CHAPTER VI

CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENTS AND NATIONALISTS' CONFRONTATION: MADRAS EXPERIENCE 1928-1935

In order to subside the spirit of nationalism and appeasing the nationalist leaders, the British administration announced a number of Constitutional concessions to the natives. These concessions effected a series of movements such as Salt Satyagraha, Civil disobedience and others. Gandhiji's deep involvement opened a new phase in the annals of Freedom Movement. The City of Madras played an important role in it.

In England the Conservative Party Ministry's term was coming to a close. They feared that the Socialists might dislodge them and thereafter yield to Indian pressures demanding Swaraj. To forestall such an eventuality, they sent the Statutory Commission to help them divide and rule Indians. In November 1927, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy announced this commission of seven members comprising Sir John Simon, Lord Burnham, Colonel Lane Fox, Major Attlee, Messrs. Cadogan, Hartshorn and Strathcona, all Britishers. It is known as Simon Commission.

The Congress opposed this Commission. It was ready for a fight in the streets with the backing and participation of the masses. Further, the Congress
passed a resolution at the Madras Session in 1927 that a Constitution for India should be drawn by an All-India All-Parties Conference to be convened for the purpose. With Sambamurti proposing and Jawaharlal Nehru supporting, what was called the Republican Congress was formed in that session.

Annie Besant was the first person to think of a programme to be chalked out by all the leaders in Madras. She wrote to them to meet at the New India building on November 9th, 1927. Early in December 1927 local leaders formed a committee to organise and regulate the boycott movement.

The Press had, practically with one voice, taken up the same attitude, even the more moderate papers displaying no enthusiasm for the Commission. Annie Besant presided over a meeting at the Mahajana Sabha Hall on 12th November 1927. On 17th November a manifesto was signed by the leaders. The Madras Presidency Muslim League passed a resolution in support of the boycott. The All-India Muslim Conference at its meeting at Calcutta, joined the movement. An All-India Khilafat Conference was also held in Madras.

With S. Satyamurthi as President, a Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee was formed. Meetings were held in various parts of the City. Hartals and

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3 Fortnightly Report, First half, December 1927.
picketing of witnesses were planned. The Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee engaged itself in organising meetings, distributing leaflets, putting up posters and publishing in the Press intensively. At least two meetings a day in the City with one more on the beach became a routine. Thousands of people came to the beach meetings. Students were asked to abstain from schools and colleges, bazaarmen and shopkeepers to suspend their business, lawyers and clients not to appear in the courts, the owners of public vehicles to stop plying their vehicles; the editors not to publish, the general public not to travel by train or trams and to hoist the national flag and a black one with 'boycott' inscribed on it. Many volunteers were enrolled.

5 On 5th January 1928, there was a meeting at Tilak Ghat. Srinivasa Iyengar, Satyamurthi and Kaleswara Rao spoke at a beach meeting on 6th January 1928, and urged the people to boycott the commission. Near the Audikesava Perumal Temple in Chintadripet, a public meeting with C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar as president, was held on January 12th 1928, under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabha and the Madras District Congress Committee.

The Simon Boycott Propaganda Committee decided to meet every day at 5 p.m. from 23rd January 1928 at the Madras Mahajana Sabha Hall, Mount Road, Madras. All the members were requested to attend daily without fail. It also appealed to the volunteers to join the procession on 3rd February 1928, the day on

5 Fortnightly Report, second half, January 1928.
6 The Hindu, 13 1.1928.
which the Simon Commission would arrive in India. All the merchants in Madras joined and organised a meeting at Pudupet on 25th January, 1928 with Dr. A. Lakshmipathi in the chair. V.L. Kesavulu and others spoke and the meeting voted for the boycott. The same day another meeting was held at the High Court beach with Nageswara Rao Pantalu in the chair. S. Satyamurthi, Shafee Mohammed, Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and others spoke urging the audience to boycott the Commission.

With Harisarvottama Rao in the chair, another meeting was held on January 26th 1928 at Purasawakkam. K. Nageswar Rao, S. Satyamurthi, Bulusu Sambamurthi, Basheer Ahmed Sayeed and other Congress leaders addressed the well-attended public meeting. Nageswara Rao dwelt upon the significance of the Madras Congress resolution for complete Independence. People listened with great enthusiasm. He urged the people of Madras to support the other resolution of the Congress, the one asking to boycott the Commission. Besides the Congress and the Khilafat Committee jointly organised a meeting at the Triplicane beach on 29th January 1928. The gathering of nearly 7,000 people listened to leaders who included D. Kulanlai, Yakub Husain, Basheer Ahmed Sayeed, Abdul Hamid Khan, S. Satyamurthi, Rangaiah Naidu, Masilamani Pillai, Yaminipoorna Tilakamma, V.L. Sastri and others. A set of rowdies attending an anti-boycott

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7 The Hindu, January 26, 1928.
8 The Hindu, January 27, 1928.
meeting simultaneously being held there, tried to attack the prominent nationalist leaders with sticks and knives. The affray lasted for more than 20 minutes. Yakub Husain, Satyamurthi and Hamid Khan had a narrow escape. Sastri was attacked near the Bells Road⁹, Triplicane, Madras.

A meeting at Loane Square, Broadway, simultaneously held that day with Dr.P. Varadarajulu Naidu in the chair, was well attended. As the meeting was progressing, students from the Gokhale Hall meeting joined them, six of them carrying Satyamurthi on their shoulders. D. Kuldai addressed the meeting and referring to the previous day’s rowdyism asked them to ignore such intimidatory disturbances and join the boycott and boldly attend in their thousands, the beach meeting to be held in the evening of February 3rd 1928. V.L. Sastri, O. Kandaswami Chetti and Sami Venkatachalam Chetti spoke. Moulvi Maulana Mohammed Hussain of Lucknow spoke in Urdu exhorting the Muslims to boycott the Commission. Basheer Ahmed translated the speech into Tamil. Srimati Mangammal also spoke¹⁰.

Another meeting was held at Nungambakkam near the Loyola College. Presiding over it, Nageswara Rao declared that it was the supreme duty of every one to boycott the Simon Commission.

⁹ The Hindu, January 30, 1928.
¹⁰ The Hindu, January 31, 1928.
In the early hours of 30th January, 1928 (between 1.15 and 2.30 p.m.), the Law College students, numbering six hundred, met under the Presidentship of S. Satyamurthi at the Gokhale Hall and voted for hartal. They also wanted the principal of the college, to postpone the college examinations posted for 3rd February 1928.11

Women too participated in the meetings. The Madras City Sweet-meat Stall and Hotel Keepers' Association met on 1st February at No.148, Mint street and expressed support for the boycott. Mrs. Yaminipoorna Tilakamma, Mrs. Masilamani, Mrs. Rukmini Lakshmipati and others spoke at a ladies' meeting held at the Gokhale Hall on the same day.12 Violent mobs flooded the City from dawn to dusk and raised slogans against British and Simon Commission In order to suppress the mobs, the police ordered firing in which one person Parthasarathy died near High Court. Subbiah, Doraiswami and Ranganatha Mudaliar were injured. Parthasarathi's body was brought to the middle of the road from the Christian College corner of the Lingi Chetti street and the crowd was advancing towards the court. Military was requisitioned and it came at 1.45 p.m.13

In the evening there was a procession from the Madras Maha Jana Sabha to the Triplicane beach. Volunteers carried black flags and sang national songs.

11 The Hindu, January 31, 1928.
12 The Hindu, February 2, 1928.
Prakasam, Rama das pantulu, C.N. Muthuranga Mudallar, P. Varadarajulu Naidu, D. Kuldandai, K. Nageswara Rao, K Bhashyam and Shafiee Muhammed were present at the beach meeting over which S. Satyamurthi presided. Prakasam recounted the incidents at the High Court. Rowdies and the police attacked the procession and the meeting. All the leaders thanked the citizens of Madras for the successful and complete hartal observed as a protest against the Simon Commission.

