Chapter V
DALIT PARTICIPATION IN THE
QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT
The Stubborn nature of the Congress, the advance made by Japan in the war and the fall of Singapore forced England to turn over towards India once again.\(^1\) The British Prime Minister Churchill decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps with some concrete proposals in connection with constitutional changes demanded in India.

**Cripps Proposals**

Sir Stafford Cripps and party arrived India on 22 March 1942.\(^2\) He declared:

The object of His Majesty’s Government is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.\(^3\)

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1. M. V. Ramana Rao, “A Short History of the Indian National Congress”, Delhi, 1959, p. 215. In the House of Commons on March 11, 1942, Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister had said, “The crisis in Indian affairs arising out of the Japanese advance has made us wish to rally all the forces of Indian life to guard their land from the menace of the ‘invader’.
Further, Sir Stafford Cripps issued a draft declaration containing a number of proposals. According to the declaration, steps would be taken to solve the Indian problem immediately after the end of hostilities. It also assured a new constitution for India.  

The Cripps proposals virtually conceded all the reasonable demands of both the Congress and the Muslim League. Many leaders welcomed the proposals; particularly the authorities of various princely states welcomed it. The Dewan of Travancore said,

The scheme evolved by the British Cabinet and sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps has now been published and it cannot be denied that the outstanding points and demands made by chief interests in India have been dealt with.

However, the leaders of the major political parties with Cripps proposals: "The Cripps Mission, on the whole was a failure. The Indian States differed with Cripps on three points:

i. the non-transference of defence to Indian hands,

ii. the indefiniteness about the interim administration, and

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5 Sir. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, the Dewan of Travancore was one of a delegation of eight which met Sir Stafford Cripps at Delhi and discussed the proposals on behalf of the States. The other members of the delegation being their highnesses the Maharajas of Patiala, Bikaner Dewan, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar and the Nawab of Rampur Sir V. T. Krishnamachari and the Nawab of Chhattari. Travancore Information (later known as Travancore Information and Listener - hereinafter referred to as TIL), Monthly bulletin of Information Department, the Government of Travancore, Trivandrum, April 1942, p. 23.
iii. the option to federating units to keep aloof from the Indian Union thereby ruining Indian unity.\textsuperscript{6}

Leaders of various political parties and states submitted memorandums to Sir Stafford Cripps. Among the other things a memorandum had said:

If the British Government think that the Indian people are entitled to independence it is perfectly within their competence to effect such changes in the political status of the people in consonance with the times and development of world conditions and no question of the treaties or privileges arises to be solved.\textsuperscript{7}

While various communities rejected the Cripps on different grounds and paved the way for its failure,\textsuperscript{8} various newspapers were of the opinion that Cripps came to India as a messenger of the Churchill Government, which was not prepared to transfer power.\textsuperscript{9}

\textbf{Quit India Resolution}

The failure of the Cripps mission forced the Congress to take further steps for the cause of freedom. Further it seems that the British Government was not going to initiate any new attempt to solve the Indian

\textsuperscript{6} Newspaper Abstract of the Travancore Police Daily Report (hereinafter referred to as NATPDR), the Malayala Rajyam, dated 3rd April 1942.

\textsuperscript{7} A copy of the memorandum submitted to Sir Stafford Cripps on the treaty position of the Indian States. File No. D. Dis. 460/1945/CS.

\textsuperscript{8} Subhash C. Kashyap and Savita D. Kashyap, "Tryst with Freedom", Delhi, 1973, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{9} NATPDR, The Malayala Rajyam, 14th April 1942.
problem. The British Cabinet was not willing to quit India before the conclusion of the war.

Gandhiji and other leaders of the working committee finally met at Wardha on the 14th July 1942 and passed the famous ‘Quit India’ resolution, declaring that, “Britain’s rule in India must end immediately.” Political atmosphere of the country vitiated by Cripps was cleared by this resolution. However, the Quit India resolution was to be approved by the All India Congress Committee at its meeting on the 7th August 1942.

Some of the nationalist newspapers, though they could understand the reason for the step taken by the Congress, were opposed to the movement. The HINDU notes as follows: “Few can view with complacency the consequences of a countrywide movement at a time like this when the country is distracted by divided counsels from more quarters than one”. The Swadesamitran writes: “The country is suffering from the effects of war. Those who are responsible for the launching of the struggle should consider before they do so. What is essential now is to organize and give discipline to the people. Nothing that will harm the morale of the people should be done.” Manorama, a Calicut paper is definitely against the resolution as preventing the formation of a united front for India. The West

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10 Ibid., The Powraprabha, 1st May 1942.
11 On June 16, in an interview in London Cripps observed, “We are not going to walk out of India right in the middle of the war, though we have no wish to remain there for any imperialistic reasons”. Jagdish Saran Sharma, op. cit., p. 450.
13 Hirendranath Mukerjee, “India’s Struggle for Freedom”, Calcutta, 1962, p. 239.
Coast Reformer also disapproves of the resolution as likely to lead to turmoil instead of union against invasion and asks for the postponement of any direct action on the part of the Congress, at the same time requesting the British Government not to take advantage of this state of disunity but to get busy with the formation of a Provisional National Cabinet at the centre. The champion regards the resolution as an expression of despair over the prospect of national unity under present conditions and urges the British Government to take the initiative in setting up a National government instead of leaving it to partly leaders who cannot come to an agreement among themselves.

But all nationalist newspapers denounce Sir Stafford Cripps’ broadcast speech to America. The HINDU says that the arguments used by him were unconvinced and sinister and most of the statements were grossly false. The statement of Sir Stafford Cripps that Indian parties neither accepted his scheme nor offered an alternative is criticised as being incorrect. Further, the statement that the British Government offered representative Indian political leaders immediate office in the Viceroy’s Executive Council - a body of Ministers like those who advise your President is objected to because Sir Stafford Cripps has ignored the vital distinction that whereas the US President is elected by and is responsible to
the American nation, nothing of that kind can be said of the Indian Viceroy.\(^\text{14}\)

Even before its final approval, the ‘Quit India’ resolution had its own consequences all over the State. Madras Presidency was no exception. As per the Puckle Circular of the Government of India,\(^\text{15}\) various State Governments lifted the ban on the Communist Party.\(^\text{16}\) The Communists, who were undergoing imprisonment in the jails were released without their apologizing to the Government.\(^\text{17}\) The aim of the Government was obvious. It was only for using them against India’s independence movement.\(^\text{18}\) Those who were engaging themselves against the war efforts of the Government were punished.\(^\text{19}\)

Despite all these oppressive measures of the Government, the AICC which met at Bombay on 7 and 8 of August 1942, approved the Quit India resolution.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{14}\) H. F. M. Report No.74

\(^{15}\) Pattabhi Sitaramayya, “The History of the Indian National Congress”, Vol. II, 1935-1947, Bombay, 1947, pp. 360-361. Sir Frederic Pucke, Secretary to the Government of India issued a circular to all states and provinces. It said, “(i) We have to encourage those on whose support we can depend, (ii) win over the wavers, and (iii) avoid stiffening the determination of Congressmen”.

