CHAPTER VIII

DISTRICT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Impact of Sepoy Mutiny on Salem district

In 1857, Sepoy Mutiny broke out in the Northern India against the British rule. But this mutiny did not have much impact in Madras presidency. There were some instances of disloyalty. These had no direct connection with the Northern Mutineers. The Madras Eighth Cavalry was ordered to go to Bengal. They demanded higher allowances. The authorities did not pay any heed to the demand. So the Cavalry refused to do so. The authorities disbanded the Eighth Cavalry.

Similar echoes were heard in Salem District at that time. Some disturbances occurred only in the areas where the Muslim population was great. One among them was Vaniambadi which was then under the jurisdiction of the Joint Magistrate of Salem. He ordered a special police force to that place to control the risings. Except this no such widespread uprisings happened. But the anti-British sentiment was not suppressed altogether.
Madras Government

For the most part, it was the policy of the Madras Government to let sleeping dogs lie. Madras government grew conservative and complacent. It became a tradition for Fort St. George to resist any initiative for reform. Edwin Montagu visited India in 1918. He remarked that "Madras was the most immovable of the many immovable governments on the sub-continent". Exciting Indian civil servants avoided serving in Madras. They christened Madras the 'benighted presidency'.

C. Vijayaraghavachari

Only after the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 the freedom movement gained momentum in Salem district. Leaders like Ramaswamy Madaliar and C. Vijayaraghavachari took an active role in the programmes of the Congress party. The first session was held on 28th December 1885 in Bombay. C. Vijayaraghavachari attended this session. He was involved in National movement more than his contemporaries.

He was inextricably connected with the Hindu-Muslim riot of 1882 in Salem. The matter was taken to
the Court of law and the Court verdict favoured the Hindus. He was suspected of complicity in the riot and was charge sheeted. He was convicted and a sentence of transportation to Andaman Islands for 10 years along with his friend C.Ponnusamy Chetty, was passed on 20th November 1882. At that time he was young and junior in his profession as a lawyer. Also he was a member of the Salem Municipal council. He decided to fight his way back to exonerate himself (He was removed from the Municipal council). He made a legal claim to the Secretary of State for India for damages to the tune of Rs. ten thousands for his wrongful removal. His case camp up for hearing before the full bench of the High Court of Madras.

Advocates, Branson and E.Norton appeared for him. It was remarkable to hear that the pleaders read out only the arguments prepared by the defendant himself. He won the case and got a nominal sum of one hundred towards damages. Also he secured the release of his friend convicted in this case, and sent to Andaman islands.

The third session of the congress was held at Madras in 1887. Balrudin Tyabji presided over this session. C.Vijayaraghavachariar drafted the
constitution of the Congress. The necessity of the expansion and reform of the Governor General-in-council was reaffirmed in this session. Resolutions were passed to effect reforms in provincial legislative council.3

In 1895 he became a member of the M.L.C at Madras. Then he served as a M.L.C at Delhi. He was one among the Vice-presidents of Madras Branch of Passive Resistance Movement. He acted as the president of All India Congress session at Nagpur in 1920.

Ramasami Mudaliar

Ramasamy Mudaliar of Salem also took active part in the deliberations of the Congress session at Madras. He began his legal profession in 1876 in Salem. Later he settled at Madras in 1882. He was an active member of the Madras Mahajana Sabha. In 1885 he went to England and exposed the British rule in India and openly expressed the resentment of Indians, especially against the Arms Act. He won over support of prominent Britishers like Chamberlain and Gladstone. He established an organisation called "The Granite City" in order to enlighten the people of
England on problems of India. As a moderate in politics, he believed that Britain could do without India but India could not do without Britain. He participated in the Congress session at Madras in 1887.

Home Rule Movement

The Home Rule League was the brain-child of Mrs. Anne Besant. This movement was very popular between 1916 and 1918. She wanted to secure Home Rule for India through constitutional methods. She wished India to retain her relationship with Britain after her Independence. She commanded profound influence among the students and educated persons. Men of great standing like Right Honourable V.S.Srimivasa Sastry and Sir S.Subramanya Iyer supported her. She was not the enemy of the British Empire. She merely wanted to shake the people of India out of their slumber. Home rule was the birth right of Indians and they were not prepared to take it as a reward of their services and loyalty to the British throne.4

She noticed the antipathy of the commonalty to the movement and tried to gain the popularity by voicing her opinion through Congress meetings. She
had a very good rapport with many leading Congress men in Madras. She was chosen for the chair at the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1917. The Home Rule Movement reached its height in that year. On the other hand, she had some political opponents in the Congress. Among them, C.Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem was prominent.  

Home Rule league held its meeting at Salem on 2nd May 1916. On that occasion, Anantha Narayana Sastriyar, a leading lawyer, delivered a speech on Home Rule and briefed the nature of the movement. His lecture was so eloquent and convincing. Twenty persons joined the league soon after his speech.

