CHAPTER VII

ROLE OF TAMILNADU IN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Tamil Nadu has the hoary tradition of fighting for justice, rights and fair-play. True to tradition, the people of Tamil Nadu rose in revolt when their cherished nights were threatened, throttled and violated by the English East India Company. The Company’s excessive direct control over the Poligars provoked the Poligar Rebellion.

The Poligar Rebellion was spearheaded by Jaga Vira Pandya Kattabomman, Poligar of Panchalamkurichi. Kattabomman was a conscious, God fearing, law-abiding subject with a strong sense of duty, dignity and discipline. Stung by the harshness, rashness and ruthlessness of Collector Jackson, he had a hiccup at an interview with the Collector at Ramanathapuram on 19 Sep. 1797 and escaped with the brother Oomathurai and his minister Sivasubramania Pillai. Encouraged and supported by Maruthu Pandyan of Sivaganga, Kattabomman extended his help to the latter to rise against the British. The Madras Council viewed his move as a challenge to its authority. Once

instruction for Governor General Lord Wellesley, Major Banmerman mounted an assault on Panchalamkurichi Fort on 5 Sep., pursued the rebel and betrayed by the

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2 Ibid., p. 185.
3 Ibid., p. 189.
Poligar of Pudukkottai, Kattabomman was captured, tried and hanged to death at Kayattar on 17 Oct. 1799\textsuperscript{4}.

Learning a lesson from the fall of Kattabomman, the rebel leaders of Sivaganga, Dindigal, Coimbatore, Malabar, Mysore and Maharashtra formed a Coalition, conspired, hatched out a plan of action and rose in rebellion against the British rule and regime under the leadership of Maruthu Pandyan of Sivaganga. This South Indian Rebellion is claimed to be the First War of Indian Independence\textsuperscript{5}.

Undaunted by the suppression of the South Indian Rebellion the rebels had shifted their theatre of revolt to Vellore. They regrouped themselves in strength, established contact with the disgruntled sepoys, conspired against the English and on 13 July 1806 revolted against the Company rule. The sepoys were particularly incensed by the racist regulations. Hindus were prohibited from wearing religious marks on their foreheads. Similarly, Muslims were required to shave their beard and trim their moustache. At one stroke both Hindu and Muslim sepoys were antagonized. Worse still, the revolting soldiers were sent to Fort St. George and two of them were given 500 lashes each and forced to seek pardon for their action. The physically and psychologically wounded sepoys were more than willing to join the rebels to rise against the inhuman and insensitive alien rule. Though the Vellore Rebellion was repressed, it is regarded as a rehearsal on a small scale to the major Rebellion of 1857\textsuperscript{6}, which is considered to the Second War of Indian Independence.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 192.
\textsuperscript{5} Revenue Sundries vol.26, p.448.
\textsuperscript{6} Secret Sundries 1801, vol. 303, p.344.
PRE-CONGRESS POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Thanks to its geographical location, its status as the Capital of the Presidency and the initial impact of European Civilisation, the educated elite of Madras played a prominent part in the formation of political associations in the later half of the 19th Century. The Land Lords, rich merchants and service minded savants of the Presidency, with their intellectual clout, social status and inclination to articulate their interests and that of the people, came forward to form the Madras Native Association (1852), the Theosophical Society (1882) and the Madras Mahajana Sabha (1884). Besides these major political formations, the Muslims of Madras established the Madras branch of the Central National Mohammedan Association of Bengal (1883). Similarly the Madras Christians formed the National Church with a view to assert their identity, free from the control of the European Missions.

Of the total 72 ‘honest, loyal and earnest people’ who attended the first session of the Indian National Congress, held at the Hall of Gokuldas Tejpal, Sanskrit College, Bombay on 28 Dec. 1885, under the presidency of Womesh Chandra Banarjee, 21 delegates were from the Madras Presidency; of the 21 representative 16 were from the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

THIRD CONGRESS SESSION AT MADRAS, 1887

The first session of the Indian National Congress was “a ramshackle set of local linkages”. A contingent of 47 delegates from Tamil Nadu attended the

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7 Dodwell, N., Report on Madras Records, p. 35.
second session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1886. Madras had the honour of organizing the third session of the Congress in 1887. It was held at Makkis Garden, now known as the Thousand Lights. 607 delegates attended the session. Badruddin Tyopji persided over the meeting

