He grew weaker day by day. His condition became critical after thirteen days. There was countrywide agitation for his release. But the Viceroy refused to set him free. In protest, the three Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council – H.P. Modi, N.R.Sarkar and M.S Aney – laid down their offices. Even the physicians attending on Gandhiji doubted if Gandhiji would outlive the fast. But despite his old age and worsening

97. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, Second Half of August 1942.

98. *The District Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement*, Government of Madras, August-September 1942, p.101.

condition, Gandhi survived his fast. Kasturba Gandhi died while Gandhiji was in detention. In April, 1944, Gandhiji fell seriously ill again. Lord Wavell, who had taken over as the viceroy of India, in October, 1943, released him on 6 May, 1944.⁹⁹

The movement continued even in 1943. Independence Day was celebrated through out India in January 1943. During 1943, January, the "Shadow All India Congress Committee" issued secret instructions to congress persons to celebrate the Independence Day. The day was celebrated energetically. In the beach near Triplicane, Madras under the leadership of Radhabai Subbarayan, the National Flag was hoisted and 'Bande Madaram' was sung with cheerful gusto. However, Radhabai along with another female participant, Damayanti was arrested and sentenced to three month imprisonment.¹⁰⁰ At the Tamil conference held in Madras, P.S.Thanuvammal hoisted the National flag and so was arrested and detained.

The students staged a number of demonstration and picketed in batches the secretariat and the Chief Presidency Magistrate Court. Anusuya Reddy was also arrested and prosecuted for shouting prejudicial slogans in front of the Egmore on 19 February 1943. On the same day, another woman named, Mahalakshmi Bharati was also arrested and detained on charges of

99. R.C. Agarwal, *op.cit*, p.294.

100. Government of Madras, *Fort Nightly Report*, First Half of December 1942.

picketing and shouting slogans in front of the Secretariat.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Ammu Swaminathan, the President of the Madras Board of All India Women's Conference and Manjubhashini, the President of the Madras Women's Student's Organisation was primarily responsible for organizing hartals, strikes, demonstrations in the Madras City. They also arranged for printing and distributing appeals to the people in a clandestine way. In defiance of the prohibitory orders, they called for a mass meeting at the Spur Tank, Egmore on 19 February, 1943.¹⁰² They automatically arrested and kept in detention in the Vellore Jail.¹⁰³ In response to these police measures, not only did a number of shops particularly in George Town, Choolai, Mambalam and Triplicane were closed but students abstained from schools and colleges to demonstrate in front of the secretariat. On 4 September Manjubhashini was released on Parole. She was due on 19th September 1943.¹⁰⁴

In Madras district, the Third Circle Congress Sangam organized organized picketing and hartals.¹⁰⁵ Krishnabai Nimbkar Vice President of the Third Circle Congress Sangam and the other nine persons who had connected with the Congress Headquarters Southern Division Madras were

101. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, First Half of December 1942.

102. Government of Madras, G.O. No.629, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 26.02.1943.

103. Government of Madras, Fortnightly Report, 21st August 1943; G.O. No.629, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 26.02.1943.

104. Government of Madras, G.O.No.2514, Public (General) Department, dated 02.09.1943.

105. Government of Madras, Fort Nightly Report, First Half of June 1945.

Balachandra Vishnu Apte, K. Vasoji Rao alias kisanlal, T.Chandrasekara Reddy, V.S. Swaminathan, K. S. Krishnamurthy, Krishnabai Nimbkar, Versee Kurmsee, Palan Bhai and Tricumdas Shivaji.¹⁰⁶

Krishnabhai Nimbkar was the grand daughter of the late Sir. T.Madhava Rao. She was a graduate of the Madras University. After studying in the Madras University, after studying in the Madras Medical College for sometime. She took up appointment as a lecturer in the Crosthwaite Girl's College at Allahabad. Later she returned to Madras and came to notice as the Secretary of the Madras League of Youth, a pro-congress organization of which Rukmini Lakshmipathi was the President. She was also connected with the Women's Swadeshi League, Madras. She participated in the foreign cloth shop picketing campaign organized by the Congress in 1931 and was convicted to six month rigorous imprisonment on 3 March 1931 but was released soon after following the Gandhi- Irwin Pact. In 1932 she married V.D. Nimbkar (Formerly, Secretary, Madras Hindu Maha Sabha and now in the Military Department). Thereafter she worked for sometime as paid Secretary of the Madras Swadeshi Emporium. Later she rejoined the Madras Medical College and took her M.B.B.S. degree. She is now a private medical practitioner.¹⁰⁷

106. Government of Madras, G.O.No.844-845, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 22.03.1943.

107. *Ibid.*

Krishnabhai Nimbkar who is known to have been associating with Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhashini Subrahmanyam who took a prominent part in organizing mass demonstrations in connection with Gandhiji's fast and who have since been detained by orders of Government.¹⁰⁸

Krishnabai Nimbkar has given me an undertaking that she could not take part in subversive political activities or any activities directed against government for a period of one year. In view of this and the fact that her child is reported to be ill I have not directed her arrest. It is for the consideration of Government whether she should not be prosecuted under rule 38 (5) of the Defence of India rules for making a prejudicial report.¹⁰⁹