\(^{16}\) NATPDR, The Malayali, 24th July 1942.

\(^{17}\) Report of the D.M., Trivandrum, 15th July 1942, to the CS to Government.

\(^{18}\) NATPDR, The Malayala Rajyam, 25th July 1942.

\(^{19}\) Order R.O.C. No.2806/1942/CS-1, 16th July 1942.

The members were of the opinion that the continuation of the British rule was, "degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom". They further emphasized, "The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the further of the war and the success of freedom and democracy."\(^{21}\)

In accordance with the approval of the Quit India resolution, Gandhiji gave the 'Do or Die' call.\(^{22}\) Before the dawn of the next day the police arrested Mahatma Gandhi, Azad and all the other important leaders of the Congress party. Within a week all those who mattered in the Congress organisation was in jail. The All India Congress Committee and all the provincial Congress Committees were declared unlawful organisations. The arrest of Gandhiji and other leaders was followed by peaceful and non-violent popular demonstrations in the shape of *hartals* and processions in the whole of India. The Congress leaders in Tamil Nadu started the revolt in support of the call of the All India Congress Party.

**Quit India Movement in Tamil Nadu**

People belonged to all sections of the community took active part in Quit India Movement. Dalits joined in this movement. During this movement the Buckingham Carnatic Mill was shut down. Many Dalits

\(^{21}\) B. Shiva Rao, "India's Freedom Movement", New Delhi, 1972, pp. 280-281.

\(^{22}\) S. B. Bhattacherjee, "Encyclopaedia of Indian Events and Dates", New Delhi, 1986, p. 264.
working in this mill were rendered jobless. Madras Port Trust, Madras Corporation and Madras Metropolitan Trans services became standstill without any operation. Many public sector buildings were damaged. Telephone and telecommunication network in North Arcot district were disrupted. Students in South Arcot district turned violent. Sulur Military Aerodrome was totally ravished. Trains were derailed. Toddy shops were set on fire. Violence in southern districts were rampant and serious. Police firing in places like Rajapalayam, Karaikudi, Devokottai, Thiruvatanai, Poolankurichi etc. claimed many lives. In these firings many Dalits succumbed to death.^^

On 11th August 1942, some college and high school students observed hartal. Some of the students of the Loyola College and Pachaiappa’s College went in a procession. It was stopped by the Police and dispersed by a lathi charge in the course of which the Police were attacked by brick-bats. Five students and a Police officer were injured.^^

On the next day, Hartal in some colleges and schools continued. The students of the Government School of Technology who attempted to form processions both in the morning and evening were dispersed. Some students of the Loyola and Pachaiappa’s Colleges indulged in stone-throwing against electric trains. About 800 tailors employed by an up-

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^^ Fortnightly Report, October 1942, p. 23.
^^ Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Madras Presidency, August to December 1942, p. 1.
country military contractor observed a *hartal*. They induced some of the tailors employed by another contractor to stop from work.\textsuperscript{25}

On August 20, 1942, majority of the students in Queen Mary's College and the Government School of Arts absented themselves. One person was arrested for picketing in front of the Ganesh Aluminium Factory. Two persons and four juveniles were arrested for disobeying the prohibitory orders in force in the city. B. S. Krishnamurthy, a student of the Presidency College, was arrested for making and distributing small printed Quit India badges. He was subsequently released after a warning.\textsuperscript{26}

On 1st September 1942, in some places of the North Arcot District, there were violence. Three out of the seven newly built thatched huts for the additional Reserve Police were burnt down by fire. Damage estimated at about Rs.10000.\textsuperscript{27}

On 26th October 1942, a goods-train derailed between Tandarai and Adichanur railway stations of the South Indian Railway. The engine and two vehicles passed over safely but the next 24 vehicles got off the rails, toppled over and crashed into each other with the result that six wagons were telescoped. The centre brake van which was in the midst of the derailed vehicles was smashed, and the brakes-man in it was caught under

\textsuperscript{27} *Ibid.*, p. 11.
the debris and was killed. The accident was due to the removal of the fish-plates and rails. The loss was estimated at about Rs.1 lakh.²⁸

**Response of dalits**

Due to the presence of a good number of mills in the Coimbatore district there was agitation among the labouring classes in the industrial areas. Most of the labourers were dalits. These dalits expressed their opposition by damaging government properties. Arokiasamy was a leading dalit freedom fighter. He organised the dalits for certain sabotage activities. His son said,

My father was just seventeen, during the Quit India Movement. He and other dalit volunteers targeted the railway lines. With iron rods they damaged railway tracks and cut the signal wires. Hence they were declared as extremists and arrested by police.²⁹

Devasahayam was another dalit leader from Singanallur region. During the Quit India Movement he was twenty years old. He was greatly attracted by the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and hence when Gandhiji gave the ‘do or die’ call he enthusiastically plunged into the movement. He was a good speaker. His talk had a great impact on the dalits and forty two dalits

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²⁹ Interview with Stephen, son of freedom fighter Arockiasamy, Puliakulam, Coimbatore district, 18th August 2004.
joined him in an agitation against the government during the August Movement.$^30$

There was a stay-in-strike in the Pankaja Mills on 22nd August 1942 for payment of three months' bonus instead of one month's bonus offered to them. At noon the police went to the scene and cleared the labourers out of the mills by a lathi charge. But they threw stones from a field opposite the mills and grew more violent. After due warning the police opened fire. In all 19 rounds were fired, killing two persons. A few of the police officers were wounded. The car of the Inspector of Police was badly damaged. A case of deliberate sabotage was the derailment of an ammunition supply train from Cochin at 2 a.m. on 14th August 1942, caused by the removal of fish-plates, spikes etc. between Podanur and Singanallur stations. The two engines attached to the train ran down the embankment and capsized, as also 11 wagons which contained 25 lb shells.

There were two other attempts at derailment of trains which were frustrated by timely detection. A number of attempts at incendiarism was also made in the district. The most serious one was at Sulur where a mob of 200 set fire to the thatched sheds, attached to the RAF Aerodrome at 2 a.m. on 27th August 1942, destroying the sheds completely and the 22 motor lorries kept inside them. Two drivers were also burnt to death. The coolie shed about half a mile away from the aerodrome was also set on fire.

$^30$ Interview with Fernandes, son of freedom fighter Devasahayam, Puliakulam, Coimbatore, 18th August 2004.
One coolie was burnt to death. Telegraph and telephone wires were cut in a number of places.  