The third Congress session had several distinctions: 1) it was held in an open thidal in a specially decorated pandal’ 2) out of the total 607 delegates 62 were from the Madras Presidency; 3) the expense of the Conference well largely met out of the donations collected from the public. The Tamil booklet ‘Congress: Questions and Answers’, written by M. Vijayaragavachariar of the Hindu and the Secretary, Reception Committee, was sold in thousands at concessional price and the proceedswere spent for the session; 4) Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao, President, Reception Committee, made the Annual Session a grand success; 5) Rao Mookkana Chari took the audience by surprise by delivering his speech in Tamil; 6) Lord Connemara, the Governor of Madras, graced the function by his presence and hosted a dinner to the delegates. In short, the Madras Congress Session served as a model for other annual meetings of the national organization. Subsequently, the Indian National Congress met at Madras in 1894, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1914, 1923 and 1927

THE MADRAS MODERATES

The followers of Gopala Krishna Gokhale were known as the Congress Moderates. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.S. Sivasamy Iyer, V. Krishnaswamy Iyer, T.R. Venkatrama Sasthri, G.A. Natesan, author of Indian Review’, T.M. Madhava Rao,

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S. Subramania Iyer, C. Vijayaragavachari, S.A. Saminatha Iyer were the distinguished Moderates of Madras. Most of them were Brahman lawyers, constitutionalists and supporters of the Government. Though they participated in the administration and welcomed measures like Montford Reforms, they also raised their voice against the draconian Rowlatt Bills\textsuperscript{12}.

THE MADRAS EXTREMISTS

The supporters of BalGangadhar Tilak were considered as Extremists. Selam Vijayaragavachary, C. Rajagopalachari, T.M. Nair, S. Kasthuriranga Iyengar. A Ramaswamy Iyengar, T. Rangachari were the well known Tilakiets, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai was called Tilak of Tamil Nadu. Mandayam Srinivacharai, Surendranth Ethiraj, Triplicane Krishnamachari, Sarkarai Chettiar and Subramania Siva were the other distinguished Extremists\textsuperscript{13}.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT 1905 – 07

The fire of Swadeshi movement, started in Bengal, soon spread to Tamil Nadu. Swadeshism captured the imagination of the Tamil Extremists. They encouraged boycott of foreign cloth and products and supported Swadeshi goods. The Industrial Association established warehouses to store and sell Swadeshi products. The Swadeshi League carried the message of Swadeshism to the masses. The Balabharath Association arranged popular discussion and debate in support of the mass movement. Similarly Swadeshivastu Pracharini Sabha popularized the sale of locally made goods. A National fund was raised in support

\textsuperscript{12} Freedom Movement Bundle Madras, Serial No. 64.
\textsuperscript{13} G.O. No. 258, Political Dept 1910-1920.
of the Movement\textsuperscript{14}. Subramania Bharati’s patriotic songs fanned the fire of Swadeshi nationalism and his articles in ‘India’ demonstrated that the Swadeshi Movement had struck deep roots in Tamil Nadu, particularly in Tirunelveli District\textsuperscript{15}. More important, the launching of Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai in 1906 challenged the maritime might of the British imperialism and the company “Marked the Most spectacular development in the history of the Movement\textsuperscript{16}.

