CHAPTER - II

ROLE OF BHAKTAVATSALAM IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

At the beginning of the 18th century the Mughal structure started crumbling down and the various European trading companies started intervening in the political affairs of the native states. The Portuguese were the first to establish their settlement in India at Goa. But they were interested in religion and conversion only. The Dutch who came after them were bitter rivals to Portuguese. The Dutch became unpopular due to slave trade. The political fortunes of the French fell due to their war with Indian rulers and with other Europeans. Ultimately the English East India Company succeeded in establishing their control over the local rulers at different parts of the country. The internal conflicts among the local rulers helped the British to play one power against the other and get political and commercial concessions from them. The country was fertile with all natural resources but the people remained poor. The British turned their attention to their elevation in commerce and politics.

During the British rule " The Madras Presidency was one of the most extensive of all the British territories in India. It was bigger than Scotland. The population was ten times more and people were speaking seven
languages”¹ - observed Lady Pentland, whose husband was the Governor of Madras presidency from 1912 - 1918. The Presidency extended from the tip of Indian Peninsula in the south, half way up to east coast of Bengal, touching Bombay on north and bordering Hyderabad.

After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the administration of India passed from the East India Company to the British crown according to Government of India Act 1858.²

Though the British established their supremacy after the suppression of Sepoy Mutiny, the need for a national organization was felt by many national minded leaders. Allan Octavian Hume, a well known liberal and a retired British Civil Servant took the initiative of creating a national organisation which could serve as a bridge connecting the Indian people with the British Government. Accordingly seventy two delegates consisting of lawyers, teachers, editors met at Bombay in March 1885.³ They decided to form a National Organisation. W.C.Bonnerjee, the standing counsel to Governor in Calcutta was elected as President. It was called the “Indian National Union”, which later came to be known as the "Indian National Congress".

Eugene F. Ischick, Political and social conflicts in South India -The non Brahmin movement and Tamil Separatism 1916 –1929, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1969, p.11
Annie Besant and her influence on Bhaktavatsalam

Bhaktavatsalam entered politics at a time when Tilak was saying, "Swaraj is my birthright" and Annie Besant assumed a remarkable role in the Indian politics. Annie Besant was elected as President of the Theosophical Society in 1907. At first she was preoccupied with the society and theosophical matters only but later on she started giving lectures on social reforms, women's education etc. She entered in publishing field when she bought the 'Madras Standard' English daily. This was the oldest daily founded in Madras in 1841. She renamed it as 'New India' to suit her needs. It was fearless, independent and sober. The first issue of New India was released on 14th July 1914. She established another weekly 'Common Weal'. She preached about home rule, boycott of foreign goods, labour welfare and the need for responsible Government through series of articles published in New India.

She wanted to popularise the idea of self-Government. She started her "Home Rule" movement in the wake of First World War. She sought the support of Indian National Congress at its meeting at Bombay in 1915. She persuaded C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer and Rangaswamy Iyengar to give lectures on constitutional topics. This attracted the attention of college

Eugene F. Irschick, *op.cit.*, p.34
students. Bhaktavatsalam who was a student at that time, used to attend her meetings and he also wrote articles in New India and Common Weal.⁶

Anne Besant once wrote, "Choose educated man of high character, unsullied honour, avoid flatterers, listen first; then talk, acquire knowledge, then theorise,"⁷ "Probably this was the underlying idea of Bhaktavatsalam's political career.

She said that swaraj was the remedy for India's poverty and unemployment. So she trained people in parliamentary practice. Thus Bhavatsalam's early influence in politics was Annie Besant.

The First World War broke out in 1914. Britain involved India in the war. Revenue of the Government and public resources were diverted to the unproductive war expenses. The British passed the Defence of India Act to curb terrorist activities. They also sought the co-operation of India in their war efforts. They promised Home rule after the war. At this time Gokhale died and his death was a great loss to Indian politics. In the same year i.e. 1915 Gandhi returned from South Africa.

Justice Party - 1916

During 1916, some of the Non-Brahmin leaders in the Congress Party felt that the Brahmins were occupying all-important positions in Government and that they were dominating in all fields. In an endeavor to fight the predominance of the Brahmins, 30 Non-Brahmin leaders including Dr.T.Madhavan Nair and P. Thyagaraya Chetty met at Victoria Public Hall on November 20, 1916 and founded a new organization called "South Indian Liberal Federation". Later this organization became popular under the name 'Justice Party'. They started News Papers-'Justice' in English, 'Dravidian' in Tamil and 'Andhra Prakasika' in Telugu. They attacked the Home rule movement and Congress party with an appeal to all Non-Brahmin communities to fight the predominance of Brahmin leaders, and their representation in services. The big landlords and other influential persons supported this movement.