The workers in a number of mills had struck work at Singanallur near Coimbatore on the 24th. On that night a gang burnt down two toddy shops and on the night of the 26th a gang attacked the Sulur aerodrome site and set fire to some sheds in which 22 lorries which had recently arrived were kept. Three of the drivers who were sleeping in a shed were burnt to death. All the lorries were destroyed. A number of arrests have been made. The attack was made just after a police patrol had visited the aerodrome to see that all was well.

- Total number of persons detained upto 31st December 1942 in connection with the Civil Disobedient Movement was .. 28
- Total number of persons convicted upto end of December 1942 was .. 73

Collective fines were imposed on the following villages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of village</th>
<th>Amount (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kannampalayam</td>
<td>.. 4,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Irugur</td>
<td>.. 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Singanallur and other villages</td>
<td>.. 24,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vellakinar</td>
<td>.. 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>.. 35,410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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At the Coimbatore Municipal Council at its meeting held on the 26th September 1942 passed resolutions endorsing and supporting the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee and strongly protesting against and condemning the alleged repressive policy of the Government. The Government superseded the council for a period of six months.  

On the 9th August 1942 itself, in the Ramnad district, the movement was started and it was very strong there. The National Youth League of Rajapalayam organized a procession consisting of about 1000 persons as a demonstration against the arrest of Congress leaders. The crowd shouted Congress slogans and pelted stones at the police station, the Recreation Club and certain shops. The processionists then held a meeting at which they condemned the action of the Government in arresting the Congress leaders and asked the public to observe hartal on 10th August 1942 as a mark of protest. One ring-leader was arrested by the police.

In the Poolankurichi region there was a great dalit Congressman. His name was Palani Kudumban. He, who spent his entire life for the sake of Congress, organised the dalit youth and conducted meetings. These well organised dalits took part in the agitations against the British in the Ramnad region. The major problem that stood as a hindrance for united action was caste. The dalits were not given due respect. Due to the initiation of Palani Kudumban, the caste Hindu Congressmen respected the

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sentiments of dalits and hence there was cooperation among all sections of people. This cooperation helped the success of the movement in that region.\(^{35}\)

In the evening of 11th August 1942, at Karaikudi, a meeting was held by Congressmen at which they condemned the Government for arresting the Congress leaders and incited the audience to boycott Government offices. Immediately after the meeting at about 8.30 p.m., the crowd assaulted the policeman on traffic duty. His coat was torn and his lathi taken away. The police rushed to the spot and dispersed the crowd with a lathi charge. A few men pelted stones at the police.\(^{36}\) On 2nd September 1942, the Estate Tahsildar’s residence at Yadavampalli was set on fire but the fire was extinguished. One estate granary was looted, the toddy shops were damaged and one burnt. On 21st September, at Rajapalayam, a toddy shop was burnt. Two post-boxes were found missing. Prejudicial slogans were found written on the walls in the town.\(^{37}\)

Ramnad was one of the worst affected districts in Tamil Nadu as seen in the number of acts of mob violence. There were several causes contributing to these violent disturbances in the place. The district as a whole had a reputation for having little respect for law and order, even in normal times and the present movement gave the necessary chance for

\(^{35}\) Interview with Sevvanthi, grand-daughter of Palani Kudumban, freedom fighter, Poolankurichi, Ramnad District, dated 20th November 2004  
\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 92.  
\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 95.
disorderly elements to defy authority openly. The attitude of the general public was also very unsatisfactory to the government. They were unhelpful to the police as they were drawn into non-cooperation by the nationalist leader. Further the situation was found difficult to tackle as the activities were mostly organized and before hooliganism took place in a village, all communications were cut off and the roads systematically barricaded by rocks and trees cut and thrown across.\footnote{Ibid., p. 96.}

The participation of large number of dalits in the district made the movement very active. Pallars, dalit community, constituted majority in the district. Sivarajan, son of Poochi Kudumban (a leading Quit India participant) explains:

Large number of dalits including Pallars and Paraiahs participated in the August movement. Due to the Police oppression, many withdrew. However, majority dalits were firm in their stand and courted arrest.\footnote{Interview with Sivarajan, Kulathu, Devakottai, dated 14th September 2004.}

There were a number of serious incidents. Mob attacks and acts of violence focused in the following five places at which firing was resorted to: Rajapalayam, Karaikudi, Devakottai, Tiruvadanai and Poolankurichi. In the last place a Lewis gun was also used. The correct figures of casualties were not ascertainable as the rioters removed their casualties. There were many cases of incendiariism and arson. The civil court building at
Devakottai, worth about a lakh of rupees, was burnt down by some extremist freedom fighters mob on 12th August 1942. The Sub-Treasury, the Sub-Registrar’s office, the Deputy Tahsildar’s office and other Government buildings at Tiruvadanai were set fire to and destroyed by a riotous mob on 18th August 1942. The Natarajapuram Railway station was burnt down on 24th August 1942 by a crowd of about 50 armed with aruval (a local knife like weapon) etc. The damage was estimated at Rs.700. The municipal elementary school at Karaikudi was burnt on 5th September 1942. The damage was valued at Rs.200. At Poolankurichi on the 15th August 1942, a gang of men led by a Congress leader burgled the local post office and stole properties valued at Rs.60. They waylaid the mail bus in broad daylight and removed 11 mail bags and burnt them. There were numerous instances of looting, rioting and hooliganism. Interference with communications and sabotage to railway line etc. were a common feature of the movement. Defiance of law and order, insult to the police and intimidation of officials were all in the programme. The Malabar Special Police and a military detachment from Tiruchirappalli had to be called out to quell the movement.40

Again in Ramnad district when the district magistrate with a strong party of police went to Poolankurichi on the order of Puducottah State where a bus carrying mail bags had been attacked and the bags removed on the 18th, they found an armed crowd on the hill side near the village

40 Ibid., p. 96.
making dispositions to attack them. Fire was opened on the crowd and it is thought there was a considerable number of casualties. The crowd took away its dead and wounded into the hills and were not pursued after they had been broken up. In this district the gangs had a regular technique of felling trees across the roads, breaking culverts and cutting telegraph lines before they make an attack.