Home Rule meetings were convened frequently in the district. The volunteers of the league toured throughout the district to propagate the ideals of the movement. Despite such hectic propaganda, the league did not attract the people of this district. This was mainly due to opposition from prominent leaders like V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, Subramanya Siva and S. Sathyamurthi. Their speeches and writings created unfavourable circumstances to the movement. Another source of opposition to Annie Besant was the nascent Non-Brahmin Movement. This movement began
to gain ground in Salem District. P.Varadarajulu Naidu and others in Salem opposed the Home Rule movement vigorously.

Madras Nationalists and Rajagopalachari from Salem

For a brief time in 1916, the Home Rule movement united all the political factions of Madras behind Mylaporeans and Mrs. Besant. The Egmore group resented the growth of Mylapore's influence since the turn of the century. Kasturiranga Iyengar, a pleader from Coimbatore, came to Madras. He drifted towards journalism and in 1905 purchased 'The Hindu' an English language newspaper. He turned the paper into the chief organ of nationalism in the province. It remained a constant thorn in Mylapore's side. In 1908 The Hindu backed the Extremists. This Hindu group was known as Nationalists by 1917.

Many lawyers, merchants and local politicians in the districts resented the monopoly of the city over the leadership of public affairs. In 1918 the leader of this loose faction, Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), a lawyer and former municipal chairman of Salem moved to the city. He allied with the Egmore group to push the Extremist
cause against Mylapore. Attempt was made to wrest the Congress from them.  

Justice Party

The Third faction, namely the Justice party tackled Mylapore in its own way. They came forward as loyal alternatives to the Mylaporeans as government favourites. This group was a very mixed bag. It included several city merchants and politicians. The weaving magnate Pitti Thyagaraja Chetty hated Mylaporeans. T.M.Nair, a journalist and doctor, who had once been associated with Egmore group, joined Justice party. There was a resentment among local politicians of all sorts against the influence of Mylapore in the affairs of the district. The banner around which these various groups clustered was the cause of the Non-Brahmin community.

Non - Brahmin manifesto 1916

The manifesto traced the Brahmin’s success to their ancient literary traditions. It pointed out that the Brahmin Congress exposed the cause of Home Rule. So it pledged the loyalty of the Non - Brahmins to the British. In a few years, this communalist polemic was broadened. An English paper 'The justice'
and the Tamil 'Dravidian' were started. Several Non-Brahmin conferences were held. The social relationship between Brahmins and others varied from area to area. Most Non-Brahmins accepted the Brahmins' cultural leadership as a necessary part of the social fabric. Generally the majority of Brahmins were employed in menial occupations such as cooks, scribes and religious functionaries. They could be purchased by the rich of other castes for 'a few coins or a broken coconut'. There was no social basis for a lasting movement. The Justice party became known as the Non-Brahmin faction.  

In 1920 elections the quarrel between Non-Brahmin and Brahmin mattered very little. People knew little about parties. To the many, Moderates and Extremists were unintelligible terms. The politics of press and platform hardly affected the voting. The land-lord, the merchant and the lawyer had their clientele. Every man had his tribe, clan or creed behind him who followed him with sheepish fidelity. In this medievalism. Political conviction counted very little. Non-brahmin agitation succeeded in discouraging Brahmins from competing for government jobs. But it did not bring enough Non-Brahmins to replace them.
Rajagopalachari in the all-India forum

All-India alliances enabled the Nationalists of the Hindu group to drum the Mylaporeans out of the Congress by 1918. In early 1920, the Nationalists lost control of the Provincial Congress to their erstwhile allies from the Mofussil. Rajaji in alliance with M.K. Gandhi in the all-India forum succeeded in committing the Congress to Non-Co-operation with the government. This policy included boycott of elections and agitation. The Nationalists had to quit the Congress or they had to stay in it and ignore the elections. Either way it meant a step into the political wilderness. The battle for the leadership of the province under the dyarchy was thus left to the Mylaporeans and Justicities. Dr. P.Subbarayan from Trichengode was an associate of Rajaji. Later he was a campaigner for the Congress Nationalists. Then he became council secretary to the Justice Chief Minister, the Raja of Panagál. Such electoral grass hopping was common.

C. Vijayaraghavachariar as congress President

The Rowlatt Act of 1919 was enacted by the official majority inspite of the opposition of the
people. This Act empowered the Government to arrest persons without ascribing any reason. Hartals were held all over the country. On 13th April 1919 Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy occurred in Punjab. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji started agitation against the Rowlatt Act.

After the First World War, a peace treaty with Turkey was signed. The British ill-treated the Sultan of Turkey. The Muslims in India became agitated and protested against the hard terms imposed on Turkey. As a result the Indian Khilafat Committee was formed on 17th May, 1920. Gandhiji joined hands with Muslims and started his on-violent Non-Co-operation movement.9

In September 1920, a special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta. Gandhi himself moved the Non-Co-operation resolution.