**SURAT SESSION**

The Tamil Nadu Congress leaders, particularly the extremists, evinced continuous concern about the Indian National Congress. V.O. Chidambaram, Kasthuriranga Ayengar and V. Ramalingam Pillai attended the Calcutta Congress session (1906). In receiving a telegram from Aurobinda Ghosh the Tamil Nadu extremists led by V.O. Chidambaram attended the Annual Session of Congress held in Surat on 26 Dec. 1907\textsuperscript{17}. The meeting turned out to be a violent clash between the Moderates and the Extremists on the election of the president of the political convention. At the ensuing free-for-all pandemonium V.O. Vhidambaram, along with Duraisamy Iyer, Sreenivasa Ramanujan, Triplicane Krishnamachari, Baralliar, Srinivasachar and Sarkerai Chettiar served as a shield to Tilak, the target of attack\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{14} G.O.No. 164, Public Dept 1909-1919.
\textsuperscript{15} Rajayyan, K., op.cit., p. 306.
The Swadeshi Movement spread like wild fire in southern Tamil Nadu. Sensing the danger of the Movement going out of control, the Government decided to stem the tide. The shops suspected of dealing with Swadeshi goods were raided. Meetings and demonstrations were prohibited. Newspapers were prescribed. Sub-Collector Robert William Ashe fired into striking workers at Tirunelveli (1908)\textsuperscript{19}. V.O. Chidambaram organized a massive mass procession in Tirunelveli to celebrate the release of Bipin Chandra Pal. He and Subramania Siva spoke at a mammoth meeting held in front of the office of the District Munsif and passionately praised Pal. Subsequently, V.O. Chidambaram, Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyer were arrested by the Collector Vinch of Tirunrlveli on charge of sedition\textsuperscript{20}. They were tried and V.O. Chidambaram was sentenced to 40 years of imprisonment. He was imprisoned in Coimbatore prison. His appeal against the court verdict was of no avail. However, the Privy Council in London reduced the life imprisonment in rigorous sentence. He was then transferred to Kannanur jail in Kerala\textsuperscript{21}. V.O. Chadambaram was treated as criminal in the prisons. He was finally released on Dec. 1912\textsuperscript{22}.

Tamil Nadu was the home of Moderates, Extremists and Revolutionary Terrorists. V.V.S. Iyer, T.S.S. Rajan and M.P.T. Acharya were trained in terrorist tactics in London, Home Rule League and India House, the nerve centres of

\textsuperscript{19} Orient Longman, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*. New Delhi, 1984, p. 96.


\textsuperscript{22} Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s. Madras : Cre – A, 1986. p. 66.
revolutionary terrorism abroad. Vanchinatha\textsuperscript{23} Neelakanda Brahmachari, Madasamy, Gurunadha Iyer and Dr. Shenbagaraman were the other committed revolutionary terrorists. In censed by the brutal actions of the British, Particularly at the firing order of sub. Collector, Vanchinathan on 17 June 1911 shot at end killed R.W.Ashe, who was travelling with his wife from Tirunelveli to Kodaikkanal, at Maniachi station. Then the assassin shot himself dead after discharging his duty as an Indian. Though Vanchinathan’s impulsive action was commended as ‘dastardly and diabolical’ be is still regarded as a patriot par excellence by the people of Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{24}.

ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA, 1919

Rowlatt Satyagraha had its genesis in Tamil Nadu. Even when the Rowlatt Bills were discussed in the Central Legislature V. Srinivasachari warned that there would be an upheaval in India if the Black Bills were to be enacted into law. On 17 March 1919, Gandhi visited Tamil Nadu and stayed at the residence of Kasthuri Ranga Lyyangar to device the way to oppose the draconian Bills. Satyagraha Sabha was formed with Gandhi as its President\textsuperscript{25}. Rowlat act was proclaimed when Gandhi was touring Tamil Nadu. He announced that national hartal against

\textsuperscript{23} Grover, B.L. & S. Grover. \textit{A New look at Modern Indian History}. New Delhi : S. Chand & Company Ltd. 1955. p. 47.

\textsuperscript{24} Majumdar, R.C. H.C. Raychaudhri & Kalikinkar Datta, \textit{An Advanced History of India}. New Delhi : Mac Millan India Ltd., 2003., p. 28.

the Rowlatt Bills will be observed on 30 March 1919 and then postponed the date to 6 April\textsuperscript{26}.

On 6\textsuperscript{th} April 1919 anti - Rowlatt Day was observed in Tamil Nadu. Protest demonstrations were held at several parts of the presidency. Processions from many areas of the city converged in the Marina beach. In the evening a mammoth public meeting was addressed by C. Rajagopalachari, Kasthuri Ranga Iyengar, S. Satyamurthy and George Joseph. A separate meeting of workers was addressed by Thiru. V. Kalyanasundaram, P. P. Wadia, V. O. Chidambaram and S. Dandapani Pillai. Complete hertal was observed at Sowcarpet under the leadership of Ramji Kalyanji. Several Muslim traders extended their support to the styagraha. Trams ceased to run. Workers struck work satyagrahi was published defying the News papers Registration Act\textsuperscript{27}. Proscribed books like sarvodaya, Indian Swaraj, V. D. Savarkar,s Volcano were sold by satyagrahis. Though the satyagraha was mainly concentrated in the cities and towns, its reverberations were felt in the muffussil areas also. Thus, Tamil Nadu earned a niche place in the national Rowlatt Satyagraha\textsuperscript{28}.