After the 1942, "August Rebellion" started she took an active part in underground congress activities. She associated herself with a number of underground congress workers from Bombay, Madras and other places, connected with the "Underground Congress Headquarters, Southern Division, Madras" and assisted then in the production of the prejudicial literature in furtherance of the "rebellion". The draft of a pamphlet urging students to strike and Government servants to resign and help in paralyzing the Government in the hand – writing to Krishnabai Nimbkar, was recovered from the house of an underground worker in Madras city during raid

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Ibid.*

of the production centres. But as she gave a written undertaking to the commissioner of Police, Madras, on 15 March 1943 not to take part in any subversive political activities or any activities directed against Government for a period of one year, further proceedings against her were dropped. Prior to this she also associated with Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhashini Subramanyam who took a prominent part in organizing mass demonstrations in connection with Gandhiji's fast and were consequently detained in jail.¹¹⁰

In November 1943 she took part in the conference of the National student's Organization. She invited the delegates of N.S.O. (Since banned) to tea in her house where at her instance it was decided that the students should start an underground illegal organization to oppose Government when a crisis such as the 'August Rebellion' arose again. For these subversive activities, Nimbkar's explanation was obtained by the commissioner of Police and forwarded to Government with the suggestion that she should be warned.¹¹¹

In 1944 she contacted underground workers of the congress socialist party at Nagpur, Bangalore and other places when it was reported that she was entrusted by the Congress socialist party with the work of reviving the 'rebellion movement' by rallying the militant forces in Madras City. 'Violence' has not been completely eliminated from this party programme.¹¹²

110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*

112. *Ibid.*

She organized the Madras Branch of the Congress Socialist Party and had illegal and highly prejudicial literature published in the name of this organization both in English and Tamil, with the assistance of two student workers and members of the banned N.S.O., Umasankar N. Phadnis of Bangalore and R.Ramakrishnan of Ipoh, Malay states (now staying in India). So far two printed issues of the English Pamphlet viz. (1) "The Congress Socialist"- official organ of the "Congress Socialist Party", Madras Branch, Vol.I, Issue No. 3 for March 1944, and (2) "Rebel India", official organ of the central 'Directorate, Southern Zone (Congress Socialist Party), National Week Number purport to have been edited by " Sivaprakash Narain at the Azad Press, Nehru Square, Gandhinagar", which are non-existent. The two printed Tamil Pamphlets are entitled (1) "Indian Revolution", First issue National Week Number for April 1944, and (2) "Indian Revolution", Vol.I No.I for May 1944. The former purports to have been printed by the members of the Revolutionary Party on behalf of the Indian National Congress and the latter is said to be the official organ of the Tamilnadu Branch of the All India Congress Central Executive Committee. She was also importing from Bombay from time to time through her two lieutenants, Umashankar and Ramakrishnan highly prejudicial socialist party literature for secret circulation. This literature was published by the underground Socialist leaders Ram Manohar Lohia, S.M.Joshi, Jai Prakash Narain (Since arrested) advocating "rebellion" movement and underground activities bordering on treachery in order to paralyse the Government. In order to spread militant Nationalist

ideas among students, youths and labouring classes and to prepare them for a "revolutionary struggle" and also counteract the growing influence of the communists, she selected Umashankar and R.Rama Krishnan to work among the students youths and labourers in Madras City and S.R.Subrahmanyam, a tried labour leader of Pondichery to work among the Textile workers at Coimbatore. She explained her plans to these individuals from time to time and also financed them in their work. Umashankar and R.Ramakrishnan made contact with a number of students and labour workers in the city and started organizing study classes and distributed prejudicial literature imported from Bombay by Krishnabai Nimbkar.¹¹³

Umashankar also connected with underground Congress Socialist Party workers in Nagpur, Bangalore and other places, in connection with the underground Congress Socialist Party movement. On a surprise raid of the residence of Umashankar and Ramakrishnan in Purasawalkam several copies of illegal prejudicial literature published in the name of the Congress Socialist Party Madras Branch and the National Congress and also those published by the underground socialist leaders, and also several original documents in the hand writing of Krishnabai Nimbkar were recovered. The interrogation of these two individuals Umashankar and Ramakrishnan, after their arrest and the various documents in the hands of Krishnabai Nimbkar clearly establish the subversive activities of Krishnabai Nimbkar as mentioned above and that she is the brain and guide behind the underground Congress

113. *Ibid.*

Socialist Party Movement in this province. It is also strongly suspected that she has been misusing her radio which she recently purchased, in furtherance of her underground activities.