- Total number of persons detained upto 31st December 1942 in connection with the Civil Disobedient Movement in the district was .. 7
- Total number of persons convicted upto 31st December 1942 in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement .. 88

Particulars regarding the imposition of collective fines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of village</th>
<th>Amount (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Poolankurichi</td>
<td>.. 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Karaikudi</td>
<td>.. 50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Devakottai and Eravasseri</td>
<td>.. 1,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eighteen other villages</td>
<td>.. 38,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Karkalathoor and 46 other villages</td>
<td>.. 50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.. 2,93,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ramnad District Board was superseded for a period of six months for passing a resolution on 7th September 1942 placing on record its strong protest against the arrest and detention in jail of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders and attributing the subsequent outbreak of lawlessness in the country to such arrests.
The Virudhunagar Municipal Council was superseded for a period of six months for passing certain prejudicial resolutions on 30th September 1942, one of which supported the All-India Congress Committee resolution and a second resolved that the Government of India should be handed over to Indians as it considered that the continuance of British rule in India at the present crisis was a danger to India.41

The worst phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Tanjore district was between 13th to 16th August 1942, when major cases of mob attacks and violence centred round four places, viz. Trivadi, Tanjore, Mannargudi and Kumbakonam. On 13th August 1942 at Trivadi a riotous mob compelled the shop-keepers to close shops, cut telegraph and telephone wires and did damage to the offices of the District Munsif and the Sub-Registrar. On 14th August 1942 at Tanjore a prohibitory order under section 144, Cr.P.C. was defied by a Congressman who attempted to hold a meeting. The police who ordered the meeting to disperse were hit by stones. A *lathi* charge had to be made to disperse the crowd. On 15th August 1942, at Mannargudi a Congress mob of about 1000, armed with sticks, knives and stones cut away telegraph and telephone wires and uprooted Municipal electric lamp post. Later they set fire to the railway station, causing severe damage to the building and railway properties. The railway track was removed for a distance of one furlong. The mob then burnt the Sub-divisional Magistrate's office and the Municipal office

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41 Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.
destroying all records. On 16th August 1942 at Kumbakonam a mob of about 10000 consisting mostly of Congress volunteers cut telephone wires, bent telegraph wires and barricaded the streets. They pelted stones and glass pieces at the Police and the Magistrates who received injuries. A lathi charge to disperse the crowd proved ineffective. The Police had therefore to open fire in self-defence. In all 19 rounds were fired killing two and injuring seven. A number of policemen were injured by stone hits. This shooting had a sobering effect on the whole district and the situation quietened down quickly. There were a few instances of looting and wire-cutting.  

- Total number of persons detained upto 31st December 1942 in connection with the Civil Disobedient Movement was .. 4  
- Total number of persons convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement upto 31st December 1942 .. 92  

**Penalisation of the Revolutionaries**

To quell violence and establish peace in these sensitive areas, government took many stringent measures. Strikers were either whipped or hanged. Fires of unbearable limitation were extracted. The cattles of the strikers were confiscated and sold on auction. Farmers and labourers were cruelly treated. Police attacked villagers during night hours and got them arrested for no fault of them. The hands and legs of villagers were tied

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42 Ibid., p. 102.
together. Their hair was also tied together and they were garlanded by broomsticks and chapels. They were compelled to bite chapels on their mouths and then charging them to walk and needles were driven into the thin edges of their nails. The police also set fire to their moustaches and beards. Dreadful punishments were given to women. All these cruel punishments met out by the freedom fighters show how brutal and barbaric were the British to kill the spirit of freedom among the Indian masses.43

The police resorted to lathi charge at many places. Many persons were injured. The police lathi charge was so severe in the case of one Subbiah Pillai, a jutka44 owner of Nagercoil. He was standing at the Nagercoil tower junction on 10th August 1942, soon after a State Congress meeting. As usual he wore a Gandhi cap. The police officer of the Kottar Town Police Station saw him and was not in a mood to brook the sight of a person with a Gandhi cap standing in such case and dignity. The police officer ruthlessly beat him till he was unconscious and blessing from his head and all over the body. Then he was taken to custody.45

Contrary to the earlier declaration of the government, which declared arrests had been made only of actual leaders,46 the police arrested not only the revolutionaries but also the common men.47 It created a sense of rear in

44 Jutka - Cart pulled by a horse.
46 TIL, October 1942, p. 9.
47 S. Sivan Pillai, “Aubobiography”, p. 3.
the minds of the people. In some cases, the government went a step further. It confiscated the properties and household articles of the rebel leaders.\(^\text{48}\)

Detention in police lock-ups without trial was common. The loci-ups were swelled with the under trials. In order to accommodate the under trials, the government constructed additional sheds.\(^\text{49}\) There were instances of detention over a year. Detained persons were transferred from place to place. In due course the government released the under trials. The government did not conduct proper enquiry in many cases. The government charged criminal cases against some revolutionaries. As there was no enquiry, it was difficult to disprove the allegations framed against them. As a result the accused were convicted and sentenced to undergo imprisonment.\(^\text{50}\) Though the Government was ready to pardon those who apologized,\(^\text{51}\) the patriotic and sensitive State Congressites did not make any apology. They were sentenced with fine or imprisonment or both. In some cases the imprisonment exceeded two years while in some others it was less than a month. The nature of the sentence also varied from rigorous to simple imprisonments.\(^\text{52}\) In addition to the imprisonment, fines were

\(^{48}\) "Kanyakumari", Weekly, Nagercoil, 9th August 1942, p. 12.

\(^{49}\) Interview with participants (hereinafter referred to as IWP) N. Gamaliel, Neyyattinkara, 14th March 1942.

\(^{50}\) Secret Bulletin of Travancore Police Daily Report (herein after referred to as SBTPDR), 16th December 1942.

\(^{51}\) One young man named Mahadevan Pillai, aged 19, residing in Kuruntheruvu, Kottar. Nagercoil delivered a speech violating the prohibitory order. For that he was arrested. Later he apologized and was released. TIL, October 1942, p. 9.

\(^{52}\) The HINDU, dated 1st September 1942, p. 6.
imposed.\textsuperscript{53} If they were not able to pay the fine, the term of the imprisonment was extended.\textsuperscript{54} Such threat was nothing but extortion. The revolutionaries, who were undergoing imprisonment did not like the extension of their period, for the treatment that they received was inhuman. The government did not spare even the Communists, as it was impossible for the government to differentiate the Communists from Congressites. So the Communists were also met with punishments.\textsuperscript{55} Besides the Congressites, the students were also severely punished.

\textbf{Penalisation of Dalit participants}

A large number of Dalits took part in the Quit India movement. They were from different places. They were penalized. Their family members were also tortured. Sivarajan\textsuperscript{56} explains the suffering met by freedom fighters and their family members. He said,

My father Poochikudumban as well as many other were arrested during Quit India Movement. In the prison they were tortured. My father's leg was broken and no medical care was given to him. So, even after the release from the prison after the punishment period, he was rendered unfit to do any physical work. It was the case of many freedom fighters.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, dated 4th September 1942, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, dated 5th September 1942, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{55} S. Sivan Pillai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{56} Sivarajan was son of Poochi Kuduman, a leading freedom fighter in Kulathur region of Ramnad district.
Antony Muthu, born in June 1916, took part in the 1942 August Movement and sentenced to imprisonment and kept in Coimbatore jail for one and half years. He was also from Puliyakulam, Coimbatore. Many other Dalit Freedom fighters were also arrested from Coimbatore district. The following is a brief list:

1. Arokiya Samy, son of Santiago was born in 1926. He was a literate and joined in the 1942 August Movement. He was arrested and sentenced to one year and was kept in Coimbatore Central Jail. He was from Puliyakulam.