**KHILAFAT AGITATION**

Tamil Nadu did not lag behind in extending its enthusiastic support to the Khilafat agitation. C. Rajagopalachari earned the esteem of the Muslims by his active involvement in the agitation. In the provincial congress conference h moved a resolution demanding the release of Ali brothers who had courted arrest for


\textsuperscript{27} Pillay, K.K. *Social History of the Tamils*. Madras : University of Madras, 1975, p. 49.

spearheading the Khilafat movement. He also mobilized the support of the Hindus to observe the Khalafat day on 17 Oct 1919. Khilafat committees were formed throughout Tamil Nadu.

On 20 April 1920, Khilafat conference was held at Madras under the presidency of Maulana Shaukat Ali. C. Rajagopalachari, Kasthuri Ranga Iyengar and T. Prakasam addressed the well-attended Conference. Another such Conference was held at Erode which was presided over by Ali brothers. Gandhi toured Tamil Nadu in August 1920 seeking support to the Khilafat movement. Vaniyambadi served as the nerve-centre of the agitation. Khilafat agitation was a conspicuous success though the Justice party and the Liberal party had not supported it.

NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT, 1920-1922

Non-cooperation Movement gained momentum in Tamil Nadu under the dynamic leadership of C. Rajagopalachari. It turned to be a mass Movement. People of Tamil Nadu hoisted National flag, installed photos of national leaders, organized meetings, demonstrations and hartals. Several leaders like Madurai advocate George Joseph, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, N.S. Varadachari, S. Ramanathan and V.O. Chidambaram renounced their titles or resigned their posts and joined the Movement. By the end of 1920 Tamil Nadu Congressmen boycotted the legislature and the election. The workers of the Buckinham Mills struck work (27 June 1921). Toddy shops were boycotted. The visit of S. Satyamurthy to several

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places including Rajapalayam roused the patriotic feelings of the people. I.P. Arangasamy Raja laid a firm foundation to the historic Khadi Movement in the town. Anti-Liquor Agitation was intensified by leaders like V.G. Vellingiri Gounder, N.S. Ramaswami Iyangar and E. Ramaswamy Naicker. When the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, visited Madras he was boycotted though he was given a rousing reception by the justicites. There was spontaneous emotional upsurge in Tamil Nadu when Gandhi was arrested on 18 March 1922.

THE SWARAJISTS, 1923

When the Swaraj Party was launched by pro-change leaders like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru on 1st Jan. 1923, like minded Congressmen Kasthuri Ranga Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar, Vararajulu Naidu, Vijayaragavacharai, A. Rengaswamy Iyengar joined the new party. In the election held on 13 Nov. 1923 for Central Legislature, Swarajists A. Ranga Samy Iyengar, R.K. Shanmugam Chetty, N. Srinivasa Iyengar were elected from Tamil Nadu. Though the swarajists won 41 seats in the election held for the effectively non-co operated with the Legislature led by S.Satyamurthy, the silver-tongue orator. The Tamil Nadu Swarjist Legislators offered uncompromising obstruction to all Government sponsored laws. He strongly supported the motion of no confidence moved by C.R. Reddy against the ruling justice party. By their consistent Legislature conduct the Madras Swarajists rose up to the expectations of the Swaraj Party.

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NEILL STATUE SATYAGRAHA, 1927

James Neil had served as the General of the Madras regiment. He ruthlessly suppressed the rebellion of 1857. Neill wrought in human vengeance on those whom he regarded as quality; they were either humiliated or executed\textsuperscript{35}. When the British Government installed Neill’s state at a central place in Madras in honour of his service to the Empire, the people of Tamil Nadu rose in revolt against the symbol of shame. A Satyagraha Committee was constituted under the presidenship of Nellai N. Somayajula. It was decided to remove the statue. Madurai Srinivasanthesantra Iyengar and his wife Padmasani Ammal, R. Chidambara Bharati, Dr. P. Varadarajulu, lent enthusiastic support to the satyagraha. On 11 August 1927 the satyagrahis under the leadership of Subbarayalu Naidu and Muhammad Salia damaged the statue. They were arrested and sentenced to 6 months rigorous imprisonment. Nellai Somayajulu, Gudiatham Swaminatha Mudaliar, Panrutty S.A. Devanayaga Ayya, who were Satyagraha started in August continued till December 1927 and during this period volunteers from several districts came to the city and participated in the agitation\textsuperscript{36}.