The resolution was ratified in the regular session of the Congress held in December 1920, at Nagpur under the Presidentship of C.Vijayaraghavachariar. It involved the surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated posts in local bodies. The Non-Co-operators were to refuse to attend Official Darbars and semi-
official functions held by the government Officials in their honour. They were to withdraw their children from schools and colleges gradually and establish National schools and colleges. Boycotting the British courts and instituting private arbitration courts were stressed. Joining the army as recruits for service in Mesopotamia was prohibited. They were not to stand for election to the legislatures and should not vote. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving were to be encouraged. They should wear only Swadeshi cloth. Untouchability was to be removed. Non-violence was to be strictly observed by the Non-Co-operators. They should adhere 'satya' (truth) under any circumstances. 10

In Madras, the Congress leaders formed "anti-Rowlatt Committee". C.Vijayaraghavachari of Salem, Kasturiranga Iyengar, S.Sathyamurthi and T.Prakasam played a leading role in this committee. This committee decided to organise agitations in every nook and corner of the district and to present monster petition to parliament and organise agitation in England. Public meetings were held daily on the beach in Madras. Subramaniya Siva, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Gandhiji and C.Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem addressed the meetings. The principal object of these meetings
was to popularise the concept of passive resistance. On 20th March 1919 a special meeting was convened on the beach in Madras under the auspices of 'anti-Rowlatt' Executive Committee, to explain the satyagraha movement. C.vijayaraghavachariar was elected to the chair. As a result of this meeting many shops in the entire province were closed. The response to the satyagraha call was more effective in Salem. Congress conducted 313 meetings in Salem district alone. The merchants extended support by closing their business concerns. The government viewed these developments with great concern and took measures to suppress the movement.

Due to the repressive policy of the Government, the movement failed to take deep roots in many places in the presidency. The activities of the satyagrahis were frequently suspended. The Congress party collected funds from the public to support the patriots who were in jails.

Freedom movement attained its prominence in Salem District only after 1920. The Tamil and English newspapers vividly reported the activities of the political parties. Both the urban and rural population began to acquaint themselves with the
developments concerned with the freedom struggle. This paved the way for a change in the attitude of the people in favour of the struggle. The local leaders and the volunteers worked with great zeal to promote the ideals of the movement.11

The Khilafat movement was organised by Gandhiji with the support of Ali Brothers (Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali). Rajaji of Salem was one of the organisers of the movement in Madras. A mass meeting of the Khilafat committee was conducted near the Presidency college in Madras on 30th September 1920. Rajaji, P. Varadarajulu Naidu, Hammeed F. an and others addressed the gathering. Following this, Khilafat meetings were held throughout the presidency. Hussain Mian Ravuthar delivered a speech at Salem. He categorically declared the full support of the Muslim community to the Non-Co-operation Movement.12 The Hindus and the Muslims showed keen interest on the Khilafat day. They organised processions and observed bands on 17th December, 1919. A public meeting was held. About 20,000 people attended the same.13

Gandhiji announced his intention of conducting a Non-Co-operation campaign on 1st August 1920 and appealed to the people to observe hartal on that day.
At the suggestion of C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem complete Independence of India was added as one of the prominent motives of the movement. Hindus and Muslims extended their support to the Non-Co-operation movement.  

Non-Co-operation Movement in Salem District

The people of this district were convinced of the motives of the movement. They responded favourably to the call of Non-Co-operation given by Gandhiji. Due to some inherent reasons they supported the movement. Firstly, the people protested against the manner by which the authorities collected the taxes. Secondly liquor had spoiled a number of families. The intention of the government was to extract as much as possible from the people. Government refused to introduce prohibition.

In the beginning the movement did not evince the expected impact. However it gained momentum after Gandhiji's visit to Madras. In September 1921, Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali spent two days in the city. Then they toured the Southern districts, and Salem. Maulvi Murtaza Sahib and Rajaji addressed meetings in Salem district. P. Varadarajulu Naidu was another
prominent leader in Salem. He also contributed his share for the success of the movement by addressing many meetings. He explained in these meetings that Swaraj could be attained if the people correctly understood the principles of satyagraha. Thus he inspired the people of Salem and prepared them for the freedom struggle with determination.\textsuperscript{16}

Boycott of Elections

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919 introduced dyarchy in the provinces. The people of India expected much from the British after the I World War. The political atmosphere in the country was surcharged with suspicion and distrust.