The Government was rattled and on 8th February 1928, section 144 Criminal Procedure Code, was invoked and meetings, processions, demonstrations and all propaganda were prohibited, well before the date of the Commission’s arrival in Madras. A joint meeting of the Andhra and Tamil Nadu Congress Committees could not come to an agreement on continuing the struggle by defying the gagging orders. Nageswara Rao sent a telegram to Congress President, Ansari, stating that the Andhra members felt that it would be a national dishonour if the gagging order was not disobeyed and that Prakasam, Sambamurthi and himself were for it. Basheer Ahmed presided over a High Court beach meeting on 9th February 1928 where Prakasam, Satyamurti, Muthuranga Mudallar, O. Kandasami Chetti and others spoke. They condemned the arrest of Bulusu Sambamurti whose patriotism they praised. Prakasam also gave a similar statement from Calcutta

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14 The Hindu, 23.02.1928.
15 The Hindu, February 11, 1929.
on 23rd February 1928 that it was a national humiliation for the Congress High Command to say that Madras Presidency need not observe hartal on the day of the Commission's landing in Madras. The Congress High Command wanted to be soft towards the soft leaders in the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. The Commission came to Madras on 25th February, 1928. Inspite of the Congress High Command's dictate, the Andhra Congress Committee issued a clarion call for hartal and some members of the Madras Provincial Congress also supported this moves.

Thanking the citizens for making the hartal a success, Prakasam in a Press statement said: "Not with standing the gagging order of the Government under sec.144 Cr PC, the calling off of the hartal by the Working Committee of the Congress and the local Boycott Committee at the last moment, and the practical suspension on the part of the Congress Committee of all propaganda even with regard to the boycott of the Simon Commission, - the hartal observed in Madras today has been very nearly as good as that of the 3rd instant". He also congratulated the citizens for their determination and undaunted bravery.

On 28th February 1928, Presidency College Principal, Fyson sent a circular demanding compliance stating that the Simon Commission would visit the Presidency College on Wednesday the 29th morning and all students whether their

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16 The Hindu, February 27, 1928.
lectures were over or not, should be present. A meeting organised by the Simon Commission Boycott Propaganda Committee, was held at the Triplicane beach. Prakasam appealed for the boycott of British goods. D. Kuiandai of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and Bulusu Sambamurti and others felt that it was wrong for the working Committee to have asked them not to observe hartal on that day. A dinner was hosted by the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court and Sir C.P. Ramaswami Ayyar in honour of Sir John Simon. D. Kuiandai organised a protest procession in the evening of 2nd March 1928 against what was called a national dishonour. The processionists marched along various streets and reached the beach where a meeting attended by 1,500 people was held with Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu in the chair.

On 31st March 1928, the day on which the Commission left Bombay for England, a meeting was held at the Triplicane beach where stormy speeches were made condemning the government and the municipality. At the end of the meeting there was a bonfire of foreign clothes.

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17 The Hindu, February 29, 1928.
The national week was devoted mainly to propagate Khaddar and boycott of British goods. Meetings were held every day and the 13th April 1928 was fixed for observation as Martyrs Day18.

During the fortnight, Lala Lajpat Rai visited Madras City and some parts of the Presidency. Welcome addresses were given to him in the meeting held at Beach on the 12th April 1928. Lalaji spoke on India's Independence. The attitude of the Madras men during the Commission's visit to the City was condemned as 'cowardly' by S. Srinivasa Iyengar. All the major cities visited by the Commission had fully and faithfully carried out the decision of the All-Parties Conference by unequivocally repudiating the Commission. The only major City which failed was Madras - the place which was the first to hold aloft the banner of boycott19. On the last day of the national week, the 13th April, 1928 a public meeting was held in the beach when it was resolved to collect signatures to a manifesto declaring the determination of the people not to give evidence before the Commission or to cooperate with it in any manner20.

A provincial All-parties Conference was held on 6th October 1928 with Annie Besant as president. The conference gave its support to the Motilal Nehru Report and the Lucknow decision asking for Dominion Status, but allowed

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18 Fortnightly Report, first half, April 1928.
19 Fortnightly Report, Second half, April 1928.
freedom of action to congressmen who aimed at complete Independence. Yakub Husain the mover of the resolution said that the Nehru Report was advantageous to Muslims.\footnote{Fortnightly Report, first half, October 1928.}

The Simon Commission came to India for the second time landing in Bombay on October 12th, 1928.

But the Simon Commission was right in India and the boycott programme continued. As a mark of respect, the Madras Corporation on 7th October 1928 morning, voted to welcome the Commission with an address. Congress members walked out.\footnote{The Hindu, February 7, 1929.}

In the year 1929, On 16th February, 1929, Motilal appealed to citizens of Madras to do their duty by boycotting the Simon Commission. That afternoon at the new Swarajya building, Mylapore, the Andhra Provincial congress committee met and condemned the Corporators.\footnote{The Hindu, February 16, 1929.}

On 17th February, at 4 p.m. police went to Prakasam's house at Mylapore and arrested Desabhakta Konda Venkatappaiah Pantulu, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, K.V.R. Swami, M.L.C., G.V. Punnaiah Sastri and Kala Venkata Rao under section
151 Criminal Procedure Code, which was meant to apprehend thieves, robbers and dacoits.24

On Monday the 18th February, the Simon Commission came to Madras. A successful and complete hartal with black flag demonstrations marked the day. The Government had taken special precautions to see that "the route which the members of the Simon Commission are to take from the Harbour is well guarded. The procession will not be allowed to cross the willington Bridge, and to use force if tresspassing occur. A procession with Prakasam and A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, Kaleswara Rao and others started from the Swarajya office in Broadway on the morning of the 18th February 1928 at 6.15 a.m."25 It joined the main procession waiting at the Napier park under Srinivasa Iyengar's lead. The joint procession with Srinivasa Iyengar in the front row reached the beach later and a meeting with Srinivasa Iyengar in the chair was held there. Prakasam, Ramadas Pantulu and others spoke.26

The Madras Legislative Council on 26th February had an adjourn motion moved on the arrests of the Andhra leaders. The Commission left Madras for Ootacamund on 3rd March 1929.

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24 The Hindu, February 17, 1929.
25 The Hindu, 19.02.1929. A photo of this procession taken in Broadway, was published in the centenary volume, though wrongly ascribing it to 1928. p.400.
26 Ibid.
Gandhiji was arrested on 4\textsuperscript{th} March 1929 at Calcutta. On 6\textsuperscript{th} March 1929, a public meeting was held at the Triplicane beach under the aegis of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and the Madras Mahajana Sabha to condemn Gandhiji's arrest. At the end of the meeting, foreign cloth collected on the spot was burnt. On 10\textsuperscript{th} March, at a meeting at Tilak Ghat, there was a bonfire of foreign cloth, on a large scale\textsuperscript{27}.

A meeting of the Andhra District Congress Committee was held on 11\textsuperscript{th} March, with Nageswara Rao in the chair when a resolution was passed congratulating Valla Bhai Patel on his arrest\textsuperscript{28}. Bulusu Sambamurti was released on 12\textsuperscript{th} March 1929. On the same day, the Central Legislative Assembly carried Motilal's resolution censuring the Government for not responding to the National Demand. Jinnah, though not a votary to the Nehru Report, voted with the Congress\textsuperscript{29}. Satyamurthi held a flag hoisting ceremony at the Triplicane beach on 31\textsuperscript{st} March, 1929. Simon commission left India in April 1929. Even after that the Madras Congressmen continued the agitation. Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya addressed meetings in Madras for two days in May, 1929\textsuperscript{30}. Vemavarapu Ramadas Pantulu presided over a meeting organised by the Andhra District Congress Committee, at the Triplicane beach on 10\textsuperscript{th} August 1929. Boycott of foreign cloth

\textsuperscript{27} Fortnightly Report, first half, March 1929.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} A Hundred Years of The Hindu, Op.cit., p.360.
\textsuperscript{30} Fortnightly Report, first half, May 1929.
and encouraging Swadesi goods were the topics discussed\textsuperscript{31}. Valla Bhai Patel was warmly welcomed by the League of Youth and others. He addressed many meetings in Madras City\textsuperscript{32}. The death of Jatindra Nath Das was condoled at meetings held by the League of Youth and the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee\textsuperscript{33}.