2. Arumugam, son of Arunachala Pannadi was born in 1921. He took part in the 1942 August Movement and sentenced to imprisonment and kept in Coimbatore Central Jail for one and half years. He was also from Puliyakulam.

3. Arumugam, son of Sangra Pannadi was born in 1925. For his involvement in the 1942 August Movement, he was arrested and kept under police custody for one week. He was from Singanallur.

4. Chinna, son of Wanja Pannadi, born in 1925, was arrested and kept under remand in Coimbatore Central Jail for fifteen days. He was also from Singanallur.

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61 Ibid., p. 36.
62 Ibid., p. 37.
63 District Calendar of Events, 1942, p. 124.
64 Ibid., p. 124.
Sivarajan further explains the atrocities of the policemen. He said that many women were raped by police. His mother was also raped. In his words,

In order to give warning to family members of other freedom fighters, after the arrest of a freedom fighter, ladies of his family were gang raped by police. My mother was also a victim. After that incident my mother was mentally upset and even today she could not recover. Now also she is mentally ill. This is the fate of the family members of many leaders.\(^{57}\)

Dalits from Coimbatore district took an active part and courted imprisonment.

Angamuthu, son of Marappa Pallan, born in 1925, had joined the Freedom Movement in 1939. He took part in the August Movement in 1942 and kept in Coimbatore jail for two years. He was from the village Irusoor in Coimbatore district.\(^ {58} \)

Antony Ammal, Daughter of Selvamuthu was born in 1917. She joined the national movement in 1937 and took part in the 1942 August Movement and sentenced to one year imprisonment and kept in state jail for women at Vellore. She was from Puliyakulam, Coimbatore district.\(^ {59} \)

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\(^{57}\) Interview with Sivarajan, Kulathur, Ramnad, dated 14th September 2004.

\(^{58}\) District Calendar of Events, Coimbatore District, 1942, p. 106.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 107.
5. Devasahayam, born in 1922, was imprisoned and kept in Coimbatore Central Jail for six months for his involvement in the Quit India Movement. He was from PuliyaKulam.65

6. Kaali Pannadi, son of Nesa Pannadi, born in 1918, was arrested during the Quit India Movement under Sec. IPC-147 and sentenced to three years and kept in Alipuram Jail. He was from Pallapalayam.66

7. Kamatchi, Daughter of Thannasi Pannadi, born in 1892 was arrested under Sec. IPC-147 and sentenced for two years imprisonment and kept in Alipuram Jail. She was from Pothanur.67

8. Nagappan, son of Thannachi Pannadi, courted imprisonment for five times in 1942 and kept under police lock-up for seventeen days. He was a native Singanallur.68

9. Kamatchi Pallan, daughter of Maruthachalla Pannadi born in 1908 was arrested and sentenced for two years and kept in Alipuram Jail. Coimbatore. She was from Singanallur.69

10. Ramasamy Pallan, son of Marappa Pallan who took part in ‘Quit India Movement’ in 1942 was arrested and sentenced during 1943 to 1944 under Sec. IPC-147 and kept in Alipuram Jail for twenty months. His native place was Singanallur.

65 Ibid., p. 63.
66 Ibid., p. 94.
67 Ibid., p. 94.
69 Ibid., p. 16.
11. Arumuga Pannadi, born in 1918, was arrested and kept in Pollachi and Palladam jails for two and half years. He was a native of Irugur.

12. Nachimuthu, son of Narayan Pallan from Singanallur, took part in Civil Disobedience Movement in 1942 and he was arrested and sentenced to four years. He was kept in Coimbatore and Alipuram jail.\(^70\)

13. Masana Pannadi, son of Kulandai Pannadi, born in 1923 at Singanallur was arrested under Sec. IPC-147 and sentenced to one year. He spent the term in Alipuram jail.\(^71\)

14. Shanmuga Pannadi, son of Samikannu Subba Pannadi, was born in 1911. He had joined the Freedom Movement and actively followed Mahatma’s foot-steps. He took part in August Movement 1942 and courted imprisonment. He was sentenced for eleven years and kept in Alipuram Jail. He was from Singanallur, Coimbatore.\(^72\)

15. Rama Pannadi, son of Mari Pannadi born in 1911, joined freedom movement in 1932. He took an active part in the Quit India movement in 1942 and courted imprisonment, under Sec. IPC-142 and sentenced to six months. He spent the term in Coimbatore and Alipuram jails.\(^73\)

\(^71\) Fortnightly report, dated 3rd July 1943.
\(^72\) Ibid.
16. Saddayappan, son of Sundra Pannadi, born in 1919, joined the Quit India Movement in 1942. He courted imprisonment and kept in Coimbatore jail for one and half years.\textsuperscript{74}

17. Shanmugam, son of Subban, born in 1913, joined the freedom movement in 1935. For his part in August Movement of 1942, he was arrested and sentenced for three and half years, under Sec. IPC-149. He was kept in Alipuram jail.\textsuperscript{75}

18. Masannan, son of Karuppa Pannadi, born in 1911, took part in the August Movement and was arrested and kept under police custody for one week. He was from Singanallur.\textsuperscript{76}

19. Muniyan, son of Ranga Pannadi, born in 1917, was a native of Singanallur, Coimbatore district. He joined the freedom movement in 1936. He took part in the August Movement in 1942 and was arrested under Sec. IPC-147, 149 and sentenced for seven years imprisonment and was kept in Coimbatore and Alipuram jails.\textsuperscript{77}

Besides the about list of Dalits from Coimbatore district, many dalits from other districts were also arrested. Dalits from Madurai district participated in large number and were kept in different prisons. The following is a brief list of participants from Madurai district.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 166.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 167.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 246.
1. Chennaiya took part in the August Movement in 1942 and courted imprisonment. He was from Thumpaipatti, Madurai District.\(^{78}\)

2. Chinnan, son of Mookan Samban, born in 1892, belonged to Melur at Madurai district, joined the freedom movement in 1939. He took part in the August Movement in 1942 and was arrested. He was sentenced for three months and spent the term in Alipuram jail.\(^{79}\)

3. Karuppiah, son of Mookan Samban born in 1928 at Seerkali, Madurai district, had actively participated in the August Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced for three months. He spent the term in Alipuram jail.\(^{80}\)

4. Mariyappa Kudumban, son of Karuppa Kudumban born in 1904 was a native of Vannivasal, Madurai district. He took part in Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced under Sec.36/2 Defence of Indian Rules. He was kept in Alipuram jail for ten and half months.\(^{81}\)