Considerably the government was severe in the collection of War - loans. Revenue officials brought a good deal of pressure on the villagers to subscribe. The officers did not compel their subordinates to make their contributions. Yet the very suggestions from them had to be complied with if the subordinates wanted to keep their favour. The common man due to his illiteracy did not comprehend the government's need for loans. To him it was a sign of bankruptcy of the so-called rich government which had to borrow from an ordinary man.
The first general election to the Legislative Council was conducted in December 1920. The Indian National Congress rejected the reform proposals and decided to boycott the election. Rajaji requested the people to boycott the elections as decided by the Calcutta session of the Congress. C. Vijayaraghachariar and S. Srinivasa Iyengar who had filed their nominations withdrew them in consonance with this appeal.\(^{17}\)

Salem Adinarayana Chettiar was a popular leader in Congress. He had also filed his nomination. When others withdrew their nominations for the cause of Non-Co-operation movement, he hesitated at first to withdraw his candidature. Finding lack of support he also withdrew his nomination and appealed to the voters to boycott the polls. This greatly convinced the people to boycott the election and many candidates followed the example of Adinarayana Chettiar.\(^{18}\)

**Boycott - a failure in Salem**

Despite such measures, the boycott of election in Salem district was a complete failure. The absence of Congress candidates created a favourable ground for non-Congress men. They posed themselves loyal to the
Government. The opportunists and loyalists got elected without much opposition. The Justice party was a Non-Brahmin regional party. This new political party emerged during the negotiations over the constitutional reforms. Before the election, Rajaji toured the presidency and staged 'no-vote' campaign. The events and opportunities provided by the reforms cast provincial politics in a new mould. The Justice party contested the elections and obtained absolute majority in the Madras Legislative Council. They formed the ministry under Subbarayalu Reddiar. The failure of the boycott programme had its adverse effect on Congress in Salem. There was a crucial set-back for the Non-Co-operation movement in this district.\(^{19}\)

**Boycott of Law courts**

The Non-Co-operation movement started in its full fury in the beginning of 1921. The lawyers such as Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhai Patel heralded the boycott of Law courts by giving up their lucrative practices. An annual sum of one lakh was promised by Seth Jamunanlal Bajaj for the maintenance of non-practicing lawyers. Mahatma Gandhi gave up the title of Kaisar-i-Hind and his example was
followed by others. Titles were surrendered and law courts were abandoned. The people started deciding their disputes by means of local arbitration. The same was led in Salem by M.G. Vasudevayya, V.S. Subramanya Iyer, V.M. Ramasamy Iyer, K.V. Subbarao and D.S. Gopalachari. They gave up their practice and resolved to devote their entire time to make the Congress popular in the district. On 10th January 1921, the government arrested M.G. Vasudevayya for his intense participation in the boycott movement and sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment.

**Boycott of schools and colleges**

On 25th December 1920 the All India Students Conference was held at Nagpur. Lala Lajpat Rai presided over the conference. The resolution of boycotting schools and colleges was passed. This brought great enthusiasm among the people. The students in Salem district left their schools and college. They organised processions with anti-British placards. A pro-British honorary Magistrate was subjected to social boycott because he unfurled the Union Jack over his shop. Popular leaders in Congress like M.G. Vasudevayya, K.V. Subba Rao, V.M. Ramasamy
Ayyar withdrew their children from the Government and grant-in-aid schools. Women of the district also extended co-operation to the movement. They conducted many processions against the colonial rule and boycotted schools and college. They demanded starting of national girls' schools in Salem and the inclusion of spinning for girls as a subject in schools. They expressed their willingness to offer financial help to such ventures.\textsuperscript{21}

S. Vijayaraghavachari an intermediate student joined the Congress. He boycotted study and took part in Non-Co-operation in 1921. A. Subramanyam joined the movement while in school. C. Anandachari, an advocate was jailed as a consequence of his taking part in the Non-Co-operation movement in Salem.\textsuperscript{22}

**Boycott of government functions**

The Prince of Wales visited India in 1921. Gandhiji urged his followers to boycott all celebrations planned to welcome the Prince.

Protest demonstrations were held throughout the length and breadth of the country. Tension prevailed in Salem District. Following the visit of the Prince of Wales, Lord Wellington, the Governor of Madras
touched the presidency. Attempts were made to boycott him in Salem. But the Ministers from Salem welcomed Lord Wellington in order to earn the good will of His Excellency. Salem Municipal council resolved not to present him with welcome address. The council members contended that they were no longer under the control of the governor. The Salem Municipality and the local Non-Co-operators organised anti-British demonstrations. They boycotted the tour of Lord Wellington and greeted him with black flags at Harur. Eventually no institution in Salem welcomed the Governor. Having noticed the anti-government spirit, the Governor cancelled the rest of his tour programme on 16th April 1921 and returned to Madras. 

**Government reacted**

Non-Co-operation movement gained on the support of the masses and soon developed into a powerful one. On finding this alarming situation the government resorted to repressive methods to crush the movement. Lathi charges, arrests and fining were ordered to an extensive scale against the agitators. In Salem district, 147 persons were arrested in 1921 for taking part in the Non-Co-operation movement. The leaders of Salem were not discouraged by these repressive measures and continued the struggle.
Congress volunteers of Salem toured the presidency and delivered speeches at public meetings to instill the spirit of freedom among the masses. Bhupathi Lakshmanaraju of Salem spoke at Ambur on 13th February 1921. He appealed to the people to directly involve themselves in the movement. During the course of his speech he said "We should have national education. Then you will understand the British injustice. Then only they would find it difficult to live. Until you get rid of your timidity, you will not attain Swaraj. It may happen that you should take up sword and fight."