As Krishnabai Nimbkar is the organiser of the Congress Socialist Party, at reasonable organisation, and her activities are most prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order and therefore the prosecution of the war, she is too dangerous to be left at large.¹¹⁴

Women students also came out during this Quit India Movement to protest against the British imperialism. Students of the Queen Mary's College observed hartals and led processions shouting "Quit India" slogans all along the way until they were dispersed by the Police.¹¹⁵ On 23 February Lalitha Rao, Presidency College, Susheela, Lady Wellington College; Mahalakshmi Bharathi, Christian College (Tambaram); Shakunthala and Anusuya, Queen Mary's College, Maya Joseph, Madras University (Research Student) were also arrested. Further Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhashini were put in jail.¹¹⁶

In South Arcot, which also underwent similar agitations, Anjalai Ammal, popularly known as "Velu Nachiar", participated in Quit India Movement with as much effective and enthusiastic ardour as she did in all

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. Government of Madras, G.O.No.844-845, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 22.03.1943.

other earlier stages of freedom struggles. Her record of imprisonment is quite long which was eight months and fifteen days in 1943. Indeed, she made the air in Arcot sizzle with her daring revolutionary activities.¹¹⁷ Subsequently, the students of Annamalai University who had grouped them into an organisation on 15 August 1942, collected membership fees of four annas and used it for boycotting classes, organizing meeting and hartals and hoisting of National Flags. Women students also formed an integral part of the organization. The government closed the University from 10 September to 20 October 1942 due to the mounting rebellion action of the students.¹¹⁸ In another incident, Anjalai Ammal (M.L.A.) was arrested along with other women volunteers for holding a meeting on Triplicane Beach on 9 December in defiance of a Government order and was sentenced to four month simple imprisonment and also to pay a fine of rupees in default to undergo two weeks further imprisonment.¹¹⁹ She was of sufficient status to warrant placing "B" class. The remainder can be treated as "C" class prisoner. Angachiammal of South Arcot was also taken into prison.¹²⁰

117 Bharti Thakur, *op.cit.*, pp.166-168.

118. *The Hindu*, dated 13 and 14.08.1942.

119. *The Bombay Chronicle*, dated 10.10.1942 and 17.12.1942.

120. Government of Madras, G.O.No.269, Home Department, dated 29.01.1944;
G.O.No.326, Home Department, dated 04.02.1944.

In Coimbatore District, Savithri Ammal was participated in Quit India Movement. She was arrested and sentenced for two years under section 17(2) of Act XIV of Defence of India Rule and under section 120-B, I.P.C. in 1943. She was kept in Cuddalore Jail. S.N. Sundrammal was the daughter of Nachimuthu Goundan, the Ex-Village Headman of Veerapandi Village, Palladam Taluk, who was tolerably rich. Her mother has properties worth Rs.20,000. Her husband owned properties worth Rs.30,000. There was no property in the name of the convict. The Joint Magistrate, Pollachi, reports that she has some education. Though from a prosperous family there was nothing to indicate that she was accustomed a high style of life. When she was convicted in 1941 to rigorous imprisonment for three months under rule 38 (5) of the Defence of India Rules, She was placed in "C" class.¹²¹

K.P. Janaki wife of Guruswami Naidu was a native of Madura worth Rs.5000. She was an actress and has been a member of the Congress Socialist Party since 1937. A fluent speaker, she was once warned by the District Magistrate, Madura in 1939 for her Anti war speeches. She was convicted for marking objection speeches in Trichy on 7 September 1940 by the Sub Divisional Magistrate, Trichy and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one year. After her release she became more active and addressed many labour and Communist meetings. She was in close touch with underground

121. Government of Madras, G.O.No.5081, Home Department, dated 12.01.1943.

communists and helps them. From 14 March 1943 she entertained No.1 in her house, collected some of the mill workers using her influence and advised them to agitate for the payment of a cash bonus for two months and to strike work in the event of their request not being complied with by the management.¹²²

Subramaniam alias Subramania Sarma was a native of Tellichery in Malabar District. In 1937 he played an active part during the first All Kerala Student's Conference held at Calicut under the Presidency of Soumyendranath Tagore, a well known communist of Bengal with whom he became intimate. Sarma then became an ardent Socio- communist and spread his doctrines till he went down in April 1938. Since then he has been a full-time communist worker in Kerala, interfering in labour, peasants', youth and students' affairs with his education he became an organizer and made good use of E.M. Sankaran Namboodripad, leader of the Socialist – Communist Movement in Kerala and kept in close touch with Communist leaders all over India. In the beginning of 1940, he and A.K. Gopalan were responsible for holding communist study classes in Trichinopoly and Madura districts and assisted in the formation of the 'Red Army' and a communist cell at Golden Rock. He also attended the "Volunteer Training Camp" run in Tirupparankundram Station limits (Madura) in February and March 1940.¹²³

122. Government of Madras, G.O.No.933, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.03.1943.

123. *Ibid.*

He was ordered to be detained in Vellore Jail under 26 Defence of India Rules in G.O. No. 36 –S, Public Department, dated 24 June 1940 but evaded arrest and went underground. While underground, he assisted Kumaramangalam and other communists in running the Madras Polit Bureau which directed the activities of the District organizers and committees of the Communist Party in Tamilnadu by secret correspondence and couriers. He, Kumaramangalam and other communists were run to earth on 19 December 1940 near Sembiam. As a result of the Madras Communist Conspiracy Case, Sarma was convicted for two offences and sentenced to two years' and eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment the sentences to run consecutively.¹²⁴