At that time Britain made the famous announcement which proposed increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration. The announcement acknowledged the splendid services rendered by the Indian Soldiers in the First World War. Lord Montague came to India in 1917 to ascertain the public opinion. Some other moderate Non-Brahmin leaders of Congress Party wanted an organization that would voice Non-Brahmin opinion within the Congress but would oppose the

Eugene F.Irschick, op.cit., p.47
Justice Party. These leaders convened a meeting headed by Kesavapillai and decided to meet Lord Montague and prefer an appeal for Non-Brahmin representation. Later they formed themselves in to an association known as the "Madras Presidency Association". This Association countered the activities of Justice Party. It was neither opposed to Brahmins nor anti national. Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle Muthuranga Mudaliar supported the association. This association consisted of well - educated middle class Non-Brahmins. It had two News Papers – 'Indian patriot' and 'Desabhattan'.

Non-Brahmins remained united in communal representation but divided on Home Rule.

Chengalput District Congress Convention - 1918

It was at that time - during 1918 - Chengalput District Congress Convention was held at Kancheepuram. Bhaktavatsalam was a student at that time. He participated in the convention as an observer. This convention was presided over by Sarojini Naidu. It was discussed in that convention whether India was to help the British in their war efforts or not. Annie Besant was in favour of supporting the British. But Rajaji, Satyamurthy and Kasturiranga Iyengar opposed any co-operation with the

9 Eugene F.Irschick, *op.cit.*, p.67
British. Bhaktavatsalam met Rajaji at this conference and was inspired by his oratorical abilities. The Congress Party resolved to extend support to Britain in its war efforts expecting some recognition after the war.

**Rowlatt Act and Jalian Walabagh Massacre - 1919**

With the Allied force's victory, the British became more repressive. Fearing any secret movement to overthrow the British rule, the Rowlatt Act was passed in early 1919. The Act provided the executive with wide and sweeping powers to arrest and question political rebels. As a result widespread agitation throughout the country followed. Gandhi gave a call for Satyagraha on April 6, 1919 as a mark of protest. In Madras there was a public meeting at Tilak Ghat after a procession. Bhaktavatsalam participated in a hunger strike at Mylapore in the morning and joined the procession in the evening.

The climax of the agitation was the Jalian Wallabagh tragedy at Amritsar on April 13, 1919 where hundreds of innocents were killed and thousands were injured while attending a prohibited meeting. Satyapal and Saifudeen Kitchlew were prohibited from speaking in that public meeting.

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12 Ibid., p.9
15 M.Bhaktavatsalam, *Enathu Ninaivugal*, op.cit., p.59
and they were deported from Amritsar. Gandhi was prohibited from entering into Punjab. As the meeting was proceeding General Dyer entered the place and with out any provocation, he opened fire to disperse the crowd. Troops under General Dyer fired 1600 rounds of ammunition in to the unarmed crowd which had no means of exit. Many were injured and killed as a result of panic and stampede.\textsuperscript{17} The injured were lying with out any medical help for two days. The tragedy created a profound and intense feeling against the British. Martial law was declared at Amritsar. Hunter Committee was appointed to probe the incident, which absolved General Dyer of all the charges against him.\textsuperscript{18}

A meeting was held at Madras on 2nd May 1919 under the Madras Provincial Congress to condemn the acts of repression of Punjab.\textsuperscript{19}

**The Government of India Act, 1919**

Montague before publishing his report visited India to review the political situation. He met many leaders and politicians. He wanted the reforms to be "epoch making and the key stone of future India"\textsuperscript{20} The report published on 2nd July 1918 suggested increased participation of Indians in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Verney Lovett, *op.cit.*, p.263
\item *Fortnightly Report*, Revenue (Special) (war) Department, Strictly confidential, D.O. from A.V.G. Campbell to the Secretary to the Government of India, May 19, 1919, TNA, Chennai.
\item Eugene F. Irschick, *op.cit.*, p.59
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the administration, diarchy at provinces and communal representation for Muslims and Sikhs. The British in support of the communal representation said that any representative Government should have communal representation also.

