APPENDIX – II

The ‘Sri Bagh Pact’

The controversy over the headquarters of the Andhra University had confirmed the suspicions of the people of Rayalaseema that they may not get fair treatment in the Andhra province. In order to protect the interests of Rayalaseema an organization known as Rayalaseema Mahasabha was formed in 1934 by Justices like C.L.Narasimha Reddi, K. Subrahmanyam an others. The first session of the Rayalaseema Mahasabha was held at Madras on 28 January 1934. Nemali Pattabhirama Rao of Cuddapah presided over the conference which was opened by S. Satyamurthi who was well known for his anti-Andhra bias. The conference, however, opposed the attempts made by the legislators of the coastal districts to extend the jurisdiction of the Andhra University over Rayalaseema. By another resolution the conference demanded the creation of Sri Venkateswara University at Tirupati. No prominent Congressmen from Rayalaseema attended the conference.

The second session of the conference was held at Cuddapah in the first week of September 1935. Important Congress leaders of Rayalaseema like K. Koti Reddi, G. Harisarvatham Rao and P. Ramachari did not attend it. The conference failed to make any impact on the people. The leaders of the Rayalaseema Mahasabha like Narasimha Reddi and Subrahmanyam contested the election of 1937 and were defeated by Congress candidates.
In the 1937 elections the Congress came out triumphant and it assumed office on 14 July 1937 under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari. Soon after the elections, the Andhras intensified their demand for a separate province. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who became the President of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee in August 1937 wanted the All India Congress Committee to pass a resolution for the creation of Andhra province. G. Brahmayya, Bulusu Sambamurthy and other leaders also intensified their efforts to secure the province at an early date. Andhra leaders were now able to concentrate on the problems affecting them most since their minds were not distracted by international issues and national problems. The citizens of Vijayawada decided to invite the Andhra Mahasabha to hold its Silver Jubilee Session in their town. Everywhere there was a new sense of urgency and the leaders of the Circars realized the need to enlist the co-operation of Rayalaseema in order to get their long cherished demand fulfilled.

The activities of the Andhra leader did not go unnoticed by the great Tamil leader, Sri Chakravarthi Rajagopalachaari. Earlier in May 1935 he announced his retirement from active public life. But the Congress High Command prevailed upon him to contest the elections from the doubly safe university constituency. Many Andhras felt that this was done to prevent Prakasam from becoming the premier of Madras. Prabhuddha Andhra in outspoken Telugu monthly edited by Sripada Subrahmanyam, in its issue of
September 1937 very bluntly said that Prakasam was not allowed to become premier since Gandhiji disliked Andhras becoming great.

When Rajagopalachari became the premier he, by a very clever move, set at naught the effort of the Andhra leaders to forge unity between the Circars and Rayalaseema. While constituting his cabinet he included Prakasam, Bezawda Gopala Reddi and V.V.Giri, all hailing from coastal Andhra, as ministers. The Rayalaseema districts were not given any representation. Naturally Rayalaseema became very sore and felt that it was let down by the Circars leaders, who had not insisted on the inclusion of the Rayalaseema representatives in the cabinet. Noticing the rift between Rayalaseema and the Circarrs, the Ramil leaders like, Rajagopalachariar, Satyamurthi and T.S.S. Rajan openly spoke against Andhra province. This made Pattabhi make the prophetic remark that “the British would grant us independence sooner than the Tamil Ministers would give us a separate province”.

In this atmosphere of suspicion and disillusionment, the Silver Jubilee session of the Andhra Mahasabha was held at Vijayawada towards the end of October 1937. The session was inaugurated by Halaharvi Sitarama Reddi and presided over by Kadap Koti Reddi both M.L.As from Rayalaseema. They have vent to the suspicions of Rayalaseema and appealed to the Circar leaders to win back the confidence of Rayalaseema by providing safeguards to that region. The safeguards related mainly to the location of the capital, parity of
representation in the ministry between the Circars and Rayalaseema and the execution of irrigational projects like Tungabhadra.

The Circar leaders appreciated the genuine fears of the Rayalaseema people and decided to provide the safeguards they demanded. The Circar leaders remembered how due to their pre-occupation with national affairs, the genuine Telugu areas like Parlakimedi, Berhampore, Chatrapur, and Jeypore agency were lost to Orissa when it was made a separate province in 1936. They felt that the time has come to put an end to the dissensions among the Telugu people and make an all out effort to secure Andhra province.


**The Agreement Provided:**

University: That two University Center’s are to be developed under the Andhra University, one at Waltair and another at Anantapur so as to distribute the Centres of Culture over the Andhra Desa and create opportunities for Social and Cultural intercourse among the Andhras and locate colleges in areas favourable to the subjects dealt with.

Irrigation: That to ensure the rapid development of Agricultural and Economic interests of Rayalaseema and Nellore to the level of those in the
coastal district, schemes of irrigation should for a period of ten years or such longer period as conditions may necessitate, be given preferential claim, specially in respect of the utilization of the waters of Tungabhadra, Krishna and Pennar, giving for ten years exclusive attention in respect of major projects beneficial to these areas. That whenever the question of sharing waters arise, the needs of the before-said areas be first met, and that this policy be implemented as from today in the administration of the province, (and)

Legislature: That in the matter of general seats in the Legislature, the distribution shall be generally on an equal district basis.

It is agreed that the location of the University, the Headquarters and the High Court may advantageously be in different places as not to concentrate all civil importance at the same centre.

Accordingly it is agreed that while the University may continue to be where it is, the High Court and Metropolis be located in suitable places in the Coastal districts and Rayalaseema, the choice being given to Rayalaseema.

It shall, however, be open to vary these terms by common consent.

After the signing of the 'Sri Bagh' pact the Andhra members of the Madras Legislature requested the premier to sponsor a resolution on Andhra province. Rajagopalachari, whose anti-Andhra proclivities were well known,
outwitted the Andhra members by making the Madras Legislature pass a comprehensive resolution for the creation of Andhra, Madras, Kerala and Mysore provinces. K.V. Reddi Naidu’s amendment, for the immediate creation of Andhra province as a first step was rejected. The Madras Government forwarded the resolution of the Government of India on 21 April 1938. Meanwhile on 2 May, the British Government announced in the House of Commons that no new provinces would be created in India. This announcement shocked the Andhras. Many suspected that the British Government’s attitude might have been influenced by Rajagopalachari’s advice. Balusu Sambamurthy, speaker of Madras Assembly wanted to resign his position and take active part in the agitation of Andhra province. The Congress High Command ordered that no Congressman should take part in the agitation. He bowed down to the dictates of the High Command. On 25 March 1939 Rajagopalachari informed the Madras Assembly that the secretary of State for India turned down the request for the creation of Andhra. The Second World War broke out in September 1939 and the Congress ministers in the provinces resigned in November 1939. The question of Andhra province once again receded into the background.