5. Sivaraja Kudumban was son of S. Perumal Kudumban and was born in 1916 at Periyakulam, Madurai district. He took part in Quit India Movement in 1942 and was arrested and sentenced under Sec.38(5) Defence of Indian Rules for nineteen days. He was kept in Alipuram jail.\(^{82}\)

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\(^{78}\) Fortnightly Report, Ceremony of Madras, p. 463.
\(^{79}\) Ibid.
\(^{80}\) Ibid.
\(^{81}\) Ibid.
\(^{82}\) Madurai Inspection Running Notes File, 1944.
6. Sanrayan Kudumban, son of Perumal Kudumban, born in 1924 at Madurai town, took part in Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to three years. He spent his term in Central jail at Madurai.\(^{83}\)

7. Vellaya Kudumban, son of Karuppiah Kudumban, born in 1908 in Madurai district, took part in Quit India Movement in 1942 and was arrested and sentenced to two months. He was kept in Alipuram jail.\(^{84}\)

8. Manthiyan, son of Kakkan Samban, born in 1923 at Melur in Madurai district, courted imprisonment and was kept in Alipuram jail for six months.\(^{85}\)

9. Mondi, son of Alagan Samban, was born in 1906 at Melur Taluk, Madurai district. He was literate and he joined the freedom movement. He took part in the August Movement in 1942 and courted imprisonment and kept in Alipuram jail for six months.\(^{86}\)

10. Pichamuthu, son of Muthu Karuppan Samban born in 1923 at Thumbaipatti, Melur taluk, Madurai district, took part in the August Movement and courted imprisonment. He was kept in Alipuram jail for six months.\(^{87}\)

\(^{84}\) Ibid., p. 436.
\(^{85}\) Ibid., p. 436.
\(^{86}\) Ibid., p. 437.
\(^{87}\) Ibid., p. 469.
Dalits from Ramanathapuram district participated in large numbers in the Quit India Movement. The following is a brief list of participants who courted arrest.

1. Chinna Thambi, son of Subbiah Kudumban, born in 1921, joined the movement in 1942. He was arrested under Sec.IPC-145 and 147 of Ordnance Act and sentenced to three years. He was kept in Madurai jail. He was from Devakottai, Ramanathapuram district.

2. Kattari, son of Subbu Kudumban born in 1907 at Devakottai took an active part in the Quit India movement in 1942. He was arrested under Sec.38(5) of Defence of India Rules and sentenced to one year and three months. He was kept in Alipuram jail.

3. Alaga Kudumban, who took part in Quit India Movement, was arrested and sentenced to two years. He was a native of Poolankurichi, Ramanathapuram District.

4. Arumuga Kudumban, son of Karuppan, born in 1918 at Devakottai, participated in Quit India Movement and he was arrested and sentenced under Sec.38(5) of Defense of Indian Rules.

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89 Bundle No.106, “History of Freedom Movement Collection”.
90 Ibid.
91 Bundle No.27, Madras Secret Police Abstracts of Intelligence, 1942 and 1943, pp. 335, 343.
5. Karuppa Kudumban from Poolankurichi took part in Quit India Movement. He was arrested and sentenced to four years and spent the term in Alipuram jail.\textsuperscript{92}

6. Palani Kudumban, son of Alagar Kudumbar born in 1910 at Poolankurichi, joined the Freedom Movement in 1934. He took part in the August Movement in 1942 and was arrested under section 38(5) of Defence of India Rules. He was sentenced to two years and six months.\textsuperscript{93}

7. Chakka Samban, son of Kalian, born in 1889 had joined the freedom movement in 1931. He took an active part in the August Movement in 1942 and courted imprisonment. He was kept in Alipuram jail, Tirupattur and Madurai sub-jails for three years and two and half months.\textsuperscript{94}

8. Alaga Koravan from Poolankurichi took part in the Quit India Movement. He was arrested and sentenced to two years.

9. Arumuga Koravan, son of Kuppayandi born in 1888 was a reputed senior dalit freedom fighter. He took part in the Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to seven years under Sec. IPC-455 and under Sec. 606 of Ordinance Act. He was kept in Madurai Central Jail.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{92} The Madras Jail Document, 1945, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 71.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{95} Fortnightly Report, pp. 242-243.
10. Kaalimuthu Koravan, son of Muniyandi Koravan, born in 1915, participated in the Quit India Movement in its early phase in 1942 and arrested and sentenced under Sec. IPC-147 and under Sec.38(5) of Defense of India Rules. He was kept in Alipuram jail for one year and four months.

11. Muniyandi, son of Poomalai born in 1918, participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to two years under Sec.IPC-148 and 323. He was kept in Madurai central jail.\textsuperscript{96}

12. Palani Kudumban from Poolankurichi took part in the Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to two years.

13. Poochi Kudumban, son of Sonai Kudumban born in 1918 participated in Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to seven years under Sec. IPC-147 and he was kept in Madurai and Alipuram jails.\textsuperscript{97}

14. Subba Kudumban, son of Alaga Kudumban born in 1915, took part in the 1942 Movement and arrested and sentenced to two years under Sec. IPC-147. He was kept in Madurai and Alipuram jails.\textsuperscript{98}

15. Kumar Moopan, son of Rama Moopan, born in 1903, joined the freedom movement as early as 1920. He took a leading part in the August Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced under Sec.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Interview with son Sivarajan, dated 14th September 2004.
\textsuperscript{98} Bundle No.32, Home Department (Political list in Publications Prescribed Correctness upto 31st December 1942.)
38(1)a of Defense of India Rules and he was sentenced to four months. He was kept in Alipuram jail. He was from Palayampatti, Ramnad district. 99

16. Narayana Moopan was born in 1915. He joined the freedom movement in 1930 at the young age of fifteen. He took part in August movement and was imprisoned.

17. Mani, son of Pambayya Kudumban, born in 1909 took part in the August 1942 movement. He was arrested under Sec. 149 and Sec. 7 of Ordinance Act and was sentenced for seven years. He was from Kavathamkudi, Ramnad district. 100

18. Arumuga was born in 1920. He joined the freedom movement in 1939. He took part in the August movement of 1942 and courted imprisonment and kept in Alipuram jail for one year.

19. Kottaya Koravan, son of Kannappan, born in 1906, took part in the Quit India Movement in 1942 and he was arrested and sentenced to seven years under Sec. IPC-147 and Defence of India Rules 38(5). He was kept in Madurai and Alipuram jails. He was from Melayur, Ramanathapuram district. 101

20. Ranga Koravan, son of Udayan, born in 1905, participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to seven years

99 Interview with Sivarajan, op. cit.
100 District Calendar of Events, pp. 92-97.
101 Ibid., p. 344
under Sec. IPC-147. He was kept in central jail, Madurai. He was a native of Thiruvadanai, Ramnad district.\textsuperscript{102}

Many dalits from Thanjavur district also took an active part. The following is a brief list of dalit participants from Thanjavur district.