On 2nd October 1929, Gandhiji's 61st birthday was celebrated with a procession to Gandhi Ghat, Triplicane, where the National Flag was hoisted. Thousands were fed. Khadi was hawked in the City. In the evening, a huge meeting was held opposite to Parthasarathi Swami Temple, where Muthuranga Mudaliar hoisted the flag. Annie Besant's 83rd birthday was celebrated at the Gokhale Hall under the presidency of C.V.S. Narasimha Raju. The all-India 9th flag salutation day was celebrated by the Madras branch of the Hindusthan Seva Dal. The Madras League of Youth was busy holding meetings\textsuperscript{34}. Prakasam was accorded a public welcome by about 500 students on his return from the Straits settlements, practice of the legislators. The Nehru Report torpedoed the Simon strategy and the Government had to think of more soft and mellow methods as an alternative attempt to tempt the unwary Indian. The Simon Commission had already left India in April 1929 for good. General elections in England were over in May 1929. Ramsay Macdonald formed the Labour Government. Soon-after he

\textsuperscript{31} Fortnightly Report, first half, August 1929.
\textsuperscript{32} Fortnightly Report, first half, September 1929.
\textsuperscript{33} Fortnightly Report, second half, September 1929.
\textsuperscript{34} Fortnightly Report, first half, October 1929.
announced that India would in a matter of months, join the Common wealth of Dominions. This revived hopes again in India.

Lord Irwin went to England to bring peace and on return from there, declared in October 1929 that the objective of India’s Constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion Status; but the time frame was not specified. Gandhi stated that he was dying for cooperation with the new outfit in London. Though the formal conferment of a Dominion Status might take long, he wanted real Dominion Status in action.

The Viceroy escaped a bomb explosion narrowly on 23rd December, 1929, the day he fixed for a meeting with Gandhi, Motilal, Sapru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Jinnah also attended the meeting. There was no assurance of any Dominion Status given by the Viceroy. People were disappointed at the perfidy of the British.

The Congress met at Lahore on 30th December 1929. Gandhi brought a motion which changed the creed of the Congress to Swaraj, meaning Complete Independence. As Gandhi felt that the time had come for younger people to shoulder the responsibility, he proposed and strongly supported Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the Presidentship. Nehru declared Independence as the goal and at the stroke of midnight on 31st December 1929, unfurled the Congress flag. The new

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35 R.C. Agarwal, Constitutional Development of India, (New Delhi, 1984), Pp.216, 217
Working Committee on 2nd January 1930 called for the resignation of members of the assembly and councils. 26th January 1930 was declared as Independence Day, to be celebrated by hoisting the new tricolour flag, reading a manifesto declaring Independence and pledging loyalty to the Congress, and to fight for liberty. As in the other parts of the country, the Civil Disobedience Movement was ushered in, in Madras with the unfurling of the Swaraj Flag on 26th January 1930. Desodharaka Kasinathuni Nageswara Rao, the editor of Andhra Partika, unfurled the flag in the premises of his office, 7, Thambu Chetti street, George Town. After exhorting the gathering to overthrow the alien Government, he led a procession of volunteers including Ganti Suryanarayana Murthi, Krishna Iyer, Yamini Purnatilakamma, Neelamraju Venkata Seshayya of Andhra Patrika and Avula Parthasarathi marched along Esplanade, Mint street, Govindappa Naicken street, and Kotwal Bazaar singing patriotic songs. Having thus kindled the spirit of independence in the masses, he held a meeting in the High Court beach, under the aegis of the Andhra Congress Committee, where the Lahore Congress pledge was taken in Tamil and Telugu by those assembled.

There was a noticeable intensification of police activity in the first fortnight of March 1930 in Madras. C. Rajagopalachari and Pattabhi Sitaramayya spoke in different meetings. A mammoth procession followed by a mass meeting in the

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evening to celebrate the start of the much advertised march of Gandhiji from his Ashram on 12th March 1930, attracted a large audience. Sundandira Sangu editor S. Ganesan was the leader. During the fortnight, the League of Youth and the National Volunteers organised five meetings.

The Young Independence Party's crowded public meeting on 4th March 1930 at Loane Square, Broadway, was addressed, among others, by P.S. Bhashyam Chetti, B. Ramajoga Rao, Srimati Durga Amma of Cocanada. Gadde Rangayya Naidu who presided, narrated the events leading to the launching of the movement by Gandhiji and appealed to the people to join Mahatmaji at that critical juncture and not to lag behind for fear of imprisonment. The Youth League in the City got busy enlisting volunteers. Mass meetings were held and inspiring speeches made, and the volunteers were trained to defy the Salt Laws in a non-violent manner. On 27th March 1930 a meeting at Tilak Ghat, with C. Rajagopalachari in the chair was addressed by Bulusu Sambamurti fresh from the Bellary jail. It was decided to break the Salt Laws in Andhra on 31st March 1930 itself. Sambamurti who played a key part in moving the Independence resolution at the Madras Congress reminded the citizens of the resolution as he felt it his duty to ask them to come out and play a leading role to liberate the country and to derive the full benefits of Freedom. He urged them not to be inactive but be

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40 The Hindu, 5.3.1930.
41 B. Kesavanarayana, op. Cit. P.114.
doughty as an example to others. He added that people in Madras though endowed with high talents were lacking in sufficient emotion and strong will-power and thereby did not have spectacular achievements to their credit. It was an inspiring speech.\(^42\)

An informal meeting of volunteers met at No.186, Devaraja Mudali street on April 5\(^{th}\) 1930. They were exhorted to whole-heartedly involve themselves in the movement. More volunteers were enlisted.\(^43\)

It was the sixth day of April 1930. It was the first day of the National week; and it was the day this half-naked fakir of India would hurl defiance in the face of the mighty British Empire where the sun would never set. It was the beginning day of a non-violent war waged against a violent and brutal administration, living on sheer lies. Gandhiji, already in Dandi, would pick up salt on that day breaking the laws that deny the poor people even the salt that mother nature gave.

Early in the morning people gathered at the Andhra Patrika Office at No.7, Thambu Chetti street to salute the National Flag. National songs were sung. A procession was taken out at 7 a.m. with the fifty or sixty present, led by K. Nageswara Rao, V.L. Sastrī, Gadde Rangayya Naidu, S. Ganesan, Durgabayamma, Saraswathi Pandurangam, Kamalabai Saraswathi, Kamakshamma

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\(^{43}\) The Hindu, April 6\(^{th}\), 1930.
and a few other Congressmen, gaining in numbers as they marched through the principal streets of George Town, Sowcarpet, Park Town and the Seven Wells. They held a meeting at the Loane Square. Policemen on foot and horse marched in front of the procession.

In the evening, about 5,000 people attending, a meeting was held at the High Court beach, with Nageswara Rao in the chair. He dwelt on the significance of the national week celebrated in memory of the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy and on Gandhiji’s breaking the salt laws on the day. He appealed for men and materials for the struggle. Prakasam declared Madras was not dead what with the work of the Triplicane Congress Sabha, the Youth League and leaders like Nageswara Rao being so active. Madras rendered the best account of herself on all critical occasions, including the one when Simon came. Their problem then was to have Satyagraha or not. V.L. Sastri, K. Bhaskyam, Basheer Ahmed Sayeed, Gadde Rangayya Naidu, Durgabai Amma and others invited people to join the do-or-die struggle for the attainment of Swaraj. The mention of Gandhiji’s name was applauded repeatedly.

The Young Independent Party held a meeting on the 5th April 30 at 186, Devaraja Mudali street when R.P. Aiyar of Trivandrum presided. A Committee with R.P. Aiyar, P.S. Bhaskyam and others, was set up and a programme was

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44 Under Secretary’s Safe File No.683A dt. 30.04.1930.
chalked out: For three days beginning with Monday the 7th April 1930 hawking Khaddar and collecting funds in the main streets of Madras.

At the Soundarya Mahal, (Madras) meeting on 5th April 1930, with J.A. Saldanha, M.L.C. presiding Harisarvottama Rao prostrated before the gathering which insisted on his resigning his membership of the Council and thereby pacified the large crowd there. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti and others spoke45.