The Government of India Act 1919 based on the Montague report laid down the British Government's policy towards India. It suggested a Central Legislature at Delhi and Diarchy in Provincial Governments. The Government of India directly administered certain subjects and they were called Central Subjects. Subjects in which the interests of Provinces dominated were called Provincial Subjects. Under this, the Governor in Council governed the reserved subjects like revenue, finance, law and order. The Governor with the help of Ministers governed the transferred subjects, which are subjects of local knowledge. The reforms were accepted by the Justice Party but rejected by the Congress leaders saying that it failed to meet their demands even half way.21

**Non Co-operation Movement - 1920**

Indian National Congress met at Amritsar in December 1919 presided by Motialal Nehru.22 At this conference they demanded replacement of Dyer. Gandhi announced his Non - Cooperation movement

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22 Charachand, *op cit*; p.19
on July 1920. Non-Cooperation was new to India. Gandhi in South Africa practiced it for fighting the battle of Indian settlers who were denied citizenship rights.\textsuperscript{23} Tilak promised his support. But before the launch of the programme on August 1, 1920 Tilak expired on July 31, 1920 itself.\textsuperscript{24} Gandhi along with Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali toured the entire country to mobilize support for Non-Cooperation from people.

Gandhi delivered a number of speeches at Madras City and districts. On August 12, 1920, Gandhi made a long speech on Non-Cooperation at Madras Beach, which was attended by two lakhs people.\textsuperscript{25} Bhaktavatsalam was a law student at that time. Gandhi gave a call to students at a meeting held at Law College. He spoke on boycott of foreign goods and titles and on national education and strikes. It resulted in hartals, processions and boycott of schools, colleges.

A meeting of the Provincial Congress committee was held on August 15, 1920 presided over by Kasturiranga Iyengar to discuss about non-cooperation. Though the moderates opposed the movement, finally it was accepted.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} R.Parthasarathy, \textit{op.cit.}, p.264
\textsuperscript{24} Tarachand., \textit{op.cit.}, p.20
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Fort Nightly Report (Public Department) Strictly Confidential}, Government of Madras, D.O. letter from R.A. Graham, ICS to the Secretary Home Department, Government Of India, August 19, 1920, No. 3108-1.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Fort Nightly Report (Public Department) Strictly Confidential}, September 2,1920 No 3341-1
In 1920 Bhaktavatsalam left his legal profession impressed by Gandhi's speech and threw himself into the freedom movement fully.

The Non-Cooperation Movement created many problems for the Government. Non co-operators deliberately challenged the authorities and defied orders. There was general lawlessness in the country. It was a programme of action drawn by Gandhi with a whole nation united to embarrass the Government and to win Home Rule.  

**Constructive Programmes of Non-Cooperation Movement**

A special session of the Congress was summoned at Calcutta on September 4, 1920 to obtain approval and ratification for the Non Co-operation Movement. The Calcutta session on September 9, 1920 fully supported the movement. Schools, colleges and courts were boycotted. Titles were renounced British goods and official functions were boycotted. The Nagpur session suggested constructive programmes like opening of national educational institutions, setting up of panchayats, spreading communal harmony, use of charka, boycott of liquor shops, removal of untouchability and promotion of women’s welfare. Hence District Congress committees were formed all over the country to implement the programmes. Bhaktavatsalam was elected as a member of Chengalput and

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27 Alferd Nandy, *Non Cooperation*, *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 1920, p.1

Madras Zilla Congress committee.\textsuperscript{29} He organized boycott of liquor shops
being the secretary of the Prohibition committee.\textsuperscript{30} He was also associated
with the National Education Movement organized by the Congress. Later in
the year 1933-1934, when Harijan Seva Sangh was formed,
Bhaktavatsalam was the Vice President of the first committee with
Dr.P.T.Rajan as President. The Non-Cooperation Movement was
suspended due to the unfortunate event of setting fire to a police station at
Chauri Chaura on February 5, 1922.\textsuperscript{31}

**Mopla Rebellion - 1921**

Moplas were descendants of Arabs settled down in Kerala.\textsuperscript{32} They
were poor, economically backward and ignorant. When the Non -
Cooperation Movement was announced, they took swords, spears and
started guerrilla war against the administration and Hindu neighbours. They
perpetrated atrocities on Hindus and forcibly converted them to Islam.\textsuperscript{33}
This shocked the entire nation. Congress leaders were not even allowed to
enter Malabar even after the riots. The Government utilized the fanatic