He was arrested for his seditious speech and sentenced to one year imprisonment.

The prophetic statement of Bhupathi Lakshmanaraju of Salem was true and that was the reality about the Raj in India. The province was thoroughly disillusioned and felt ashamed that so much was spent on a tour which was not successful. Later on the Prince told Montagu that "India is no longer a place for a white man to live in."

Lord Northcliffe was a friend of Lord Reading, the then Viceroy of India. Northcliffe asked "What do we want India for? Prestige? Perhaps cash? We
certainly don’t get any from it. The thousands of able men from home could do far better almost anywhere else".27

It is astonishing to note that the feelings of Bhapathi Lakshmanaraju of Salem was endorsed by the Prince of Wales and Lord Northcliffe.

P.Varadharajulu Naidu of Salem in his Tamil newspaper ‘Prapancha Mitran’ wrote in favour of the movement and criticised the policies and repressive measures of the government. In order to suppress the publication, the government demanded Rs.1,000/- as security. He was arrested and sentenced to nine months imprisonment for the publication of a provoking article in the December 1921 issue of his paper. 28

V.M. Ramasamy Ayyar, D.S. Gopalachari, M.G. Vasudevayya and N.Rama Rao were also put in jail on the allegation of instigating the people against the Government. The Non-Co-operators of this district observed hartal and demanded the release of the arrested leaders. Leaflets, posters and writing on the walls appeared against the Government. The district authorities found the situation getting out of control. A.R.Vaidyanatha Iyer, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Salem issued an order which banned such
writings on public walls. Restrictions were also placed on the issue of leaflets. The order stipulated that there should not be any picketing of shops or places of business with the intention of enforcing their closure or suspension of business. Nobody should intimidate any one who desired to carry on with the usual business.²⁹

Suspension of the movement

The movement was going fast to pieces. Gandhiji’s slogan was Non-Violent Non-Co-operation. The movement lost its glamour after the arrests of Gandhiji and Rajaji. Indiscipline reached its height when almost all leaders were put in jail. The repression of the government demoralised the people yet further. Several other factors were also responsible for the failure of the movement. Non-Brahmins began to feel that the Congress worked for the promotion of the interests of the Brahmins and it was dominated by Brahmins. The internal conflicts within the Congress party weakened the movement. The radicals considered the Non-Co-operation as ineffective. P.Varadharajulu Naidu declared in a conference in Salem that he refused to agree with
Gandhiji's conception of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation. He believed that violence was the only way to bring the British to their senses. 30

On 26th March 1921, Rajaji was released from jail. Congress leaders in Salem followed their counterparts in other parts of India in instigating the masses to violence. Processions and public meetings were banned in Salem district under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. M.G. Vasudevayya, the District Congress Secretary disobeyed the order and addressed public meetings. He and sixteen other congress men were arrested by the police. The advocates boycotted the law courts in protest to the action of the police. Non-Co-operators' arrest caused a vacuum in the leadership of the district and had an adverse effect. People became reluctant to take an active role in the movement. Particularly the movement lost its credence in Salem town and Attur Taluk. The effectiveness of the movement was considerably marred by the Moplah uprising in Kerala state (south India). The Hindu muslim front started cracking up. There was a possibility of communal violence. In February 1922 a mass violence broke out at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces (North India). This horrified Gandhiji who declared that the
people were not yet trained to carry on a non-violent struggle. He announced the suspension of the movement in February 1922.\textsuperscript{31}

For the rank and file of the Congress this declaration was a thunder-bolt. The failure of the Non-Co-operation movement necessitated reorientation of Congress strategy. Once again the Congress went back to constitutional agitation. On 11th February 1922 the Congress Working Committee Meeting was held at Bardoli and adopted the resolution of constructive programme.\textsuperscript{32} The resolution emphasized the need for the production of Khaddar (hand spun and hand woven cotton cloth), establishment of national schools, temperance eradication of untouchability, upliftment of Harijans, and Hindu-Muslim amicability. It recommended the enlistment of congress members and collection of donation for the ‘Tilak Swaraj Fund’. All congressmen were asked to concentrate their attention to encourage hand-spinning and thereby to promote manufacture of Khaddar. Rajaji again took to propaganda work and addressed many meetings. He highlighted the importance of the constructive programme of Gandhiji. Devadoss Gandhi, son of Gandhiji, joined him. They toured the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu in 1923 and addressed public
meetings in various places. They asked the people to wear khaddar. Join the Congress and liberally contribute to the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund'.