Prakasam and others spoke on 7th April, 1930 night at a meeting at Gangai Kondan Mandapam organised by the Triplicane Congress Sabha, the Youth League the Andhra District Congress Committee. Harihara Sarma asked Prakasam to lead the campaign in Madras. The latter assured to lead them and to be in the first batch. It would not rebound to the credit of Madras if it remained quiet and he declared that in one or two days the place and time for action would be announced. Easwara Iyer, V.L. Sastri and others spoke46.

On 8th April 1930, it was decided to conduct a satyagraha campaign with Nageswara Rao and Prakasam at the head. 90 volunteers with seventy from

45 The Hindu, April 6th, 1930.
46 The Hindu, April 8th, 1930.
the Young Independent Party and twenty from the League of Youth, were enlisted.\(^7\)

On 8\(^{th}\) April 1930 evening Bhashyam Chetti, Angachhi Ammal and R.P. Aiyar spoke at a meeting in Chintadripet organised by the Young Independent Party in support of the satyagraha, and appealed to the volunteers.\(^8\)

On 9\(^{th}\) April 1930 at a Mylapore meeting held by the Young Independent Party, appeals were made for men and money by Bhashyam Chetti, R.P. Aiyar, A. Subrahmanyam, Angachi Ammal and others. Satyagraha fund totalling Rs.1,700 was sent to C. Rajagopalachari\(^9\). On the same day, volunteers met at the headquarters of the Young Independent Party.

On 10\(^{th}\) April 1930 at a public meeting at Royapuram, the Young Independent Party along with Congressmen, appealed for funds and volunteers for the satyagraha due on the 13\(^{th}\) April 1930. B. Ramaloga Rao presided\(^10\).

The Congress planned to various programmes in Madras City, once such was collection of foreign cloth on 11\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\). The above work was done in the mornings, public meetings to be arranged in the evenings daily at 5.30, in parks and centres in Madras. On 11\(^{th}\) March 1930 R.P. Ayyar was to take volunteers to

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\(^7\) The Hindu, April 9\(^{th}\) 1930.
\(^8\) The Hindu, April 9\(^{th}\) 1930.
\(^9\) The Hindu, April 10\(^{th}\) 1930.
\(^10\) The Hindu, April 10\(^{th}\) 1930.
Trichirappalli to join the Vedaranyam March of Rajagopalachari, and to hold a monster meeting on the 12th March 1930 and burn the foreign cloth collected.51

Prakasam issued an appeal to the Madras public to enlist as volunteers in large numbers for violating salt laws in Madras on 13th April 1930.

Mrs. Rukmini Lakshmipati, President of the Youth League, O.P. Ramaswami Iyengar, Secretary, Dr. B. Subba Rao and K. Vinayaka Rao of the League, left Madras on 11th April 1930 for Trichirappalli.

Prakasam, Nageswara Rao and others after deliberations on 11th and 12th, decided to take a party of 32 volunteers with them in the first batch. The plan of action and the route to be followed were also decided.

Prakasam presided over the Tilak Ghat meeting on the 11th April 1930 which was held to give a send off to the first batch of South Indian volunteers from Bombay. It was addressed by Mylai Ratnasabhapati, V. Mahalinga Aiyar and the Bombay volunteers.52

The Young Independent Party under the leadership of P.S. Bhashyam Chetti held a meeting at Choolai, appealing to the volunteers. On 11th April 1930, Prakasam informed the Government his intention to defy the salt laws.53 On 13th

51 The Hindu, April 6th, 1930.
52 The Hindu, April 6th, 1930.
53 The Hindu, April 12th, 1930.
April 1930, the last day of the national week and also the Tamil New Year's day, people gathered in front of the Swarajya office, at 40, Broadway, at 6 a.m., and marched in a procession with Prakasam and Nageswara Rao in the lead, through China Bazaar Road, Sowcarpet, Chintadripet, Triplicane High Road, Pycrofts Road and reached the beach. Students of the Hindu Training School, Triplicane came in large numbers. The volunteers carried the tricolour in their hands. Fruits and sugar candy were distributed by Srimulu Naidu, a labour leader. The numbers increased as the procession progressed. Garlands and arathies were offered to the heroes and the huge crowds of people thrilled to witness, the volunteers started their work. While the brine was boiling in seven pots, Prakasam addressed the people in the hot sultry morning. He thanked them for their presence and participation at that hour. He told them how he prepared Salt at Kona and how it was seized by the police. He showed them the spoonfuls of that salt brought by him. They were excited to see the free salt. He asked them to give some of that contraband salt to the police who were there under Assistant Commissioner Venkatappayya's lead. The police left the place. Prakasam appealed for funds and volunteers.

In the meanwhile salt was prepared there, in the Madras beach. Two salt officers assisted by an Assistant Commissioner of Police and with the Inspector of Triplicane division elbowed into the crowds to the tent under which the volunteers
were making salt. A large number of sowars and constables were waiting in readiness in the Presidency College.

The Assistant Commissioner and the Collector of Salt H.L. Prager questioned K. Nageswara Rao as to what they would do with that salt. Promptly he said that they would make the best use of it. "Is not this impure stuff unsuitable for human consumption", a salt officer jutted in. "Not at all, you may seize it, confiscate, if you like", replied Nageswara Rao. Doing nothing like that, the officer turned to the young lady standing there and pitied her plight there. He did not know that he was talking to a veritable Durga, Srimati Gummiadiadala Durgabai, who told him that she was doing her duty\textsuperscript{34}. Then the people marched to Prakasam's house (at the junction of Brodies and St. Mary's Roads). At 11.45 a.m. they boiled salt water in big vessels put on trenches. After two hours, one and a half measures of salt was made. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner P.L. Mullaly and Assistant Commissioner M. Venkatappayya entered and put out fire. The eleven aluminium utensils used in the manufacture of salt were also seized.

Mullaly told Prakasam that he came to seize the salt under the Salt Act. The volunteers recovered all the salt and distributed it among themselves in small quantities which they held tight in their fists. The news spread like wildfire throughout the division. Large numbers of people assembled in front of the house.

\textsuperscript{34} Under Secretary's Safe File, 683-A, dt. 30.04.1930.
Mullally arrested Prakasam who refused to furnish bail. As Prakasam came out of his house, people prostrated at his feet and garlanded him. Prakasam appealed to the volunteers to continue the struggle peacefully and said that he expected Madras to do its duty. He was taken to the Mylapore police station. At the Mylapore police station, the Special Magistrate asked Prakasam whether he felt guilty. He replied that the Salt Law was broken intentionally, in obedience to the call of the Mahatma. At about 5 p.m. Prakasam was released. As he came out of the police station, the large crowd that was waiting, broke into thunderous cheers and cried merrily "Prakasam ki jai."

He went straight to Tilak Ghat, where a mammoth public meeting was being held with K. Nageswara Rao in the chair. Prakasam gave an account of the Salt Satyagraha in the City in general and his dramatic arrest and release in the afternoon. Nearly 14,000 attended and it was by far the largest audience since the days of non-co-operation, but still perfect order was maintained.

While the meeting was going on a big bonfire of foreign cloth was made outside the gathering. Fisher folk as well as the volunteers were seen manufacturing salt near the water edge. The contraband salt was put in small packets and auctioned fetching nearly Rs.800. The highest bid was for Rs.60.

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55 The Hindu, April 14th, 1930.
56 Ibid.
T. Duncan, a young Englishman and a theosophist, dressed in Khaddar, successfully bid for two packets. This evoked very considerable enthusiasm in the audience who insistently demanded a speech from him. He made a short but stirring speech wishing India to be free soon under Gandhiji’s glorious leadership. Prakasam thanked him.

Nageswara Rao said that Madras made history on that day. He urged that the boycott and picketing liquor shops should also be done side by side. The lady participants like Angachi amma and Durgabai were praised by Prakasam. Durgabai invited ladies to join the movement. Ramadas Pantulu urged the audience to boycott foreign cloth\(^7\).

Thus the City of Madras crowned itself with glory unparalleled in the history of the salt satyagraha. The Baisakhi Day which also was the Tamil New Year Day that fell on the 13\(^{th}\) of April 1930 was the day that showed the country, the Patriotism, Unity and determination of the citizens of Madras, not only in facing lathis and bullets, but the burning fire-wood and boiling brine, a few drops of the liquid falling perhaps on their tongues, also giving them the savour of the boiling brine, literally. Of course, the administration was rubbed with this salt into the wounds caused by the Simon Commission.