\textsuperscript{29} S.Amarnath, *op.cit.*, p.20
\textsuperscript{30} Gazetters of India – Tamilnadu, *op.cit.*, p.148
\textsuperscript{31} *India at 50, Facts Figures and Analyses 1947- 1997*, Express publication
(Madurai) Ltd, 1997, p.29
\textsuperscript{32} Major A.W.H. Hornsby, J.G.R.D. Macneil, *Military operations connected
with Moplah Outrages in Malabar 1843 – 1885*, Madras Government Press,
Madras, 1885.
\textsuperscript{33} Tarachand, *History of freedom movement in India*, Ministry of Information
and Broad Casting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1972, reprinted 1992,
Muslims for their purpose and kept them away from the Congress leaders. But however the Congress leaders minimized the effects so that the Non-Cooperation Movement was not affected. In Madras state the Congress started engaging itself in the rehabilitation of victims. Bhaktavatsalam joined in this endeavor and gave away all his mill clothes to the victims. He started wearing ‘Khaddar’ from that day.

Congress Provincial Conference at Kancheepuram - 1925

In 1925 Congress Provincial Conference was held at Kancheepuram, presided over by Thiru-Vi-Kalyanasundara Mudaliar. At this conference E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker moved a resolution for equal employment and opportunities to the depressed class. He also sought the Congress to stop its aids to a national school run by V.V.Subramania Iyer at Cheranmadevi. He said that the school followed communal discrimination. Food was served separately for Brahmin and Non Brahmin inmates of the school. But his resolutions were defeated. As a protest E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker left the Congress and founded the Self Respect Movement. Bhaktavatsalam was very much worried at the new turn of events. It pained him a lot to realize that caste enmities were rekindled. The exit of EVR and his followers did not affect or cripple the Congress. Bhaktavatslam wrote a letter to the

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34 A.C. Guha, "India's Struggle a Quarter Of a century 1921 – 1946, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1982, p.35
35 M.Bhaktavatsalam, Enathu Ninaivugal, op.cit., p.4
36 Gazetters of India, op cit., p.145
Hindu "Much greater men have left the Congress and yet the Congress is now stronger than it has been. His letter was published in The Hindu, 21 April 1925. This reveals his faith in the organization rather than in individuals.

**Indian National Congress Session - 1927**

In 1927, the Indian National Congress session was held at Spur Tank Road, Chetput, Madras. Muthuranga Mudaliar was elected as the President of the Reception Committee and Bhaktavatsalam was a Secretary of the Committee along with Satyamurthy and Bhasyam. The session was presided over by Dr. Ansari and many All India leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru attended. The overall supervision of the session fell on Bhaktavatsalam. He had his baptism as a full time public worker at this Congress. All the dignitaries were given enthusiastic reception and escorted to their abode by volunteers. At this Congress a Khadi exhibition was arranged. Along with the hand woven clothes, some mill yarn were also mixed and exhibited. When Bhaktavatsalam came to know this, he strongly objected and ordered for the removal of mill

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39 *Ibid.*, 
clothes. A music concert was also arranged under the supervision of Dr. U. Ram Rao.

**Simon Commission - 1928**

The Simon Commission was appointed to investigate into the working of diarchy and it visited India in 1928. The commission was boycotted because it had no Indian representation.

In Madras the Simon Commission boycott propaganda committee was formed under Satyamurthy and it issued appeals to students to absent themselves, to shopkeepers to suspend business, lawyers not to appear in courts, public not to travel, hoist national flag and a black flag. On February 3, 1928, when Simon commission visited Madras, black flag was shown. Hartal and Picketing were done. Bhaktavatsalum participated in the demonstration along with Satyamurthy.

The Lahore Congress of 1929 presided by Jawaharlal Nehru, was attended by Bhaktavatsalum. In this session Jawaharlal Nehru charged the

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41 M. Bhaktavatsalum, Naan Kalanthukonda sudanthira porattam, Rex Printers, Madras, 1982, p.9
42 Fort Nightly Report, Second half of January 1928 (TNA, Chennai)
43 Fort Nightly Report, Public General Department, March 2, 1928, No 1014 - 1 Pub., (TNA, Chennai)
44 S. Amarnath op.cit., p.23
45 Ibid., p.24
British for having ruined India's culture, economically, politically, spiritually and culturally. At this Congress attainment of Purna swaraj was declared as ultimate goal. The session demanded reduction of land tax, implementation of prohibition, and abolition of salt tax. The Tamil Nadu Congress committee passed a resolution under the presidency of Muthuranga Mudaliar. The resolution requested the Lahore Congress to abide by Calcutta resolution and boycott the Round Table Conference and condemned the repressive policy of the Government.  