Salem District Board took an active role in Khaddar movement. A resolution was passed in the council of the Board that all the students in municipal educational institutions and the servants in municipal offices should wear khaddar. To make the resolution effective, spinning wheels or charkhas were given to the people. Congress volunteers organised training camps in the district to teach people spinning khaddar yarn. Separate periods were marked in the time-table in schools for spinning Khaddar. S.N. Narashimaraju made a strong appeal to the students to wear khaddar. District Board authorities encouraged the people to have spinning wheels and wear Khaddar. These measures produced good results. When Gandhiji came to Salem in 1925, he stayed for sometime in the house of P. Rathnasabapathy Gounder on 9th March. He found several charkhas in his house and the wearing of khaddar by all his family members. Moreover the constructive work gained more attention in the district with the establishment of Gandhi Ashram on 6th February 1925 of Pudupalayam village in Trichengode Taluk by Rajaji.
Gandhi Ashram

To promote and propagate the ideals and philosophy of Gandhiji this Ashram was started. It was like a branch of the Gandhi Seva Sangh. It encouraged weaving and temperance among the local weavers and untouchables. The site for the Ashram was donated by P. Rathnasabapathy Gounder. Gandhi visited the Ashram in 1925. A grant of 60,000 rupees was provided by the All India Spinners Association. It was also strengthened by the support given by Dr. P. Subbarayan who was then in the service of the British Government. In 1932 the Madras government wanted the Ashram closed. Dr. P. Subbarayan timely intervened and protected it. Gandhiji visited a second time the Ashram in 1934. The Ashram encouraged the production and use of khaddar. Its motive included the promotion of village industries and handicrafts. It played a vital role in the political activity of the district. M.G. Vasudevayya and E.V. Ramasamy Naicker were among the patrons of this Ashram. It became the centre of Rajaji's life till he became the Chief Minister of Madras presidency in 1937. Though the Non-Co-operation movement lost its grip, it developed a spirit of nationalism among the people of Salem district.
Civil disobedience movement

There was political calm for about five years since the suspension of Non-Co-operation movement. Until 1927, there were no agitation, against the British. In that year the British parliament appointed the all-white Simon Commission of seven members to study the working of dyarchy of 1919 Act. There was no Indian member in it. Nationalists criticised it vehemently. Congress began to react again. In Madras 'Boycott Committee' was formed under the leadership of S. Sathyamurthi. In 1928 Srinivasa Iyengar, the Congress president started a "League of Independence". Salem was represented in it.

The Simon Commission came to Madras on 18th February 1929. It was greeted with black flags, hartals and boycotts wherever it went. Salem municipal council passed a resolution to close its offices, schools and college under its control on that day. Large number of students gathered under T. Krishnaswami, a Hindi Pandit. They raised slogans like 'Simon go back'. Afterwards T. Krishnaswami and ten other congressmen of Salem participated in the satyagraha at Madras. Some anti-nationalists and sycophants greeted the Simon Commission. In Salem the
hartal was total. Almost all the shop keepers put down the shutters and demonstrations were also held.\textsuperscript{38}

The Moplah uprising killed Hindu-Muslim entente. Since then the two communities began to drift away. The Muslims in Salem district did not extend their whole hearted support to the programme of the nationalists. Hindu-Muslim friction appeared in many places on the hartal day. Muslim youths became pro-commission volunteers and followed the commission. The Hindus at Kaveripatnam arranged a festival on the Muharram day. There was every possibility of a clash between the two communities. The government issued prohibitory orders and averted the clash.\textsuperscript{39}

Swarajist in Salem

The Gaya session of the Congress was held in 1922 under C.R. Das who formulated scheme for the Swarajist party. His scheme failed to get the approval of the Congress. There was a battle royal between no-changers and pro-changers. So he resigned from the Congress presidency. The object of the Swarajist and the Congress was the same i.e the establishment of Swaraj or Dominion status within the British empire. Obstruction was the keynote of the Swarajist-creed. They wanted to wreck the legislatures from within.\textsuperscript{40}
P. Varadarajulu Naidu addressed a Swarajist meeting on 17th October 1928. He explained his contention that there was practically no difference between dominion status and independence. He proposed two methods to achieve freedom viz. armed rebellion and civil disobedience in the form of no-tax campaign. He believed that the country was not in a position to rebel with arms.

Civil disobedience was the only alternative. He started the Nationalist Party. The Madras government considered this party as a break away group from the orthodox Congress party. It was reported that there existed personal animosity between him and Srinivasa Iyengar. Capturing the seats in the local municipal and legislative councils was the motive of this party. P.V. Naidu organised many public meetings and explained to the people the importance of political freedom and social justice.41

‘Namakkal Kavingnar’ Ramalingam Pillai. (1888-1972)

This Thuluva (Isai) Vellala Tamil poet and artist of Namakkal was born in Mohanur to a Police constable. He became partially deaf in his youth. He made a painting commemorating the Coronation of King
George in Delhi. This earned him a medal and much accolade at the Coronation.