\(^7\) Ibid.
Further programme was announced by Prakasam on the 14th April at a meeting held in the High Court beach, by the Young Independent Party and the Andhra District Congress Committee.

Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested on the 14th of April 1930. A hartal was organised by Prakasam on the morning of the 15th and the response was spontaneous. By noon, the George Town area presented a deserted appearance. The vegetable market at Kotwal bazaar was also closed. Other parts of the City were no different. Chintadripet boys threw stones on a passing car breaking the wind screen. No one was injured. Police dispersed the crowd. But for this stray incident, the hartal was peaceful.

On that day, Prakasam and Nageswara Rao started a procession from the Swarajya Office, at No.40, Broadway, at 6.30 a.m. and reached the beach at 8.30 a.m., covering on the way Broadway, Monegar Choultry Road, Thambu Chetti street, Esplanade, North Beach Road with five lady volunteers, Smt. Durgabayamma, Angachi Amma, Venkataramanamma, Kamakshi Amma and Saraswati Amma following, all of them singing national songs. They carried National Flags. Salt was made on the beach with 10,000 people witnessing. Assistant Commissioner Anantachari who followed right from the beginning arrested Prakasam and Nageswara Rao and placed them before Bandi Shrihari.

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*The Hindu, April 15th, 1930.*
Women Volunteers Picketing Foreign Cloth Shops
In Madras, 1930
Naidu, the Magistrate\textsuperscript{59}. The breakers of the Salt law were convicted for being members of an unlawful assembly and were fined Rs.500 each\textsuperscript{60}. As they did not pay, their cars were later auctioned. This fine was thought of quite early so as to attach the car of Prakasam, Police Commissioner C.B. Cunningham in his letter (dt. 10.4.30) to the Chief Secretary stated, "certain leaders for example as Prakasam who is talking of leading a batch to manufacture salt in Madras, have motor cars and other readily attachable movable properties and, in the case of Prakasam at least, in his present financial status a fine of Rs.500/- would be for his a very serious matter indeed."\textsuperscript{61}. The issue looked as though it was prejudged for the Magistrate by the commissioner, who even specified the amount of the fine and referred to the inability of the leader to pay it. This also showed the utter penury Prakasam was suffering from, at that time, this was British compassion and justice! Ladies of the City broke the Salt Law on 21\textsuperscript{st} April 1930. Twenty of them with Srimati Hanumayamma (Mrs. Prakasam) and Durga Bai in the lead, started in a procession from the Swarajya office in Broadway at 7 a.m. Nageswara Rao, Gadde Rangayya Naidu, with many other men formed a cordon for them. At the High Court beach, with more women joining them, they boiled brine in six pots.

\textsuperscript{60} The Hindu, April 16\textsuperscript{th}, 1930.  
\textsuperscript{61} Under Secretary's Safe. File, 683 A, dt. 30.4.1930.
Assistant Commissioner Anantachari went to Nageswara Rao’s house in Mylapore and arrested him at 1 p.m. Bhashyam Chetti and Rangayya Naidu were picked up, and the three were produced before the Magistrate, Bandi Shrihari Naidu at three o’clock in the evening. Nageswara Rao and Rangayya Naidu pleaded guilty while Bhashyam Chetti refused to plead. They were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment each and were put in a van and whisked away to the penitentiary." On hearing this, a complete hartal was announced for the next day by Prakasham.

On the hartal day, the 22nd of April, 1930 at Esplanade and near Law College, the police had to use force to disperse people repeatedly. Stones were thrown at Deputy Police Commissioner Mullaly and other policemen. At 12 noon the situation became unmanageable; many were injured in the lathi charge. Early in the morning, Prakasham toured George town, Purasawakkam and Choolai and broke salt law at 10 a.m. The Choolai Mill workers led another procession and prepared salt near the High Court beach. Choolai Mill workers were in the forefront even during the Simon boycott. G. Selvapati Chetti was a very active labour leader that strengthened the movement. Prakasham, Durga Bai, and Angachi Amma were given a great ovation by the 10,000 strong crowd when they came. The Police Commissioner was unnerved and reported that Salt manufacture was resumed in the High Court Beach and it endangered public peace. He would

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62 The Hindu, April 21st, 1930.
63 The Hindu, April 22nd, 1930.
thereafter disperse unlawful assemblies there by application of force. He would prosecute Prakasam under 117 I.P.C. To this report, an alarmed Governor in Council reacted quickly by assuring the Commissioner the Government's full support in any measures he might think necessary to take to preserve public peace.

The protest meeting in the evening in the High Court beach was very huge. Prakasam, in the words of Police Commissioner C.B. Cunningham, “filled the platform for the whole period of the main meeting abusing the police for their brutality, boasting of the ‘success’ of the ‘hartal’ and praising Congress workers for alleged non-violence. He produced on the platform a series of injured Congressmen and did his very best to incite the audience against the police. He ended up by announcing that his son had died of small pox during the day. After receiving the bad tidings, Prakasam continued the meeting and after reaching home found the boy alive, saved by Prakasam’s brother Homeopathy practitioner Dr. Janaki Ramiah, F.R.C.S.

The day was a day of lathi charges, mounted police trampling on the peaceful audience. The ‘Sudandira Sangu’ wrote: “The Salt Act does not say that horses should be made to trample upon the people; nor is it laid down in it that the

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44 Under Secretary Safe File 683 A, dt. 30.4.1930.
45 Ibid.
46 The Hindu, April 12th, 1930.
volunteers should be beaten like dogs as they were beaten on the Beach Road on
Friday morning. A Brigadier, Gillies was injured; Captain Whitcombe had a
bruise and Railway District Superintendent Maynard’s wife had a swollen lip due
to a stone hit. The Mail reported that there were ‘wild scenes of disorder and
confusion’; the attack on Europeans troubled the Government. Cunningham felt
that ‘Prakasam’s cup is full’ and as there was no programme on the beach that
morning, Police went to Prakasam’s house in Mandaveli at 11 a.m. 21st April 1930
and arrested him. He was brought before the Presidency Magistrate for an offence
under Sec.117 Indian Penal Code, read with sec.143 Indian Penal Code and 74 Salt
Act. When the Government Translator was about to read the charges before the
Magistrate, Prakasam stopped him from proceeding and said that he admitted the
charges. Then the Magistrate asked him whether he was regretful for his actions;
Prakasam denied, adding that he was ever prepared to undergo any kind of
rigorous imprisonment. He was convicted for one year’s imprisonment for which
he was happy. Cunningham and the Government were unsatisfied. Under
Secretary to the Public Department C.F.V. Williams wailed that Prakasam got only
one year while Nageswara Rao and others escaped with just 6 months of
imprisonment. But the country was aghast at the cruelty of the rulers.

8 Under Secretary’s Safe File 689 A, dt. 30.4.1930.
S. Ganesan went into raptures in praising the 'Andiras simnam' (the lion of Andhra, wellknown as Andhra Kesari)\(^{70}\). Swarajya said: "Mr. Prakasam has done his duty and paid the penalty under the law. It is for those whom he left behind to keep up the spirit and continue the struggle"\(^{71}\). When Durgabai went to Prakasam's house after his arrest, she found the house in utter desolation and plainful penury. Water and power supplies were cut due to default in paying the dues. There were no clothes to wear. Durga was so distressed at the sight that she went straight to the bazaar and sold away the two pairs of gold bangles and a chain on her person and brought provisions and clothes for the family of Prakasam. She provided Prakasam in the penetentiary, with a few clothes\(^{72}\). From the Penitentiary in Madras, he was transferred to Trichyprappali, after a few weeks and the police had to put him in the train at the Kodambakkam Railway Station to avoid the admiring crowds outside the Egmore Station\(^{73}\). Prakasam's arrest "did not check the agitation which had acquired a macabre momentum of its own"\(^{74}\).

Durga Bai, a young woman of vision and verve took over the mantle and led the people. A hartal was observed on the next day, the 24\(^{th}\) April, 1930. Tributes were paid to the leadership of Prakasam. V. L. Sastri presided. Durga Bai and

Dr. P. Natarajan spoke. The procession that preceded the meeting, started at Swarajya office at 7 a.m. and as a fitting finale, people made salt at the beach.