BOYCOTT OF SIMON COMMISSION, 1929-1930

The Congress at its Annual Session at Madras in 1927 resolved to boycott the all white Simon Commission. When the Commission visited Madras on Feb. 1929, it was greeted with black-flag demonstrations. The boycott of the Commission turned into a mass movement. Behind the façade of official welcome, the Congressmen organized a massive mass agitation which resulted in police


firing killing three people. T. Prakasam, Muthuranga Mudaliar and M. Bakthavasthalam were subjected to bural lathi charge\textsuperscript{37} protest demonstrations were held against unprovoked attack on unarmed agitators. The Simon Commission and the Justice Party were condemned in the Marina meeting. Ranganatha Mudaliyar and Arokyasamy Mudaliar resigned from the justice Ministry in protest against Dr. P.Subbarayan who participated in the official reception given to the Simon Commission. Despite official support to the Commission, the boycott of Simon Commission in Tamil Nadu was a significant success\textsuperscript{38}.

**POORNA SWARAJ DAY, 1930**

At the congress session in Dec. 1927 at Madras, Nehru got through a snap resolution on complete Independence. The seed sowed in the Madras Session sprouted as Purna Swaraj resolution at the Calcutta Congress in 1927\textsuperscript{39}. C. Rajagopalachari re-emerged as popular leader in Tamil Nadu politics, toured across the Presidency to prepare the people for Complete Independence of India. On 26 Jan. 1930 Purna Swaraj Day was observed in every city, town and village. C. Rajagopalachari and Madurai A. Vaidyanatha Iyer actively participated in the celebration. National Flag was hoisted at Madras. A mass meeting was held at Triplicane Tilagar Ghat in which Purna Swaraj Oath was read and repeated by thousands of people assembled there\textsuperscript{40}.

\textsuperscript{37} Sedition Committee Report, Madras, 1918, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{39} Irschick E.P. *Politics and Social Conflict in South India*, Bombay, 1969, p. 58.
SALT SATYAGRAHA, 1930

C. Rajagopalachari, the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, was nominated by the Congress High Command to lead the Salt Satyagraha in the Presidency. He shifted the Congress Head Quarters from Madras to Trichi, which served as the center of Civil Disobedience Movement. He went to Madurai to seek the support of N.M.R. Subbaraman, President of Madurai District Congress Committee and A. Vaidyanatha Iyer, local leading lawyer. At the residence of Ayer the final decision was taken to stage the Trichi Vedaranyam Salt March similar to that of Dandi March.

On 13 March 1930, the day after Gandhi commenced his Dandi March, a mammoth public meeting was held at Trichy. Then Trichy T S S Rajan and Vedaranyam Sardar Vedararathnam Pillai were responsible for fixing the starting place and closing point of the March. Both of them extended their untinted support to the Satyagraha. Then the Salt March started from Trichi to Vedaranyam via Tanjavur, Kumnakonam, Mannargudi and Tiruthuraipundi. C. Rajagopalachari led the first batch of 98 volunteers. The patriots with the National Flag in their hands marched in rows of two chanting Bharatis songs and a song specially composed by Namakkal V. Ramalingam Pillai for the occasion. Despite the warning given by A.J. Dharn, the District Collector of Tanjore, the villagers extended hospitality and welcome to the Satyagahis enroute. After 16 days of March, they reached Vedaranyam on 26 April 1930. Thousands of people who had already gathered there greeted them with thunderous cheers. Next day, the

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volunteers observed fast and prayed. On 30 April 1930 C. Rajagopalachari with 16 chosen Satyagrahis defied the Salt Law and collected salt at Agasthian Pillai. They were arrested and sentenced them to 6 month imprisonment in Trichi Jail. After their arrest, S. Satyamurthi led the satyagraha. he and K.S. Santhanam, Mattaparai Venkatrama Iyer, K. Subramania Iyer, G. Ramachandran led the satyagraha and courted arrest. Vedaranyam salt satyagraha lasted for one and a half months.