He was released in the middle of 1942 on his under taking that he would not partake in activities detrimental to the efficient prosecution of the war and defence of British India. But after his release, nevertheless he resumed his activities and has frequently toured the Tamil Districts particularly Madura. With the help of communist K.P. Janaki of Madura and others he organized a number of communist cells particularly in the Madura Mills where the relations between the management and labour have been particularly cordial in recent years. He attended the 'leaders' training course held by the communist party in Bombay in December 1942.¹²⁵

124. Government of Madras, G.O.No.934, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 31.03.1943.

125. *Ibid.*

On 14 March 1943 he went to Madura and stayed with local communist leader K.P. Janaki and was arrested while inciting the labourers to agitate against a decision of the management of the mills, which had been taken in full co-operation with the official labour union. K.P. Janaki has landed properties worth about Rs.5000/-. She has studied upto II Form. She has been accustomed to more than average mode living. She may be placed in class II.¹²⁶

K. P. Janaki, a person who had been working in the past with the communists was in the General Hospital, Madras, and that the medical opinion felt that she would improve in health by a further period of incarceration. She was very poor and without money and influence. She did not do any harm at all if she would set free. Therefore the Government of Madras urged that the matter of women prisoners and detenus considered.¹²⁷

The five detenus referred to by Krishnamachari are Kuttimalu Amma of Malabar, Kamala Devi Chatopadyaya of Bombay, Ammu Swaminathan, Manjubhashini Subramanian and K.P.Janaki of Madura. Ammu Swaminathan and Manjubhashini are respectively in class B and class C of the C.I.D. Classification and an offer of release on undertaking and sureties has already been made to them. K. P. Janaki was in class c and she will

126. *Ibid.*

127. Government of Madras, G.O.No.2884, Public (Confidential) Department, dated 05.10.1943.

also be released on an undertaking and sureties. She was ill in the General Hospital, Madras from 8 July 1943. The health reports received from the Physician treating her on pp.8,12,14 and 18 CF.¹²⁸

The Quit India Movement, which started on August 1942, went on a fiery course for nearly one year. The violence that happened during the movement clearly showed the British government that it was getting caught in dangerous situation. Though this popular movement contradicted to the methods of Gandhiji, Gandhiji was venerated by many Indians as their ultimate leader. The upsurge subsided steadily not only due to the brutal oppression of the British forces but also that mercy people felt the futility of violent action. After the release of Gandhiji on 6 May 1944, the Quit India Movement was cancelled. Though the movement of 1942 failed to achieve its expected objective, it certainly had a tremendous impact because of the popular outrage that it revealed. It was a demonstration of the unchanging desire of the people to get national freedom even when the leaders of the struggle were forced to relinquish the task of organization. One of the salient features of this movement was not only the participation of women but also the assumption of the women in the movement leadership. They could prove themselves that they were capable of astounding efforts and positive directions.¹²⁹

128. *Ibid.*

129. G.Venkatesen, *History of Freedom Struggle in India (Tamil)*, Madurai, 1993, pp.274-281.

The Indian National Army

The so-called Indian National Army, known in General Head Quarters (GHQ) as the Japanese Indian Force (JIF), was a product of the British military disaster in the East and India's aspiration for independence.¹³⁰ Subhas Chandra Bose was its creator. He was a Bengali who had topped the list in the civil service entrance examination but later left the service to become a politician.¹³¹ Bose was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1938 but, as he believed in the use of brute force to gain independence for India, he fell out with the more conservative congressmen, including Gandhiji.¹³²

In December 1940, he stowed away in a Japanese ship from Hoogly to Yokohama and then found his way to Germany. There he tried to raise a Legion of 2000 men from Indian prisoners wars in German hands, but his efforts were poor and he did not find much sympathy or encouragement in Germany or Italy, as he and his troops refused to swear allegiance to Hitler or Mussolini. He wanted those countries to declare that India would be given Independence after the war, which they refused.¹³³

130. Shahid Hamid, *Disastrous Twilight*, Great Britain, 1986, p.15.

131. N.E. Ramalingam., *Indiya Viduthalai Sirppikal*, Adampakkam, Chennai, 1996, p. 211.

132. Dhangauri L. Shah and L. P. Shah., *Freedom of India 1857 Movement and 1919-1947 Movement*, Pune, (nd.), P.263.

133. Shahid Hamid, *op.cit.*, p.15.

In 1942 Rommel declined the services of the Legion in Western Desert. In 1943 it was moved to Holland where the men mutinied and were brought under control with difficulty. The following year it was sent to Bordeaux in France where it committed many atrocities. The Italian raised another unit in November, 1944 from the Indian Polls captured in North Africa and ordered it to Libya but it refused to go.¹³⁴

Bose married an Austrian woman had a child, but they were later divorced. Meanwhile all Bose's political and military hopes in Europe were shattered and he was sent by the Germans in a submarine to South-East Asia.¹³⁵

At the time Bose left Japan for Germany, Raj Behari Basu, a known terrorist, found his way to Japan and there married the daughter of Mitsuru Toyama, the head of the Black Dragon Society. Basu became an adviser on Indian affairs. Singapore fell in February, 1942, and some 60,000 Indian troops became Pows. The Indian other ranks were separated from their British Officers and there was nobody to guide them. The Japanese had no difficulty in raising the Indian National Army of 25,000 men under Captain Mohan Singh. These who resisted were tortured. The Indian officers, junior Commissioned Officers and other ranks were made to use a common mass.¹³⁶

134. *Ibid.*

135. *Ibid.*

136. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, Tiruvandrum , India, 1986, pp.763-764.