Salt Satya Graha - 1930

Tax on a commodity like salt was most inhuman. When the Government refused to remove the tax on salt, Congress decided to defy the law all over the country by collecting salt at coastal areas. Meetings, hartals, protest songs and dramas were arranged. Gandhi undertook his famous Dandi March on March 12, 1930. In Madras, T.Prakasam and K.Nageswara Rao broke the salt law at Triplicane beach. Rajaji chose Vedaranyam, a place south of Cauvery delta. His program was well organized. He made an appeal for funds and addressed public meetings. As a prelude to his Vedaranyam March, he sent workers to make arrangements for accommodation and supplies.

46 Fort Nightly Report, First half of December 1929, Public (General) Department, December 1929, No p. 4-23. (TNA, Chennai)

47 Saroja Sundarajan, op.cit., p.461
A wave of nationalistic spirit spread all over India. After Rajaji was arrested other leaders took over the struggle. The response to civil disobedience movement was spontaneous. Congress leaders and workers of Madras took an active part. Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle did not participate in this struggle as Rajaji had instructed them not to participate in the struggle but to serve those who had been imprisoned. Bhaktavatsalam collected funds by travelling all over the province.\(^{48}\)

When Bhaktavatsalam was the secretary of Tamil Nadu Congress along with T.S.R. Rajan in 1932 he decided to celebrate January 26, as Independence Day even though there was a prohibition order. Bhaktavatsalam was arrested along with his uncle Muthuranga Mudaliar and Adikesavalu Naicker.\(^ {49}\) While the procession was passing through Broadway, police suddenly rushed in and lathi charged the crowd. Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle were beaten up severely by the police. They were arrested and sent to Vellore jail and imprisoned for 6 months.\(^ {50}\) The Government noted this episode as "besides checking the movement in its more violent form, it proved the efficacy of the recently introduced short lathi".\(^ {51}\)

\(^{48}\) S.Amaramath, op.cit., p.29.


Muthuranga Mudaliar's mother expired while he was in prison. But he did not come out even on parole.\textsuperscript{52} Every time the Jail doors opened for them they took it as an opportunity to recharge them for harder fight.

The Congress party demanded an enquiry into the police firing and lathicharge for the January 26, 1932 incident. But the Government refused. Bhaktavatsalam as the secretary of the Madras Mahajana Sabha formed two enquiry committees and published the report with his foreword.\textsuperscript{53}

During this time the Justice Party co-operated with the British in running the Diarchy under Raja Panagal and A.P. Patro as the ministers. In 1934 elections Justice Party was defeated and its disunity ruined the party.

\textbf{Deputy Mayor - 1936}

In 1934, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee decided to participate in Local Board election. For this purpose Tamil Nadu Civic Board was formed and Bhaktavatsalam became the secretary along with Kumarswamy Raja.\textsuperscript{54} In 1936, in the Corporation elections, the Congress attained a sweeping victory which was contributed to Jawaharlal Nehru's visit on October 17, 1936. Out of the 40 seats Congress won 26 seats and Justice Party 8 seats, independents 6 seats.\textsuperscript{55} Bhaktavatsalam won from

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\textsuperscript{52} M.Bhaktavatsalam, Enathu Ninaivugal, \textit{op.cit.},p.63
\textsuperscript{53} M.Bhaktavatsalam, \textit{ibid.},p.20
\textsuperscript{54} S.Amarnath, \textit{op.cit.},p.32
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Fort Nightly Report (Public Department) Strictly Confidential}, Second half of October 1936, November 3,1936, No.p-20, (TNA, Chennai).
\end{flushright}
Mylapore and was elected and Deputy Mayor while Sriramulu was elected as Mayor.\textsuperscript{56}

**Parliamentary Secretary - 1937**

The Government Of India Act 1935 came into force from April 1, 1937. General elections were held in 1937. The All India Congress committee decided to participate in the State Legislature election in 1937. The ruling Justice Party became unpopular and was defeated in the election. Congress leaders toured the entire Presidency for electioneering. T.Prakasam toured Andhra; Muthuranga Mudaliar, Kumaraswamy Raja and O.P.Ramaswamy Reddiar toured Tamilnadu. Congress won the election with 159 seats out of 215 and 26 seats out of 46 in council,\textsuperscript{57} but was not willing to accept the office. They wanted an assurance from the Government that governor would not use his powers to override the cabinet. After getting the assurance, Rajaji formed the ministry in July 1937.