Parallel to the Vedaranyam Salt March, Andra Kesari T. Prakasam, on 13 April 1930, led a Salt March to Tilakar Ghat, Triplicane, Madras, defied Salt Law, distributed 'Liberty Salt' and courted arrest. Sankara Iyer and Munuswamy Mudaliar produced salt at Solengapuram and Madras. Salt Satyagraha was staged in Madurai. Tuticorin, Cuddalore, Erode, Tirunelveli and Trichy, and thousands of volunteers were arrested. The Satyagraha rekindled patriotic feelings among the people.

As the Salt Satyagraha was gaining ground the provincial administration unleashed repressive measures. On 11 march 1930 police opened fire at the meeting of workers at Choolai, Madras. The volunteers who picketed the toddy shops at Madurai (17 July) and Satygrahis at Madurai (6 Aug) were subjected to police shooting, killing many people. On 11 Jan. 1932, the police resorted to lathi charge to disperse a procession in which Tirupur kumaran was brutally attacked and he died on the spot holding the National Flag high and singing patriotic song. Police entered the Madurai College Hostel and lathi charged the inmates.

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45 Fortnightly Report for the first half of April 1925.
The Congress meeting held at Town Hall Maridan, Coimbatore, was disrupted by police action. The Valparai meeting was banned. The police brutality was widely condemned\textsuperscript{48}.

The Congress Working Committee met in 1935 and decided to contest election and accept office under the Government of India Act of 1935. In the election for Central Legislature held in 1937 the Tamil Nadu Congress candidates won 11 out of 16 sets allotted to the Presidency. In the election for Madras Legislature, Congress captured 159 out of 214 seats. Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar worked hard for Congress victory in the election. C. Rajapalachari was elected from the Graduates Constituency and formed the First Congress Ministry (1937-39). The Rajaji Government remained controversial from the beginning\textsuperscript{49}.

**INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA, 1940-41**

Disappointed with the August offer of Lord Linlithgow (8 Aug. 1940) Gandhiji preferred Individual Satagraha instead of Mass Disobedience Movement to demonstrate the national disapproval in view of war situation. At the national level, Acharya Vinoba Bhave was chosen by Gandhiji as the First Satyagrahi\textsuperscript{50}. In Tamil Nadu, Dr. T.S. S. Raja was the First individual Satyagrahi to court arrest, K.Kamaraj assumed charge of the Tamil Nadu Congress, toured across the Presidency, prepared a list of Satyagrahis to lead the Movement in turn. He was arrested at Goodur Railway Station on his way to meet Gandhiji to get his approval of the official list he had prepared and lodged in Vellore Jail. Large

\textsuperscript{48} Gopala Menon, *Non-Brahmin Movement and Justice Party*, Justice Party Souvenir, P. 95.


number of influential persons from several districts actively involved themselves in the individual satyagraha\textsuperscript{51}.

**QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT, 1942**

Following the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji came out with his clarion call mantra of Do or Die\textsuperscript{52}. The Government arrested the top leaders of the Congress and on 9th Aug. 1942 Gandhiji and other leading lights were arrested in a single sweep and shifted to unknown destination. In Tamil Nadu, K. Kamaraj, Vellore V.M. Ubayadulla, Thiruvannamalai N. Annamalai, C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar, M. Baktavatsalam, S. Satyamurthy were arrested when they were returning to Madras after attending the Bombay meeting and sent to Vellore Jail\textsuperscript{53}.

The unexpected arrest of the National leaders provoked spontaneous protests across the country. In Madras total hartal was observed. The workers of the Buckinham and Carnatic Mills, the Madras port Trust, the Madras Corporation and the Tramway struck work. Shops were closed. Educational institutions did not function, Police resorted to lathi charge and firing, in which 9 died and several wounded\textsuperscript{54}.