He joined the Indian National Congress. Encouraged by Gandhi he wrote nationalistic songs. His stirring song "Kaththi irri rattham irri yutham onru varuguthu" (A war without sword and blood is coming) was written in 1930. This became a powerful inspirational song to proclaim the Gandhian Non-Violence in Tamil Nadu. It was the marching song of Rajaji and hundreds of satyagrahis who marched on foot to Vedaranyam to break the Salt-law. After this, Ramalingam came to be known as the 'National poet of Tamil Nadu' and 'Congress Poet'. A small collection of his patriotic songs under the title 'Prarthanai' (Prayer) edited by Rajaji, was a prescribed text book in the elementary schools. It was banned by the British government as unsuitable for school use.

Salt Satyagraha

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, the most popular programme of the Nationalists was the Salt satyagraha. Public meetings were held in Salem town, Namakkal, Trichengode, Sankari and other parts of the district to spread to ideals of the movement.
In this presidency Rajaji was the leader of Salt-satyagraha. Twenty persons marched to Vedaranyam near Cape Calimore to prepare salt. In Salem, Anantachari was in charge of Salt-satyagraha. Volunteers like, Muniappa Chettiar, Theerthagiri Mudaliar, N., Narasimharaju, A. Shanmugam Pillai and A. Subramanyam were arrested for their taking part in Salt-Satyagraha and imprisoned. Anantachari organised flag salutation ceremonies and public meetings. He was arrested again under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code and sentenced to six months imprisonment. The Divisional officers in Salem, Namakkal and Sankari took measures to counter the propaganda work and prevented public meetings. Congress volunteers were convicted under section 16 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Rajaji, the President of Provincial Committee was arrested and sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment. Also a fine of rupees 200 was imposed. This earned public sympathy and support to the movement. The arrest of Gandhiji was resented by the people of Madras. Total hartal was observed throughout the presidency.
The Civil Disobedience Movement also was a little success. Along with it the movement against liquor shops as well as the boycott of foreign goods gained ground among the people. 44

Liquor shop picketing

The Congress volunteers of Salem district picketed liquor shops in Komarapalayalam, Rasipuram and Kalappanaickenpatti. The Congress was able to tap the discontent of many sectors of the population who were against the government and its impositions. People were in the strained conditions due to Depression and supported the organised dissent. In the countryside, they associated the anti-zamindari and resettlement campaings with the congress. Masses of handloom weavers were thrown into unemployment. They fuelled riots in Komarapalayam. Picketing at Komarapalayam on 19th July 1930 resulted in a riot. The mob attacked and in the melee one sub-inspector and five constables were injured. In Salem town another riot occurred when a drunkard attacked a picketer. Picketing liquor shops continued under the leadership of Rajaji. Another remarkable incident that occurred in Salem district was setting fire to a toddy shop during Gandhiji’s birth day celebration.
The movement picked up momentum when the Second Round Table conference failed. Picketing the toddy shops went on. The Government ordered lathi charges on those who picketed the toddy shops. On 2nd July 1932, picketing ended in a clash between Adidravidas and caste-Hindus. The anti-drink agitation caused more problems to the government than the Salt-satyagraha.45

Boycott of foreign goods

Another aspect of Civil Disobedience Movement was the boycott of foreign goods. On 6th June 1931, the Tamil Youth Conference was held at Madras under the chairmanship of Lakshmipathi. Palanisamy Pandaram from Salem attended it. The conference adopted resolutions for the boycott of foreign goods especially those manufactured in England. It called the youth to picket shops which sold foreign clothes. Rajaji instructed the congressmen to boycott British goods and advocated the use of Khaddar.46

The Congress working committee of Salem recruited unemployed youths and hand-loom weavers for picketing. In July 1930, about three thousand weavers went door to door and requested the people to give up the use of foreign clothes.47 In all these activities
of the Congress, the Muslims did not participate. The shops of the Hindu merchants were alone picketed. Communal interest played a havoc in the movement. Kamakshi, wife of a local advocate and K. Gopala Ayyar picketed the foreign cloth shops at Bazaar St, Salem. They persuaded the people not to go for foreign clothes. Kamakshi was the daughter of Rao Bahadur K. Sesha Ayyar. Both picketers were put in jail for two years. Others carried Congress flages singing national songs. They were convicted to six months imprisonment.

In order to popularise the movement, Rajaji addressed a public meeting on 7th August 1933 at Trichengode. He led a procession from Trichengode to Paramathli. The volunteers shouted slogans like 'Gandhiji Ki Jai' and 'Vandematharam'. They distributed leaflets to the people on the way. Police arrested them and they were sentenced to six months imprisonment.

The Civil Disobedience Movement slackened due to Communal Award. The attempt to divide the 'Caste Hindus' from the Scheduled caste Hindus was the bitterest blow. In may 1933, Gandhiji commenced his 21 day fast for Harijan welfare and suspended the
satyagraha for six weeks. Rajaji appealed to the congressmen to observe temporary suspension of the movement. The All India Congress Committee met at Patna and decided to suspend it unconditionally. In 1933 Gandhiji advised the Congress to give up 'Mass satyagraha' as well as 'Individual satyagraha'.