On April 25th, Durga Bai led a band of hundred volunteers such as K. Natarajan, A. Thambu, R.P. Aiyar, R. Subbha Rao, K. Ramakrishna from the Swarajya office and marched through Broadway, Mannadi, Thambu Chetti street and Parry’s Corner before reaching North Beach Road. C.B. Cunningham, Mullaly along with some constables and jawans, stopped them at North Beach Road. When the processionists did not disperse, Cunningham ordered the two ladies to be separated and ordered lathi charge. The pressmen got aside. For two or three minutes there was merciless beating, till some fell to the ground. Durga Bai and Varahalamma flooded them with tears and started giving first aid. Posts were broken, flags seized and firewood taken away. Cunningham offered to take Durga in his car, which she refused. Swarajya reported that hundred policemen surrounded the volunteers and having so ringed them in, belaboured them brutally. It also said that the women were beaten and forcibly dragged. The Commissioner who denied this was all praise for The Hindu as against Swarajya. The wounded were taken in private cars to Dr. U. Rama Rao’s dispensary in Thambu Chetti street.

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75 Under Secretary’s Safe File, 683 A, dt. 30.4.1930.
76 Ibid
In the evening that day, a public meeting at Tilak Ghat with Durga Bai in the chair, condemned the police action. K. Bhashyam Iyengar, and V.L. Sastri spoke as did Natarajan and others who were beaten in the morning. It was planned to continue satyagraha in batches of four people each thereafter, to avoid action under unlawful assemblage. But the movement did not altogether lose its mass character in as much as the more turbulent people, the workers of the Choolai Mills (2,200), Buckingham and Carnatic Mills (11,000) and the Perambur Railway workshop (6,000) were being approached by the Congressmen. Wounded volunteers were visited at the Udayavanam camp by the public. There was no meeting on the 26th in the evening. An all-parties meeting was held on the sands of Triplicane. A huge crowd of 30,000 was on the sands, while another of 50,000 was heaving on the roads near the Presidency College. Workers of the Mills were present with their leader G. Selvapati Chetti, Sami Venkatasachalam Chetti presided over the meeting. Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Cousins of the Theosophical Society spoke. The next one to speak was G. Selvapati Chetti, the Union Leader, who threatened to launch the mill workers into the struggle. S. Satyamurthi, K. Bashyam, Basheer Ahmed Sayeed, Abdul Hamid Khan, Nadimulla, R. Chinnasami Ayyangar, Dr. U. Rama Rao, K.V. Menon, P.M. Audikesavulu Naicker, Mrs. Hannen Anjelo, Mrs. Swaminathan, Mr. Wood and Anjanejulu, sat on the platform. By 6.30 p.m., the audience was swollen so

78 Under Secretary’s Safe File, 683 A., dt. 30.4.1930.
much that nothing could be heard. Overflow meetings with V.L. Sastri and T.P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai as presidents, were held. At the original meeting V. Chakkarai Chettiar, Dr. Natesa Mudaliar and P.T. Kumaraswami Chetti spoke. After the meeting was over, V.L. Sastri’s meeting was run over by Mullaly’s horsemen upsetting the platform on top of Sastri, reportedly to save Inspector Chelladurai and Cunningham from the crowds. Chelladurai was stabbed and horseman ran up and down the area injuring many. Happenings on the road were more shocking. Police tried to clear the road of the sea of seething humanity which could not be achieved. Stones were pelted. The battle went on for hours, the field being the Presidency College Cricket ground and the roads and lanes around. People were fired upon, and military was summoned. Chinnakrishnan a boy of 13 years was shot in the neck and he died on the spot. Ramakrishna Naicker, 20 years old, employed in the Tramways was hit in the chest and fell down dead. The third person was Advocate E. Govindaswami Mudaliar who was not at all connected with the meeting. After being hurt, he went to a doctor and died sometime after the removal of the bullet. The Government was sad that such a ‘loyalist’ was killed. Among the wounded Vadivelu Mudaliar, Syed Yussuff, Kathayee, Krishnan, Virawani, were physically handicapped for life. Manicka Chetti, of Swadesa Mitran, too died of heart failure later. Cunningham did not repent, but the Chief Secretary felt that the “firing was rather wild”. Cunningham wrote: “I have no

information of any unrest among my men and although they have been overstrained of late, their mood and discipline seem perfectly satisfactory. With the arrival of Madras Special Police today I am thankful to have been able to give relief to the City men

Govindaswami Mudaliar was cremated at Mylapore on 29th of April 1930. The deadbodies of others were taken out to Choolai by people, and cremated on 28th April, 1930, with Sec.144, Criminal Procedure Code in force.

On 30th April 1930 there was stone throwing in Triplicane. Five boys were captured by the police. They were whipped severely by their parents in the presence of the police. On the 1st of May, Durga Bai and Natarajan held a meeting in a lane in Purasawakkam, and Cunningham was happy that sec.144 CPC drove them "to hide themselves" in lanes, "answering our purpose". On 2nd May 1930, Ganapati and Venkatraman who returned from the Sabarmati Asram, defied Section 144 CPC and held a meeting at the Loane Square. They were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment by the Presidency Magistrate, the same Bandi Srihari Naidu

On 5th May, 1930 Durga Bai led women to the Santhome beach. Inspector Ganapati was prevented from reaching the materials by Durgabayamma and

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* Under Secretary’s Safe File, 683 A, 30.4.1930.
others who lay stretched on the ground in a circle around the burning fire. They pleaded with the police to think that they also were Indians and act accordingly. Police broke through the human circle and the volunteers suffered burning and scalding injuries by coming into contact with the fire and the spilt boiling water. Dr. Subba Rao and Dr. Natarajan rushed there and rendered first aid.\(^2\)

Gandhiji was arrested on the 6th of May in Dhandi. There was a hartal in Madras, a meeting was held in the beach. V.L. Sastri went to the beach near Queen Mary's College, with volunteers in defiance of sec.144 CPC and was arrested and sentenced for four months. Three more went to jail with him. Durga Bai, running between Sholinganallur and Madras, was arrested on May 24th at Ranipet in the North Arcot district. The agitation thereafter took the form of boycotting foreign cloth, picketing liquor shops and promoting Khaddar.

At Allahabad on the 15th May 1930, the Working Committee of the Congress, after resolving to carry on the struggle during Gandhiji's incarceration with redoubled vigour, passed a resolution to organise forthwith a complete boycott of foreign cloth throughout the country. Shops dealing in foreign cloth were to be picketed. In the first half of May, the Madras Swadesi League had held a series of daily meetings in different parts of the City. The meetings were presided over by the wives of prominent men such as R. Ramachandra Rao and K. Bhashyam.

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Speeches were made in support of Swadesi Industries and the boycott of foreign cloth. A special feature of the meetings was the active interest displayed by two European ladies, Mrs. Cousins and Mrs. Hilda Wood. On 12th May, the President of the Provincial Co-operative Union, Vernavarapu Ramadasu Pantulu, called upon all co-operative societies to embark upon an intensive propaganda for the promotion of Khaddar and Swadesi. In the Hindu of 29th May, Ramadasu Pantulu renewed his appeal.

On 18th June, Udayavananam camp was raided and E. Krishna Iyer and all other present were arrested bringing the salt satyagraha in Madras almost to an end.

On 25th June, the Swadesi League held a meeting at the Mahajana Sabha Hall with Dr. U. Rama Rao in the chair. Mrs. Cousins attended and addressed many meetings. On 5th July, she spoke at the Gokhale Hall under the auspices of the Madras Swadesi League and the Women's Swadesi League.

Dr. U. Rama Rao and his party extracted from the local piece-goods merchants in June, an undertaking that they would abstain for three months from ordering 'foreign' cloth.