In 1942 Basu and Mohan Singh, during a visit to Tokyo, tried to persuade the Japanese to support the independence movement in India, which they at first refused to do. However, at a conference in Bangkok in 1942 Bose, then in Germany, was elected as Head of the Provincial Government of India and the Japanese gave way.¹³⁷

The men of the Indian National Army were given menial jobs and deployed to guard the concentration camps, construct airfields and act as camp followers to the Japanese Army. Mohan Singh protested and fell out with the Japanese, who arrested him and disbanded the Indian National Army. Many of his men were put in Pow camps.¹³⁸

When the patriotic call of Bose inspired the imagination of Young Indians, Lakshmi Swaminathan Sehgal, could not keep herself aloof from it. After passing MBBS, she had spent two years in Madras before moving to Singapore for medical practice in 1940. As she was in the process of setting up the medical practice at Singapore, it was increasingly felt that war would spread to Far-Eastern Asia also. When a civil defence force was organized, she had to join its medical wing. After the two war ships, the *repulse* and the *Prince of Walls* were sunk, Penang fell to Japan. The evacuation of white population from Singapore began and the natives

137. *Ibid.*

138. Shahid Hamid, *op.cit.*, p.16.

were left at the mercy of the Japanese.¹³⁹ When the British and Australian Pow were separated from Indian after 17 February 1942, the command of Indian troops was handed over to Maj Fujiwara who, in turn handed them over to captain Mohan Singh. After disbandment of the Indian National Army formed by Captain Mohan Singh.¹⁴⁰ When Bose first arrived at Singapore on July 1943, Lakshmi Swaminathan was one of the few women who had received him at airport. When Bose gave a call of 'total mobilization' of all the manpower and resources of Indians in South-East Asia, he exhorted the women-folks-"the Army of liberation would be incomplete unless women also came forward and volunteered to join the fighting ranks." It was his desire to raise a women's regiment called the Rani of Jhansi Regiment after the valint Rani Lakshmi Bai who died fighting the British in 1857. "For me", She wrote, "this was the highlight of his speech. For most of the others that could never be done".¹⁴¹

With the help of the leader of Indian Independence League (IIL), Yellappa, She planned a women's rally in which a guard of honour was to present to Bose on behalf of the women. A massive hunt began to enlist the support of women who were to be trained with a heavy 303 rifles of

139. Brig. R.P. Singh, *Rediscovering Bose and Indian National Army*, New Delhi, 2002, p.170.

140. Manmohan Kaur, *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, New Delhi, 1968, pp.228-229.

141. Brig. R.P. Sing, *op.cit.*, pp.170-171.

Indian National Army during the war period. She was able to seek the support of only twenty women who were willing to be trained at Singapore. This was the beginning of the first organised move to seek the support of women-in-arms for the independence of India. It came "as a complete and pleasant surprise" to Bose when he was presented guard of honour before the meeting.¹⁴² He asked women to carry on with the glorious tradition of spirited Indian women. Next day, she was interviewed by Bose. He reposed great faith in Indian womanhood and felt that, given the opportunity, they were quite capable to play positive part in India's struggle for independence. Bose asked her whether she would be prepared to take up the command of the Rani of Jhansi regiment. He forewarned her of the danger that lay ahead in such assignments. Despite that, she gave unconditional support to take up the responsibility. She was so thrilled over the whole matter that she joined the proposed Rani of Jhansi Regiment next day on 14 July 1943. She visited the homes of twenty women who had participated in the guard of honour by only fifteen women eventually volunteered to join her.¹⁴³

In a bid to enlist maximum support of women, she visited Penang, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur where she got positive response. She selected some outstanding women who later became officers in the regiment. The two sisters Janaki and Papaty, came from Kuala Lumpur. The

142 *Ibid.*

143. *Ibid.*

Navratnan sisters, Poonamma and Rosamma hailed from Ipoh.¹⁴⁴ On return, she managed to accommodate five hundred women of the regiment she also started intensive training in jungle warfare. When the provincial government was to be formed on 21 October 1943, Bose asked her willingness to join the cabinet as minister in charge of women's affairs. She replied in affirmative as "this was an honour not only for me but for all Indian women and I readily agreed". The solemn ceremony of the Provincial government was held at the Cathay Cinema in Singapore on 21 October 1943.¹⁴⁵

In March, 1943, the Women's Section of the Indian Independence League was inaugurated. Mrs. M.K. Chidambaram was elected as the Chairman of the Indian Independence League elected Chairman and Saraswathy as Secretary of the Women's Section of Indian Independence League, Singapore. Lakshmi Swaminathan was appointed Secretary at the Headquarters. These ladies toured the various parts of Malaya, Thailand and Burma to open branches and to enlist volunteers. Ultimately all branches of the Indian Independence League started the Women's Section. The work of the women for the major part was of collecting funds and providing amenities to the soldiers. But with the

144. Naidu, R. Lakshmi Devi. Lt. Miss., *The Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army*, Sriperrumbudur, 1998.