In view of his standing in the party and services, it was expected that Bhaktavatsalam would be made a cabinet minister. But Rajaji chose Gopal Reddy, comparatively a young man, as Local Administration Minister and appointed Bhaktavatsalam as a parliamentary secretary to Local

\textsuperscript{57} *Popular Ministries, Schemes, Projects, Historical events and Visits 1921 - 1974*, Tamilnadu Archives, Chennai, p.49.
Administration Minister. A senior and more experienced Bhaktavatsalam accepted that opportunity politely and served as a loyal and disciplined solider of the party and was content with taking up any position offered to him by the leader.\textsuperscript{58}

**Individual Satyagraha - 1940**

When it became clear to Congress that Britain's intention was not to grant independence to India but to hold her in bondage and exploit her, Individual Satyagraha was launched on October 7, 1940 with Vinoba as first individual and Jawaharlal Nehru as the second. In Madras Presidency, Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle Muthuranga Mudaliar participated in the Satyagraha and were arrested at Tiruvallur.\textsuperscript{59} All the satyagrahis were sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000/-. As Bhaktavatsalam refused to pay fine, his car was auctioned.\textsuperscript{60} He was put in Trichirapalli jail and later released in December 1941. When he was in prison he acquainted himself with the epics like *Ramayana, Mahabharata*, and *Bhagawat Gita* and *Prabhandam*.

\textsuperscript{58} O.V. Alagesan, *Duties, Yes; Rights, No.* Bhaktavatsalam 50 Years of Public Life, op.cit.,

\textsuperscript{59} Who is Who of Freedom Fighters, op.cit.,p.245

\textsuperscript{60} M.Bhaktavatsalam, Entathu Ninaivugal, op.cit., p.63.
Quit India Movement - 1942

Quit India Movement is a landmark in the Indian struggle for freedom. It was the last and bitter fight for freedom ever waged in India after 1857, both in dimension and intensity.\textsuperscript{61}

With the Japanese occupation of Singapore, Malaya and Burma, Madras was in danger. Britain had no army to fight. Hence it was forced to seek the support of India and her people. The British requested co-operation from the Congress with a promise for dominion status to India after the war was over. But the Congress and the country were in no mood to accept anything other than complete independence and demanded the British to quit India immediately.

The Quit India Movement resolution was passed in Bombay on August 8, 1942.\textsuperscript{62} The resolution demanded withdrawal of the British from India immediately and a provisional Government for India. As soon as the call was endorsed all leaders were arrested and Congress party was banned throughout India. It was at the time that Gandhi gave his historic call "Do or Die". Kamaraj, Satyamurthy, Muthuranga Mudaliar and Bhaktavatsalam participated in this session at Bombay.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61} Dr.P.N.Chopra, Editor, \textit{Quit India Movement - British secret documents}, New Delhi, 1986, p.2

\textsuperscript{62} R.C.Majumdar, H.C.Roy Chadhuri and Kalikinkar Datta, \textit{An Advanced History Of India}, Macmillan India Ltd, Madras, 1996, p.977

\textsuperscript{63} P.Kandaswamy, \textit{op.cit.}, p.42
While returning from Bombay, Kamaraj got down at Arakkonam and evaded arrest to gear up the movement in Tamilnadu. Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle were arrested at the Central Station, Madras, and lodged at Vellore jail on August 10, 1942. The Congress political detenues from South India were thirty two in number and that included Prakasam, Kamaraj, V.V.Giri, N.G. Ranga, Bhaktavatsalam, Muthuranga Mudaliar and Ananthasayanm Iyengar. From Vellore, they were brought back to Madras and taken to Nagpur. At the time they were not even aware of the place as to where they would be taken. Satymurthy and Prakasam asked the Sergeant but no reply was received. They were put in prison at a place called Amaravathi or Amroati.

When they were first stationed at Vellore jail, Bhaktavatsalam, Muthuranga Mudaliar and Prakasam did not ask for any special concession or treatment. They went about doing the work given by the jail officer with out any murmur.