1. Ammasi, born in 1902 took part in the August Movement in 1942. He courted arrest and was kept in Thanjavur and Alipuram jails for one year and nine months. He was from Thirupoonthuruthi, Thanjavur district.\textsuperscript{103}

2. Arumugam, son of Saman Kaladi, born in 1894, took part in Quit India Movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced to ten months during 1943-44 under Sec. IPC-380 and Defense of India Rules and he was kept in Alipuram jail. He was also from Thirupoonthuruthi, Thanjavur district.\textsuperscript{104}

3. Idumban, son of Muthusamy Kaladi, born in 1913 joined the movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced under Defense of India Rules. He was kept in Alipuram jail for ten months. He was a harijan leader from Thirupoonthuruthi, Thanjavur district.\textsuperscript{105}

4. Murugan, son of Maruthan, born in 1910 participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942 and courted imprisonment and was kept in

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Interview with son Anburaj on 20th February 2003.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
Thanjavur jail for nine months and Alipuram jail for three months. He was from Thirupoonthuruthi.\(^{106}\)

5. Santhanam, son of Palani Kaladi was born in Thiruthuraipoondi in 1893. He involved in the freedom movement from the early period of Gandhian era. He participated in the Quit India Movement in 1943, and he was arrested and sentenced to ten months during 1943-44 under Defense of India Rules. He was kept in Alipuram jail.\(^{107}\)

6. Arumugam Samban from Thiruthuraipoondi born in 1902, took part in the 1942 August Movement. He was imprisoned and kept in Thanjavur and Alipuram jails for one year and three months.\(^{108}\)

7. Irumban, son of Muthusamy, born in 1913, joined the freedom movement and took part in the August movement in 1942. He was arrested and sentenced under Defense of India Rules. He was kept in Alipuram jail for ten months and 13 days. He was also from Thirupoonthuruthi.\(^{109}\)

After 1920, Gandhiji became the most respectable and powerful leader in Congress and Devendrar, a dalit community in Tamil Nadu, like other people of India, started considering him as the Mahatma and followed him. His Ahimsa principles attracted this community and many supported the Congress. Devendrar community paid their sincere


\(^{107}\) Ibid., p. 430.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., p. 430.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., p. 448.
allegiance to Gandhiji and took active part in all struggles organized by him.\textsuperscript{110}

**Role of Devendra Kula Vellalars**

From 1930 onwards Theni Ammachipuram Ayyanar Devendran started spreading the dictums of Gandhiji’s Ahimsa among his people. He gathered many of his people and made them participate in various *Satyagraha* struggles fashioned and shaped after Gandhian principles in his district. In 1942 he played a commendable role in Quit India Movement and he was instrumental in drawing many youths from Theni region to participate in this struggle. He was a recipient of so many medals offered to him by many congress leaders. He was a friend to Rajaji, Kamaraj and Bakthavathchalam and held many vital positions in congress. From 1952 to 1957 he became the Congress MLA from Nilakottai constituency. No doubt, he was a great leader who was responsible for the spread of Quit India movement in Theni region.\textsuperscript{111}

Palani Planiappa Devandrar was born in 1918 in Palani Nagar, Dindigal district. He was also a renowned freedom fighter. After completing his eighth standard, he worked for sometime as fireman in Indian Railways. Gandhian ideology of Ahimsa drove him to plunge into Gandhian Movement. He resigned his job and took active part in Gandiji’s

\textsuperscript{110} A. Ramasamy, “Tamil Nattil Gandhi” (Tamil), Chennai, p. 362.

\textsuperscript{111} D. Gnanasekaran, “Indian Viduthalai Porum, Devandrarkalum” (Tamil). Chennai, p. 16.
Quit India Movement along with Lakshmipathiroy and courted arrest. He became staunch Gandhian follower that was found in his choice wearing *khaddar* dhoti, shirt and a cap on his head. He conducted camps to chare away the cruel anti-social untouchability factor along with Kamarajar and Kakkan. He did many social works that attracted the attention of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when he paid visit to Palani. In this endeavors Lakshmipathiroy supported him to a great extent. He believed in the service of people without getting any party embellishment. Thiyaga Deepam Palani entered into the heavenly abode in 1993 on his 75th year.112 His services to freedom movement, especially Quit India Movement is ever remembered.

Gnathipalayam Dasapannadi was born in Sayandapoor, Gopi Taluk, Erode district. He was an active participant in Salt *Satyagraha* Movement in 1930 and Quit India Movement in 1942. Born rich he had the fire to spread the gospel of Gandhian principle in and surround his village. He staged many dramas having the theme of India's freedom from the foreign rule. He droved many youths into his fold and with their support he instilled in the hearts and minds of Devendra, the spirit of freedom struggle. As a result he courted arrest for many times. Due to his active leadership Quit India Movement was very active in Erode district.113

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113 Freedom Struggle Files 1900-47, Government of Madras (Tamil Nadu Archives).
Avayan Devandrar was born in Kiraiyur village, Aruppukottai taluk, Virudhunagar district in 1920. He was graduated in Master of Arts in English and History and became an IAS officer during British rule. He joined in the British Indian civil services in India. Much impressed by Gandhian ideals he felt his service for the country was better than to serve British. He gave up his job and joined Gandhian Satyagraha Movement. He took an active part in the freedom movement in 1942. His erudition and devotion to serve the downtrodden was also marvelous.\textsuperscript{114} Earlier he had participated in the great Salt Satyagraha Struggle and got arrested.\textsuperscript{115} However at that time he was hardly a boy of ten. During the Quit India Movement, he was instrumental for arranging various meetings in the Aruppukkottai region.

Thekampatti Balasundararasu Devendarar was born in Thekampatti village in Theni district in 1900. From 1920 to 1952, he did a lot for the development of Congress in that region. He gathered many youths and instilled in them the spirit of freedom. He participated the historic struggle of abolition of toddy as instructed by Gandhiji and faced imprisonment in Madurai. He took part in many struggles form 1930 onwards and went to jail with them with 500 Congress Volunteers.\textsuperscript{116} He formed an organisation for the abolition caste in India. In 1926, he formed Devendra Vellalar

\textsuperscript{114} Somelay, "Madurai Mavatta Varalaru" Madurai, 1985, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{115} "India Suthindra Poril Devendrakal", Tamilar Panpattu Aivu Niruvanam, Chennai, 2000, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{116} Dalit Murasu, 2003, p. 27.
Union. He went to jail for his active participation in Quit India Movement.

Emanuel Devendarar belonged to Selloor in Paramakudi Taluk, Ramanathapuram district. He participated in the Quit India Movement (1942) and he was put in jail for three months. Many Devendrars from Coimbatore was arrested for their role in Quit India Movement. The following is a brief list.