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83 Under Secretary's Safe File, 705, dated, 29.8.1930.
84 Under Secretary's Safe File, 672, dated 12.6.1930.
85 The Hindu, 18th June 1930.
A Swadesi exhibition was held at the Gokhale Hall from the 11th to the end of July, 1930.66

Students of the Hindu High School in Triplicane, Madras, celebrated Gandhi Cap Day on the 15th of September 1930. Boys wearing the caps came to the school with caps for other boys also, more particularly for the sons of Government servants. Later they collected a crowd in front of the school and indulged in noisy demonstration and were dispersed by the police. The trouble continued on the following day and extended to the Kellet High School, again necessitating the intervention of the police who arrested 25 students and released them the same day. There also the day was observed as "Gandhi Cap Day."67

On October 2nd 1930, Gandhiji's birthday was celebrated, under the combined auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, the League of Youth, Women's Swadesi League, and the Madras Swadesi League. A public meeting to celebrate the event was held on that day at the Gokhale Hall, where Mrs. Cousins spoke.68

Swadesi propaganda and appeals for the non-observance of Deepavali in Madras City, got an impetus with the arrival there, of C. Rajagopalachari, released from jail. His activities invited proceedings under sec.107 Cr. P.C. brought against him on the 24th of October. He was sentenced on that day to one year simple

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66 Under Secretary's Safe File. 705, dated 29.8.1930.  
67 Under Secretary's Safe File. 683-C, dated 2.7.1930.  
imprisonment. While in jail, he persuaded his compatriots to take to active work
soon after release. K.V. Ganapati lyer and K. Venkatraman after release, went
round the City collecting names of volunteers, ready to go to jail. Satyamurthi
became the President of the T.N.C.C. after Rajagopalachari's incarceration99.

On 29th November, K. Nageswara Rao, President of the Andhura Provincial
Congress Committee and S. Satyamurti, President of the Tamil Nadu Council of
Action, issued an appeal to the volunteers to attend the flag salutation function the
next day at the Gokhale hall at 8 a.m. admission was restricted to khaddar clad
people. A warning was issued by the Commissioner not to attend the ceremony
and Section 41 of the Madras City Police Act III of 1888 was promulgated
prohibiting meetings and demonstrations between the Madras Harbour and
Santhome on the Beach, on 30th November 1930.

Defying the Commissioner's orders on the flag salutation day (30.11.30)
Ganapati, leader of the National Volunteer Corps, was arrested. Satyamurti issued
appeals through the press for concentration on the boycott of foreign goods.
Nageswara Rao, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, R.N. Arogyaswami Mudaliar and
Satyamurti appealed for funds for helping the release of 'political' prisoners100.

99 Fortnightly Report, 2nd half of October 1930.
100 Fortnightly Report, first half, December 1930.
Picketing became intense. Cyclostyled news-sheets were distributed. Flag
Salutation Day was celebrated on the 28th December in front of the Parthasarathi
Swami Temple in Triplicane. Satyamurti was arrested on his refusal to disperse
from there\textsuperscript{91}.

Irwin defended the repressive measures, when he addressed the European
Association on 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 1930, at Calcutta. He however admitted that he
could find no simple and permanent cure to combat a nation-wide movement for
Freedom\textsuperscript{92}.

Satyamurti and District Congress Committee Secretary Chinnasami Iyengar
with ten others including a lady, were arrested in the Godown street on 9\textsuperscript{th}
December 1930. They were convicted on a charge of being members of an unlawful
assembly, in defiance of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, then in force
for 2 months since December 30, 1930\textsuperscript{93}.

Congressmen were languishing in jail and the Party refused to attend the
First Round Table Conference held in London between 12\textsuperscript{th} November 1930 and
19\textsuperscript{th} February 1931. Freedom struggle became very grim and convincingly more
real than the dubious peace parleys in London. The year 1931 started with
increased activities of Civil Disobedience in Madras City as a result of the vigorous

\textsuperscript{91} Fortnightly Report, second half, December 1930.
\textsuperscript{92} The Indian Review, Edited by G.A. Naicsan, Vol. XXXII, 1931, Madras, p.77.
\textsuperscript{93} Indian Annual Register, Vol. I, (Calcutta, 1931), p.20.
propaganda of Satyamurti, Nageswara Rao and a band of dedicated volunteers who followed them.

The Madras District Andhra Congress Committee, the Madras Provisional Congress Committee and other organisations formed a City Boycott Committee on 10th January 1931 to effectively picket foreign cloth shops and engage in boycott propaganda.

On Satyamurthi’s arrest, K. Bhashyam became the President of the ‘Council of Action’. Four persons were arrested on 11th January 1931. V. Subba Rao of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and a batch of 21 volunteers were arrested for picketing cloth shops on the 12th January 1931. On their refusal to disperse, picketers were caned and beaten with lathis in Pycrofts Road, Triplicane, on 13th January 1931. The battle in the Pycrofts Road, continued on the next day also. The General Stores were picketed and on its closure, the volunteers went away. Then a crowd collected there and stoned the shop, breaking the windows. The crowd was severely caned by the police. The volunteers returned and took the injured to private hospitals.

On 19th January 1931, Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald spoke of a change of policy towards India. Gandhiji and some others were released unconditionally.

* Swarajya (English), Madras, 28.4.1931. (N.N.R. p.571).
** Fortnightly Report, first half, January 1931.
on 25th January 1931. On 28th January, K. Bhashyam led a party of picketers in the
Godown street. Police lathi-charged the peaceful picketers. Commenting on this,
Swarajya said that the lathi charge was uncalled for, as the picketing was peaceful.
K. Bhashyam was taken into custody and later released at Chetpet.

Meanwhile, Gandhi who had been holding talks with Irwin right from the
time of his release in January 1931, came to an understanding with the Viceroy.
The Gandhi-Irwin agreement was announced on 5th March 1931. By this, the
Congress agreed to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement, including the
boycotting of British goods and to participate in the Second Round Table
Conference. The Government agreed to withdraw ordinances. The Congress
Working Committee met on 7th March 1931 and passed a resolution to suspend
the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Significant changes took place by the time the Second Round Table
Conference was held. Irwin was replaced by Willingdon who came to India
determined to crush the National Congress. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was thrown to
the winds and suppression of all types of agitation became the policy of the
Government. The National Press was troubled.

The political scene in India after Gandhiji’s departure to London became
horrible and the failure of the talks in London aggravated the situation further.

* Swarajya, Madras, 29.1.1931 (N.N.R) p.137.
Repression was the policy of Willingdon. Suppression of the Congress was his aim. Gandhi-Irwin Pact did not exist for him. A disappointed Gandhi returned to India on 28th December 1931. No suitable answer was found to the communal problem. No worthwhile concessions were secured for the people.

The Congress Working Committee met on the first of January 1932 and resolved to revive the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was resumed on the fourth of January. This time the Government was well prepared and in the early hours of January 4th, Gandhiji and all prominent leaders of the Congress were arrested and put in prison. The Viceroy embarked on a mad and futile course of oppression to wipe out the Congress within six weeks. Ordinance after ordinance, he issued thirteen of them with an all-India application covering all aspects of Government. On the day of Gandhiji's arrest, four ordinances were issued giving very wide powers to the Government to deal with the agitation. The Congress was declared unlawful. The police was authorised to arrest any one even on mere suspicion. All the Congress workers were thrown in to jail. Even sympathisers were not spared. Property of the Congressmen was confiscated. Congress offices were raided and papers and documents seized.

In Madras, immediately after Gandhiji's arrest, orders were issued under Section 144 Cr. PC prohibiting meetings and processions. Naturally these orders were flouted. Picketing cloth shops was resumed. More ordinances followed. The
Prevention of Molestation and Boycotting Ordinance was brought into force in Madras on the 5th January 1932. The Unlawful Associations Ordinance was out on the 6th. Repression developed resilience and the resolve of the people became firmer, adding more numbers to the volunteer force day by day.

T. Prakasam was arrested in 1932 and the Government initiated proceedings against him\(^7\). C. Rajagopalachari and Satyamurti were arrested on 9th January 1932, when they were distributing leaflets entitled 'The Satyagraha Fight'. Under the Molestation and Boycott Ordinance, Satyamurti was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and under Section 4 of Ordinance 5 of 1932, simple imprisonment of six months. Six months simple imprisonment was Rajagopalachari's lot\(^8\). Picketing was unabated. Police used lathis liberally. An added weapon to their armoury was the hose pipe, jetting water.