They had spent nearly two and a half years at Amroati Jail. Bhaktavatsalam records his memory at Amroati jail as under “I had spent two summers and two winters. Summer means night temperature was 110

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65 K.R. Karanth, *Everlasting Achievements*, Bhaktavatsalam 50 Years of Public Life, op.cit.,
66 M.Bhaktavatsalam, Enathu Ninaivugal, op.cit., p.71.
67 C.R.Pattabiraman, *Deep Loyalties*, Bhaktavatsalam 50 Years of Public Life, op.cit.,
degrees and Winter was also severe. Bed sheets given for winter were insufficient. Cracks at foot developed. Muthuranga Mudaliar, Satyamurthy and M.P.Sivagnanam fell ill. No proper treatment was given to them. The Jail authorities censored all letters. As donkeys were roaming in the Jail campus, donkey’s milk was given to us. Prakasam learnt Tamil and Kamaraj learnt Hindi.”\textsuperscript{68}

Satyamurthi’s health deteriorated and was admitted in hospital. Later he was brought to Madras and expired. After two and a half years, all the others were released on May 4, 1944.

Students of Madras, in the mean while, themselves from schools and colleges. They Shouted Quit India Slogans, and held demonstrations. Cutting of telephone and telegraph wires were reported and collective fines imposed.\textsuperscript{69} Gandhi observed fast for twenty one days from February 10, 1943 and the detenues in Vellore jail observed fast on February 11 and 12, 1943.\textsuperscript{70} Newspapers like Dinamani, Swadesa Mitran and Bharatadevi devoted much space to Gandhi’s fast and condemned Linlithgow, the then viceroy. Editors of papers like Andhra Patrika, Dinamani, Swadesa Mitran,

\textsuperscript{68} M.Bhaktavatsalam, Enathu Ninaivugal, op.cit., pp.72-73
\textsuperscript{69} Fort Nightly Report for the 2nd half of January 1943 Public (General) Strictly Confidential, P-4 -27 February 6,1943.
\textsuperscript{70} Fort Nightly Report for the Second half of February 1943 Public(General) Strictly Confidential, P-4 –28 ,February 22,1943.
Bharatadevi and The Hindu were warned not to publish news regarding the Quit India Movement.

While the Muslims wanted a separate state for them, the Justice Party in Madras presidency wanted a state for Dravidians. Meanwhile the Second World War came to an end with the surrender of Germany. Britain went to polls in 1945 and Churchill was defeated. Atlee assumed as Prime Minister of Britain and announced election to Central and Provincial legislature in India in 1946. Britain also realised the wisdom of a negotiated transfer of power from Quit India experience.

Then came the general election in March 1946. Congress won the election in the Madras Presidency with 164 seats out of 215 and 32 out of 52 in council. By that time Rajaji left the Congress on the Pakistan issue and the leadership passed into the hands of Kamaraj. Prakasam formed the Ministry and Bhaktavatsalam was inducted as Minister for Public Works, Irrigation and High ways department. The ministry was short lived. A no-confidence motion was moved against Prakasam and he resigned on March 14, 1947. O.P.Ramaswamy Reddiar took over as Chief Minister and Bhaktavatsalam was given the same portfolio.

71 Popular Ministries, Schemes, Projects, Historical events and Visits 1921-1974, op.cit., p.63
72 Madras Administration Report 1946, Chapter 1, p.22
After the assumption of Mount Batten as the Viceroy, events moved quickly. Indian Independence Bill was passed in the British Parliament, and Royal assent was given. While the rest of the world was sleeping, India awoke to her freedom and saw the end of a long drawn national struggle against the British rule on the midnight of August 15, 1947. "The Hindu" hailed the Indian Independence Bill as a historic measure which crowns the half-century-old struggle for national freedom. The partition work started, people reconciled to it that it was inevitable due to Muslim League's resolute stand. The Princely states of Travancore and Hyderabad though decided to stay out of the Constituent Assembly, later joined the Indian dominion. The whole country wore a festive look, gaily bedecked and adorned on August 15, 1947. Every building was hoisted with the national flag. Flag hoisting, March past and jubilant celebrations marked the day.

There after Congress party reigned supreme for two decades. So also Bhaktavatsalam. He won the elections and continuously held position in the cabinet and finally he was sworn in as Chief Minister of Madras state in 1963 and served the state till 1967.

73 R.C. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 977.