1. Devasagayam, son of Chinna Pannadi imprisoned for six months, because of involving himself in August revolution.

2. Shanmugam, son of Mr. Arunachala Pannadi was sentenced for six months for his participation in the abolition of Toddy and staging dharna. He also participated in the Quit India Movement and was imprisoned. His brother Arumuga Devendarar was also imprisoned for six months for the same reason.

3. Pattani Mariyappa Pannadi was imprisoned for six months because of participating in August revolution.

4. Karuppusamy Pannadi was sentenced for six months.

5. Ramasamy Pannadi was sentenced for one year.

6. Nagappa Pannadi was sentenced for nine months.

7. Duraiswamy Pannadi (Thullan) was sentenced for his active part in the August revolution.

8. Arokiyasamy Pannadi was arrested under Defence of India Rules.

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118 Interview with P. Chandrapose, dated 20th June 2003.
9. Backiaswamy Pannadi was imprisoned under the Defence of India rules.

10. Arunachala Pannadi was sentenced for one year.

11. Kamatchi was sentenced for three months.

12. Marudhasalam Pannadi was also arrested.

The arrest continued from 1st December 1942 to 18th December 1942. Enquiry date was first day of December in 1942 and the Judgment was on 18th December 1942. Among the 58 persons, 16 belonged Devendra Kula Vellalar community. They are mentioned below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nachimuthu Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Muniya Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avinasi Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamatchi Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arumuga Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramaswamy Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kanni Pannadi</td>
<td>Singanallore</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamatchi Pannadi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinna Masanam Pannadi</td>
<td>Kallumadai</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

119 Letter from District Magistrate, Kovai to Government, dated 9th December 1942.
Like this all over Tamil Nadu many Devendaras actively took part in freedom struggle and they were punished for it. They are remembered even today. We can gather a lot of information and make a big history on the role of Devendaras active participation in freedom struggle.\textsuperscript{120}

Balakrishnan Kudumban took part in Quit India Movement and he was put in prison. He gathered a lot of youths and rebelled against British. He was a great challenge to the English. He was called as 'Bula' by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was elected as MP from Erode and from Dindigul for Congress party. During his period he worked for the poor and down trodden. He was friend to Kamarajar. All his popularity was due to his active involvement in the Quit India Movement.

**Change in Congress Policy**

After the Quit India agitation, the Congress lost much of its influence and prestige. When the movement started, the Congressites thought it was a blessing on their part and renewed the agitation.\textsuperscript{121} As the Congressites could not succeed in their aim of immediate freedom,\textsuperscript{122} people lost confidence in the Congress party. In order to restore its lost power and prestige, the Congressites were forced to adopt different tactics.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[120] Interview with Seeniraj, Son of Raju Pannadi, Puliyur Kulam, dated 21st October 2003.
\item[121] Parayil Shamsudeen (Ed), “Swathanthria Samara Senanikal” (Malayalam), Trivandrum, 1980, p. 83.
\end{footnotes}
With Gandhiji’s release on 6 May 1944, on medical grounds, political activity regained momentum. Constructive work became the main form of Congress activity, with a special emphasis on the reorganization of the Congress machinery. Congress committees were revived under different names - Congress Workers Assemblies or Representative Assemblies of Congressmen - rendering the ban on Congress committees ineffective. The task of training workers, membership drives and fund collection was taken up. This re-organisation of the Congress under the ‘cover’ of the constructive programme was viewed with serious misgivings by the Government which saw it as an attempt to rebuild Congress influence and organisation in the villages in preparation for the next round of struggle. A strict watch was kept on these developments, but no repressive action was contemplated and the Viceroy’s energies were directed towards formulating an offer (known as the Wavell Offer or the Simla Conference) which would pre-empt a struggle by effecting an agreement with the Congress before the War with Japan ended. The Congress leaders were released to participate in the Simla Conference in June 1945.123

When Congress leaders emerged from jail in mid-June 1945, they expected to find a demoralized people, benumbed by the repression of 1942, bewildered by the absence of leadership and battered by the

privations that the War brought. To their surprise, they found tumultuous
crowds waiting for them, impatient to do something, restless and
determinedly anti-British. Repression had steeled the brave and stirred the
conscience of the fence-sitter. Political energies were surfacing after more
than three years of repression and the expectations of the people were now
heightened by the release of their leaders. The popular belief was that the
release would mark the beginning of a period of rapid political progress.\textsuperscript{124}

\textbf{Dawn of Freedom}

Lord Wavell flew to London on 21st March 1945 to consult His
Majesty’s government on Indian affairs and came back on 4th June. He
published his new plan, know as Wavell Plan. The highlight of the plan
was the reconstitution of Viceroy’s Executive Council. It was to be largely
Indian in character and composition.\textsuperscript{125} He sent invitations to 21 leaders to
a conference to be held at Simla. Due to the communal question, the plan
ended in failure.

In 1946, exploring the option of negotiation before launching a
movement was seen to be crucial since the British were likely to leave
India within two to five years, according to Nehru. The Secretary of State’s
New Year statement and the British Prime Minister’s announcement of the

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 474.
\textsuperscript{125} The Indian Review, July 1945, pp. 391-395.
decision to send a Cabinet Mission on 19 February 1946 spoke of Indian independence coming soon.\textsuperscript{126}

The Congress and League interpreted the Mission Plan in their own way, both seeing it as a confirmation of their stand. Thus, Patel maintained that the Mission's Plan was against Pakistan, that the League's veto was gone and that one Constituent Assembly was envisaged. The League announced its acceptance of the Plan on 6 June in so far as the basis of Pakistan was implied in the Mission's plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping. Nehru asserted the Congress Working Committee's particular interpretation of the plan in his speech to the AICC on 7 July 1946: 'We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly.'\textsuperscript{127} The implication was that the Assembly was sovereign and would decide rules of procedure. Jinnah seized the opportunity provided by Nehru's speech to withdraw the League's acceptance of the Mission Plan on 29th July, 1946.\textsuperscript{128}

The developing crisis was temporarily defused by the statement made by Attlee in Parliament on 20 February, 1947. The date for British withdrawal from India was fixed as 30 June 1948 and the appointment of a new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, was announced.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 485.
\textsuperscript{127} Bombay Chronicle, 8 July 1946.
\textsuperscript{128} Bipan Chandra, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 493.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 495.
The Mountbatten Plan, announced his plan on the 3rd June 1947. The plan set down the partition of India as a settled fact. Accordingly the Indian Independence Act was passed by British Parliament on July 5, 1947 and it received Royal assent on 18th July, to become operative on 15th August, 1947. Thus India got independence and in this venture nationalists from all communities every place of India rendered their service.

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130 R. C. Agarwal, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-313.