145. Brig. R.P. Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 170-171.

arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose there came a revolutionary spirit in the organization.¹⁴⁶

It was on 9 July, 1943, that Subhas Chandra Bose addressed a meeting and asked for men and women volunteers. He felt that women must be ready to share the burden of freedom's battle. This caught the imagination of the Indian womenfolk and a beginning to start a Women's Regiment was made, which later popularly came to be known as the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.¹⁴⁷

A women's camp was started on 23 October 1943, in Singapore which was followed by many more in Malaya and Burma. They were given training in nursing, social service and general welfare work. The military part of the training consisted of drill, weapon, training, tactics, map reading and general subjects. They were trained to use rifles, bayonets, sub-machine guns, machine guns, revolvers, grenades, swords and daggers.¹⁴⁸

The women wore the soldiers' uniforms and had to observe strict military discipline. They were taken out on route marches and had to cover between six and forty miles at times. Their day began with the singing of the

146. Manmohan Kaur, *op.cit.*, p.229.

147. Nawaz B.Mody, *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Mumbai, 2009, p.109.

148. Manmohan Kaur, *op.cit.*, pp.229-231.

National Anthem and common prayers for the liberation of Hindustan. They would day after day, re-affirm their pledge too- "I shall fulfil our objective in the face of all difficulties, I shall sacrifice myself, my body, soul and properties, all for the fulfilment of my pledge I promise I shall not do any such thing which may besmear the name of Hindustan and Netaji. I shall obey all the orders of superiors with heart and soul. I shall keep in good condition all the weapons Netaji has given".¹⁴⁹

The women of Rani of Jhansi Regiment were keen to go on active service. So they sent a representation to Subhas Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army. It was made mention in the representation that, "It is you, who taught us that there is no distinction between men and women. It is you who gave us training, fit for menfolk, have inspired us with courage and moral stamping required for actual warfare. We have received complete training. In these circumstances why should we not be sent to the battlefield without delay"? This was signed with the blood drawn from the fingers of the signatories.¹⁵⁰

The first bath was sent to Maymo (Burma) in the beginning of 1945. The members of Rani of Jhansi Regiment could not take part in actual fighting as the Indian National Army was retreating at that time. Before

149. *Ibid.*

150. *Ibid.*

Netaji left for Malaya he issued orders that the regiment be disbanded and members sent to their homes.¹⁵¹

Lakshmi Swaminathan was an important woman of the Indian National Army.¹⁵² She was a civilian doctor in Singapore and is the daughter of Ammu Swaminathan of Madras who took prominent part in the various movements launched by the Congress.¹⁵³ She was in Singapore at the time when the call of the Netaji came. She responded to this call with wholehearted enthusiasm. She was the Commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment and also the Minister of Social Welfare and Medicine in the Azad Hind Cabinet.¹⁵⁴

As the commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Lakshmi was designated as Lieutenant Colonel. When the Indian National Army collapsed she did not surrender to the British. She was captured and later placed under arrest. Her regiment was disbanded in 1945 and most of the girls were sent away to Singapore from Rangoon. She was arrested in 1945, and kept under house arrest. Lakshmi Swaminathan was sent to Rangoon Jail. There was a great deal of agitation for her release and the government

151. *Ibid.*

152. Suruchi Thapar - Bjorkert, *op.cit.*, p.128.

153. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3-A, Under Secretary Safe File, dated 06.02.1946.

154. Manmohan Kaur, *op.cit.*, pp.229-231.

had to yield and released her on the condition that she would not make any public speech.¹⁵⁵ Lakshmi was released the next year. She came to India and married Captain Sehla of the Indian National Army.¹⁵⁶

Lakshmi, however, defied the order and spoke on the anniversary day, 21 October 1945, of the Azad Hind Fauj and said the object for which the Azad Hind Fauj was formed had still to be achieved. She also organized a protest meeting against the Indian National Army trials at Delhi. Her activities did not please the authorities and she was served with a notice and asked to go to Kalawe. On 14 November a second notice was served on her and the next morning she was flown to Meikilita from where she was taken to Kalawe in a military car.¹⁵⁷

There were few women sepoys from Madras in the Indian National Army. They were Chinnammal, Subaranjitham, Rukmani, Vellayammal alias Malai Ammal of Vyasarpady, Radhambal of Red Hills, Pattammal of Rayapuram and Jeyalakshmi Ammal of Korukkupet. From Madurai District, Angammal. They served in Indian National Army as a sepoy with Regimental No. 8240 in Rani of Jhansi Regiment. And another one Saraswathi Ammal also served in Indian National Army as a sepoy.¹⁵⁸

155. *Ibid.*

156. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3-A, Under Secretary Safe File, dated 06.02.1946.