The Quit India Movement spread fast like wild fire to the districts. In the North and South Arcot Districts, the agitators went berserk and cut off telegraph and telephone lines, burnt Government properties and derailed goods train. The

\textsuperscript{53} District Calendar of the Civil Disobedience Movement, Secret, 1942-1943, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{54} District Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement, secret, August 1942, p. 34.
students of Annamalai University plunged in the agitation\textsuperscript{55}. Tanjore district witnessed several attempts at sabotage and surreptitious activities. Widespersed violence broke out in the Combatore district. Singanallur Mill workers defied law and went on a procession. The Sulure Aerodrome was burnt and about 200 tanks were damaged. About 30 agitators died in the police firing. In a neighboring village all males were arrested and confined in a small place\textsuperscript{56}.

Total hartal was observed in the Madurai district. At several places young agitators came into clash with the police. A. Vaidyanatha Iyer, B. Chidambara Bharathi, K. Rajaram Naidu and others were arrested for making inflammatory speeches. There was conformation between the public and the police at the Jhansi Rani Park resulting in firing. Post office was burnt. Circle Inspector Visvanathan was subjected to acid bomb attack. Since the situation went out of control, curfew was clamped and the district handed over to the army\textsuperscript{57}.

In the Virudunagar district Rajapalayam played a conspicuous role in the Quit India Movement. On 9 Aug. 1942 the youth of the town organized a serpentine procession led by P.S. Vasanthan\textsuperscript{58}. The town police station was attacked. The status of George V near the police station was smarshed into smithereens. The procession at the Golden Jubilee Hall, condemned the arrest of their leaders and chalked out further course of action. Women of the town joined the agitation in strength\textsuperscript{59}.

\textsuperscript{55} Fortnightly Report (confidential) 19 oct. 1939.
\textsuperscript{56} G.O. 2152 public Dept July 1942.
\textsuperscript{57} Rudraiya Choudhari, G., \textit{A Political Study}, Bombay, 1971, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{58} Fortnightly Report, Madras, 1921, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{59} Fortnightly Report for the year 1938, Govt. of Madras, 1938.
Protest meetings were held at Sattur taluk. Hartal and picketing was observed in Arupukottai taluk. During the second week of August the Movement was intensified in many districts, resulting in violent activities in most parts of Tamil Nadu. Conspiracy cases had been hoisted on Congress leaders and awarded varied degree of sentences. Tamil Nadu agitators demonstrated by example that they would not desist from violent and destructive activities in order to attain freedom to their country.\textsuperscript{60}

**IMPACT OF INA TRIALS, 1945-1946**

The INA trials and RIN revolt made a tremendous impact on Tamil Nadu. There were demonstrations and agitation in Madras, Trichy and other towns demanding the release of Rashid Ali, an INA officer who was awarded seven year sentence (1945) Madras city was in the grip of violent protest when the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) went on strike (18 feb. 1946). More than 200 workers struck work in the Madras Airport. Students of Colleges paralysed the city by staging demonstrations. Women participation in the agitation was conspicuous. P. Jeevanandam, M. Kalyannasundaram, S. Krishnasamy Iyangar and M.P. Srinivasan, student leader addressed a well attended meeting at Tilagar Ghat, Triplicane, Madras.\textsuperscript{61}

**INDEPENDENT INDIA, 1947**

The agitation was resumed in Tamil Nadu when Gandhiji commenced his 21 day fast on 10 Feb 1943. In Madras, hartaal was observed in front of the State Secretariat and several activists were arrested. In towns like Trichy, and Madurai


\textsuperscript{61} The Hindu, dated 24.09.1945.
the agitation was widespread and many courted arrest. On 9 Aug 1944, the people of Tamil Nadu celebrated the Second Anniversary of the Quit India Movement. Congress swept the polls in the Provincial election held in 1946 and on 30 April 1946 T. Prakasan formed the ministry. Political prisoners were released. T. Prakasam was succeeded by O.P. Ramswamy Reddiar (23 March 1947) C. Rajagopalachari was included in the Indian Government headed by Nehru. Of the 49 representatives sent from the Madras Presidency to the Constituent Assembly 22 were from Tamil Nadu.

When India became Independent on the mid-night of 14-15 August 1947, Tamil Nadu celebrated the event with gaiety, gust and happiness. The National Tricolour Flag with Ashok Chakra in the middle was hoisted in St. George Fort replacing the Union Jack Flag. The Madras Legislature formally adopted a resolution welcoming the transfer of power of India. Tamil Nadu reverberated with the Bharathi song Aduvome pallu paduvome, Ananda swathantiram Adaintanvittom Enru.

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