On 13th January 1932, the police occupied the Congress House in Royapettah, where the all-India Swadesi Exhibition was being held and confiscated the property. On the 14th, the Benares Hall at Esplanade was the scene for the display of police abilities in using lathis and the hose pipe, the victim was picketer Srinivasa Rao, who raised slogans, even as he was squatting on the ground\(^9\). Nageswara Rao was arrested on 15th January, while distributing

\(^8\) Public (Gen) Dept., G.O.No.683, dt. 16.05.1932.
\(^9\) Public (Gen) Dept., G.O.No.674, dt12.05.1932.
boycott leaflets in George Town. Rs.250 fine, in addition to six months in jail were his share the Government demanded from him\footnote{100}.

On 26th January 1932 the "Independence Day" was observed all over the country. Public meetings were held violating 144 Cr. PC. Flag hoisting was held in Public places. C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar the former President of the Madras Branch Congress Committee led a procession in the Esplanade area in Madras. In this procession P.M. Audikesavalu Naicker, who later became the Deputy Mayor of Madras Corporation and M. Bakthavatsalam who later became the Chief Minister of Madras State also participated. They were brutally beaten by the police. Similar treatment was meted out on to the journalist Kasa Subharao the Editor of Swarajya. The injured leaders were not even taken to hospital for treatment by the police. Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathy as a true nationalist and freedom fighter, boldly took all the injured freedom fighters to General Hospital in her own motor car, for which she was admonished by the Police Chief of Madras City\footnote{101}.

Mrs. Ambujammal, Mrs. Janammal and Mrs. Kamala Bai, who were picketing cloth shops in the Rattan Bazaar on January 18th were arrested. The three were honoured with six months of simple imprisonment each. Additionally

\footnote{100} The Indian Annual Register, Vol.1, (Calcutta, 1932), p.6.  
\footnote{101} M.P. Sivaganam, op. cit. p.150-151
the first two were asked to pay Rs.80/- each and in default to stay in the prison for one more week\textsuperscript{102}.

The Indian Franchise Commission headed by Lothian arrived in Madras on 27th February 1932 and was greeted with wall posters bearing slogans 'Lothian, go back' and 'Long live revolution'. K. Bhashyam Ayyangar who led a black flag demonstration was arrested. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment and a fine of Rs.250/- Seventy people were arrested on that occasion\textsuperscript{103}.

As a part of civil disobedience movement the "Dandi Day" was organized in Madras city on 12\textsuperscript{th} March 1932. Mrs. Rukmini Lakshmipathy and other numbering about 12 went in a procession along China Bazaar Road holding a national flag and went on asking people to boycott foreign cloths and they refused to disperse when asked to do so\textsuperscript{104}. They were arrested and produced before the 4\textsuperscript{th} presidency magistrate Egmore, Madras. They were charged under Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. The Magistrate found them guilty of an offence under section 17(1) of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act and sentenced them.

Gandhiji undertook a fast on September 20\textsuperscript{th} 1932, against the Communal Award of Ramsay Macdonald. The nation's attention having turned to Gandhiji's

\textsuperscript{102} The Indian Annual Register, Vol.I (Calcutta, 1932), Ed: N.N. Mitra.
\textsuperscript{103} Public (gen) Dept., G.O.No.1224, dt.22.09.1932.
\textsuperscript{104} G.O. MS. No.1144/ Law / General) 21\textsuperscript{st} March 1932.
ordeal, Civil Disobedience took a back seat. Gandhiji's birthday was celebrated by holding meetings and taking out processions. Anti untouchability committees and societies were formed. A Deepavali Swadesi Sabha was also started. Picketing again picked up. Leaflets were issued and flags were hoisted. Rajagopalachari participated in many functions.

The Third Round Table Conference held in London between 17th November and 24th December 1933 produced nothing positive. The Congress boycotted it. The Press Ordinance muzzled the free expression of views. Margaret Cousins was imprisoned on the 18th December for criticising the gagging order. She was charged under sec-108 Criminal Procedure Code, for making seditious speeches\textsuperscript{105}.

The political situation in India during the first half of the year 1933, was on the whole, of less anxiety from the point of view of the Law and Order. The year had opened with diminished figures of political prisoners in Indian jails. Terrorist movement sprouted up and there was secret subversive activity.

The anniversary of the Civil Disobedience Movement was celebrated on January 4, 1933. Police dispersed the meeting held in this connection. On January 26th, the Republic day, was celebrated and 64 persons were arrested on the occasion\textsuperscript{106}. In April, the National Week was celebrated by holding meetings and

\textsuperscript{105} Public (gen) (conf.dl) Dept., G.O.No.36, dt.9.1.1933.

\textsuperscript{106} Fortnightly Report, first half, January 1933.
hawking khaddar. Picketing activity was on the rise despite Government repression.

Gandhi began his twenty-one-day fast which ended on the 29th. In connection with the Madras Conspiracy case, 23 people were arrested in Madras in July 1933. They were alleged to have plotted the assassination of the Governors of Madras and Bengal when the latter would be on a visit to Madras. Other Europeans also were thought to be in the hit-list. The charge failed. On 14th July 1933, Gandhi called off the mass Satyagraha. He allowed individuals to court arrest. The enthusiasm of the battered and tired people was already waning and violence and secrecy were on the increase. Gandhi, better than anyone else understood the mood. On December 14th 1933, he refuted the charge that he ceased to have faith in the Civil Disobedience Programme, and said that his sense of moral honour compelled him to confine his activity to the Harijan cause, then.

On a tour of the Madras Presidency, Gandhi arrived in the City on 20th December 1933. He was received by V. Bhashyam Iyengar. A very large crowd assembled on the road outside the Central Station yard as far as Ripon Buildings. The same day, he opened the All-India Khadi Exhibition which was held in the Congress House. In the evening, he addressed a meeting on the Triplicane Beach.

107 Public (Gen) Dept., G.O.No.Ma.256, 14.03.34.
which was attended by 50,000 people. On the 22nd December, he left the City. He left the Presidency in March 1934.

Gandhiji suspended the Civil Disobedience Campaign on 7th April 1934. The All-India Congress Committee met at Patna on May 18th and 19th under the Presidentship of Madan Mohan Malavya. Dr. Ansari moved a resolution adopting Gandhiji’s recommendation with regard to the suspension of Civil Disobedience. The withdrawal of Satyagraha, as after the Chauri Chaura incident, earlier, led to the proliferation of political activities and many were in favour of reviving the Swarajist Party and to enter the Councils. This time, there was no opposition from Gandhiji. He accorded his full support to the move. Thus, when the new Act was adopted by the British Parliament in December 1934, the Congress transformed itself into a machine for fighting elections to prove that it had the backing of the vast mass of Indians who were nevertheless not satisfied with the new installment of political reforms and sought complete independence. Referring to the question of the Councils, Gandhiji remarked that if Congress men thought Council Entry would benefit the country, they should enter them rather than sit idle, for the paralytic stage must soon end.

108 Under Secretary’s Safe File, 877, 1.3.1934.
Any Civil Movement however strong could not be carried on continuously for a long period. A civilised movement fought non-violently and involving the masses covering all strata of society required some respite and strategy also required time to recoup and regroup. Gandhiji and the nation did a formidable job in facing the worst kind of lawless repression perpetrated by the Government thoroughly hostile not only to the agitators but to elementary human considerations not to speak of compassion, much less of any sympathy.

The authorities, inspite of the brave face they put forward and the aggressive postures taken were severely shaken by the sheer grit of the meek volunteer in defying and defeating the determination of the bureaucrats supported by its police and the mighty military power. The breaking of Indian bones was avenged by the consequential creaking of the British throne, so far as India was concerned. The 1935 Act had emerged as a result. More than this, the concretisation and consolidation of the people's will, is an achievement, the credit for which should go to Gandhiji, the Mahatma.

Thus the year between 1928-1935 marked a series of agitations and struggles which paved the way for demanding full Independence. But time was not ripe due to the dominant attitude of the colonial rule and their suppressive measures. People expressed their resentment on the visit of Simon Commission and imposition of Tax on Salt which was reflected in Violence. The victims were the people and the leaders. In 1930 political and constitutional changes aggravated for the great struggle of quit India Movement of 1942.