157. Manmohan Kaur, *op. cit.*, p.231.

158. Government of Tamilnadu, *Who's Who Freedom Fighters (Tamilnadu)*, Vol.III, Madras, 1973.

In Thanjavur District, Thanapackiam was served in Indian National Army as a Nursing sepoy in Rani of Jhansi Regiment with Regiment No. 84370. Lakshmi Devi daughter of ShriNaidu served in Indian National Army as Lieutenant in Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Meenakshi served in Indian National Army as a sepoy in fifth Guerilla Regiment.¹⁵⁹

The prominent women sepoy in the Ramanathapuram District were Chinnammal and Kamakshi Ammal of Manamadurai Taluk. Both of them served in Indian National Army as a Chairman for the women section, Indian Independence League Hanthawaddy East, Burma and Indian Independence League a body working side by side with the Indian National Army. Mangammal, Vijayam, Maragatham, Muthammal, Dhanuskodi Ammal, Kalimuthammal Nagammal, Puranam, Muthulakshmi Ammal, both of them served in Indian National Army as a sepoy in Rani of Jhansi Regiment.¹⁶⁰

Moreover, Govindammal of Salem District, Palaniyayee Ammal of Trichirapalli District, Sengamalai Ammal of Tirunelveli District, Pattammal of South Arcot District both of them were in the Indian National Army as sepoy in Rani of Jhansi Regiment.¹⁶¹

On the 7 may 1945, the devastating war in Europe came to an end, with the surrender of Germany at Rheims. But the war against Japan continued. So the main task of the Government was to end the Japanese

159. *Ibid.*

160. *Ibid.*

161. *Ibid.*

War and to carry on the British Indian Administration under the existing constitution until a new permanent constitution was agreed upon. On 14 June 1945 Viceroy Wavell invited the leaders of the political parties to join his new Executive Council, which would consist entirely of Indians to save the viceroy and the Commander-in-chief. To be more precise, it would be a completely Indianised council except for the portfolio of defence.¹⁶² The viceroy invited twenty one members in all, from the congress, the Sikhs and the Europeans to Simla talks. He also announced if there was agreement on a new Executive council, the Provincial Ministers which resigned in 1939 would resume office and there would be coalition Ministers. In pursuance of this package known as the "Wavell plan", the Members of the Congress Working Committee jailed during the Quit India Movement were freed from detention after thirty four months. But the Simla talks failed thanks mainly to the "Intransigence" of the Muslim League. Wavell announced that the new council would not be formed.¹⁶³

The wonder of wonders took place in July 1945 when Britain went to the polls. Churchill the "World Statesman" and "Cherubic War Leader" who had years of glory behind him and who was in everybody's mind in 1945 was defeated. The Labour party won the elections and Clement

162. Saroja Sundararajan, *op.cit.*, pp. 618-619.

163. *Ibid.*

Attlee assumed office as Premier. Amery who was one of the ministers defeated at the polls was succeeded by Pethic Lawrence as Secretary of State for India.¹⁶⁴ The triumph of the Labour Party was greatly welcome in congress circles. Yet the jubilation over it had hardly subsided, when the whole country received another big blow: the horrifying news of the explosion of atom bombs by the U.S. Air Force over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945.¹⁶⁵

Fortunately for humanity, Japan surrendered on 12 August 1945 without waiting for a third atom bomb. This was a welcome turn in the war. The news of Japan's surrender was officially announced by the British Broad - Coasting Corporation only on the morning of 15 August. The Hindu was the only paper in the whole of India to carry the glad tidings on that very day. Again, this paper for the first time sent a war correspondent to Rangoon after it was recaptured from the Japanese to report in detail the ravages of the war in the Burmese capital. The report of correspondent T.G. Narayanan unveiled the mystery surrounding the Indian National Army formed by Subhas Chandra Bose from among the Indian Prisoners of War.¹⁶⁶ Finally, on the 18 August, on his way to Tokyo, he was killed in an airplane crash.¹⁶⁷

164. *Ibid.*

165. *Ibid.*

166. *Ibid.*

167. Shahid Hamid, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

The Indian National Army appeared to have claimed among other things that it was completely trained and posted by Indians. Its victories were few and those who surrendered were looking tired with little enthusiasm to fight. It looked "as if the Indian National Army were dragooned to fight and the Japanese who were supposed to cooperate with them had apparently left them short of food and ammunition. Any enthusiasm the Indian National Army had for co-operating with the Japanese Army and hope of success they harboured would seem to have disappeared since the retreat from Imphal and since then the story of the Indian National Army had been one of the surrender writes to the reporter.¹⁶⁸

An Indian National Army Relief Committee (INARC) organized by the Tamilnadu Congress Committee has opened an office at Broadway, where released Indian National Army men are being accommodated.¹⁶⁹ On 7 December 1945 about thirty released Indian National Army men marched in twos from Broadway to Sivagnanam Park, Peddunaickenpet, where a Congress meeting was held. They wore Khadi Military uniform without unit letters or badges but had small tri-coloured congress flags pinned to their right arms. Some of them had round badges on their breasts with the letters

168. *A Hundred Years of the Hindu*, p. 604.

169. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3-A, Under Secretary Safe File, dated 06.02.1942.

Indian National Army written in green on a white background. A member of the party acted as leader.¹⁷⁰

For the first time in the city of Madras the discharged Indian National Army men, who had a foretaste of real freedom, hoisted the Indian National Flag and saluted it in the military fashion. About fifty five in number, they stood in rows before the flag mart and their Leader Appu Nair hoisted the National Flag. After saluting in military style four people from the rows came in front and sang the National song. They shouted slogans of Jai Hind, "Delhi Chalo" and "Inquilab Zindabad". Then they offered their prosperity of the Azad Hind Fauj by silently bowing their head for a few minutes. This took place at the flag hoisting ceremony at a public meeting organised by the Madras Second Circle Congress Committee at Peddunaickenpet last evening. G.Rajamannar Chetty presided. These Indian National Army men have been discharged from a camp near Calcutta and they are on their way home.¹⁷¹

Then a resolution urging the Government to drop the trials of the Indian National Army and to release the rest of them in prison immediately was passed. Ammu Swaminathan said that she had the same feeling of seeing her own daughter when she had not seen for the past three years in their presence.¹⁷²

170. *Ibid.*

171. Government of Madras, G.O.No.3609, Public (General) Department, dated 08.12.1945.

172. *Ibid.*

The ship "Nea Hellas" from Singapore arrived in Madras harbour in the morning of 21 March 1946. It carried 336 civilian Indian National Army and troops. The Indian National Army men were disembarked first and taken in lorries to the Welfare Camp, Mylapore. After they arrived in the camp, Maclaughlin's staff started taking the names and addresses of the men, with a view to arrange for their journey home.¹⁷³

When the particulars of about fifteen men were taken, the "Adjutant" of the unit Bhisham Singh, ordered the men not to give any information. Then the commandant of the unit, Lieutenant Chatter Singh, was consulted by McLaughlin. He stated that until he contacted the local Congress Committee, or the Indian National Army Relief Committee, his men would not give any particulars to the authorities. Chatter Singh was consequently taken to the Indian National Army Relief Committee Office. He reported their arrival in Madras to G. Raja mannar, Secretary of the Indian National Army Relief Committee. He advised that on their arrival at their respective native places they might report to the local Congress Committee for any help. He furnished Chatter Singh with the addresses of the Relief Committees at Madras, Calcutta and Delhi.¹⁷⁴

173. Government of Madras, G.O.No.17-Vol. II, Under Secretary Safe File, dated 05.06. 1946.

174. *Ibid.*

During their stay in the camp the Indian National Army men assembled in the morning and evening for roll call and prayers and in the nights two men were posted by Bhisham Singh as sentries -one at the compound gate and the other at the entrance of the building.¹⁷⁵

On 22 March 1946 morning Mrs. Sastry, the Welfare Officer, brought in her car Lieutenant Colonel Lakshmi, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi and G.Rajamannar, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, of the Indian National Army Relief Committee. Maclaughlin immediately went into conference with them and the leaders of the Indian National Army men in camps, and en-route to their villages. But Maclaughlin stoutly refuted the charges. Then Lieutenant Colonel Lakshmi addressed the charges. Then lieutenant colonel Lakshmi addressed the Indian National Army men who were in the meanwhile, made to fall in. She said that the achievements and fame of the Azad Hind Fauj, were well-known to the whole world, that it was unfortunate that they could not complete the task of liberating India, and that they should not fail to remember the pledge they had all given to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. She asked them "not to be led away by reactionary propaganda and communal politics, and added that in their future fight for freedom the use of violence has to necessarily give place to non- violence".¹⁷⁶

On 3 April, 1946, five hundred and thirty one civilian of Indian National Army personnel arrived at Madras Port by the S.S. "Kosciuszko".

175. *Ibid.*

176. *Ibid.*

They were transported then to the Perambur Camp. The men were very cooperative. Adithan, the Secretary of the local Indian National Army Relief Committee and Rukmini Lakshmipathi, the Treasurer were present at that time.¹⁷⁷

On 18 Monday the men had become more and more truculent. They were troublesome during meal times giving the food away to outsiders and demanding double rations. They had also struck one of the Camp Watchmen and knocked one of his teeth out.¹⁷⁸

Maclaughlin went down to the camp and spoke to their leaders. They demanded Rs.50/- Relief Money plus their train-fare, but later agreed to accept any amount the Government would be pleased to sanction. Therefore, he recommended to the Chief Secretary that the Government of Madras in anticipation of the Government of India sanction relief measures. It was decided that since the situation demanded it, Rs.40/- be paid to each man inclusive of railway fare.¹⁷⁹

The women in freedom struggle of India excelled as speakers, marchers, campaigners and tireless volunteers. They actively participated in the processions and rallies conducted by the political parties. They always fought for Hindu- Muslim unity. The contribution in freedom struggle of India is truly remarkable and is difficult to define in words.

177. *Ibid.*

178. *Ibid.*

179. *Ibid.*