Hindu-Muslim clash

After 1933 groupism and factional politics became the main activity of the congressmen. Hindu-Muslim clashes took place in many places in the presidency. In 1935, Salem witnessed such a clash at Kaveripatnam where the mosque and a Hindu temple were situated close to each other. During the Pongal festival, the Hindus led their bulls with loud music. The Muslims could not tolerate such activities near their mosque and protested. Clash took place on 16th January 1935. The police intervened and lathi charged. Thirteen persons were injured and two seriously wounded. Government asked the District Collectors to compile lists of loyalists to goad them against Civil Disobedience. Local politicians posed themselves as loyalists and formed loyalist associations to fight the Congress. The Muslim Leaders in Salem tried to use government support to
promote their own and their followers' position in local affairs. This precipitated communal rioting in the town.\textsuperscript{52}

'Ryots Day' protest against the resettlement rates in Salem district on 18th March 1935 was held. The purpose of the meeting was to pacify the Muslims and to discuss other matters related to the national movement. The Justice Party stood against the ideals of the Congress. As a political rival, it organised vigorous campaign against the Congress party. The wrangle between these two parties continued until 1937 elections in which the Congress party emerged successful. Thereafter the popularity of the Justice party among the people of the presidency was lost. The Justice party virtually died with dyarchy.\textsuperscript{53}

1937 and after

The first elections under the Government of India Act of 1935 were scheduled in 1937. This act envisaged 'Provincial autonomy.' In 1935-36 local board elections, Congress scored notable success in Salem District. Rajaji stated" My own view is that ... as much benefit should be wrung out of the councils as possible for strengthening the prestige
and position of the Congress". Dr. Subbarayan. Zamindar of Kumaramangalam became a congressman and was nominated for a Salem seat. The election result was a surprise even for the most optimistic congressmen. They won 159 of the 215 seats overall. In July, Rajaji formed the new Ministry. P. Subbaroyan elected from Salem became the Minister for Education.  

Prohibition

In Salem district, it was tried in the Attur Taluk. In order to minimise the temptation for excessive drinking, no new shops were allowed within 5 miles of the boundary of the area. Though this measure kept the increase in the consumption of toddy under check, it led to a considerable increase in the sale of foreign liquor. Illicit distillation and smuggling became a menace in the taluk. The reopening of the arrack shops in the area was ordered. Total prohibition of arrack as well as toddy was also tried during 1930-33 in parts of Tiruchengode, Namakkal and Rasipuram Taluk, on the representations of the social reformers like Rajaji. In order to make the experiment a success, allotting of trees for shops within five miles of the areas was restricted to the
average of the previous five years. To start with, this showed signs of success, and the dry areas were further widened. Thereafter the enthusiasm failed. Illicit distillation increased. Government received a number of representations for the re-opening of the shops. In 1933 the government abandoned the experiment.

The temperance campaign was an important aspect of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the province. Liquor was a problem in a region where it was manufactured by the simplest method from the juice of palm trees. Temperance had for many years been a concern of politicians and social reformers. The Civil Disobedience campaigns gained support from these men. The Congress organised boycotts of the government's action of Licences for liquor trading. Rajaji wrote that the war against liquor was an integral part of the war of Independence. Some liquor shops were looted and burnt. Some toddy-palms were vandalised.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-31 Rajaji published two pamphlets to expound the cause of prohibition. They were the 'Indian Prohibition Manual' in English and 'Ur Kattuppadu' in Tamil.
Social reformers alone supported prohibition. As soon as Congress Ministry assumed office, the cause of Prohibition was taken up with great ardour. Chief Minister Rajaji piloted the Bill in the legislature for introducing prohibition in Salem and then in other districts of the presidency. The bill was passed as the Madras Prohibition Act, 1937 (Madras Act X of 1937). It was the first of its kind in the whole of India.

Prohibition was introduced in the Salem district from 1st October 1937. From that date all liquor and opium shops were closed. All advertisements of intoxicating liquors were banned. The task of enforcing the Act was entrusted to an augmented police force. The Excise staff were withdrawn from the district. A prohibition officer was appointed to assist the police in the preventive work. Village officers were also specially required to assist the police. The whole work was done under the direction and supervision of the Collector and the District Magistrate. Besides that, the congress workers did useful propaganda and detection work. Taluk and Village Prohibition Committees were formed to enlist public co-operation in favour of Prohibition.
The implementation of this act at Salem was not an experimental nature, but a first step towards complete prohibition for whole province in future. However licence was granted to sell foreign liquor. This act imposed indirect checks to curb the illicit tapping of toddy. The number of trees marked for tapping of toddy in the district was restricted. The Collector of Salem sent a proposal that tapping of coconut trees for sweet juice should be prohibited in future. Accepting the proposal, the government instructed the Collector that licences would not be renewed or granted for the tapping of coconut trees after 31st December 1938. The police raided Mettupatti, a village near Ayodhyapatnam, six miles from Salem Town on the road to Harur. Illicit toddy tappers were arrested.56

Salem was noted for illicit distillation. In many places the law breakers thrived undetected. This posed a major problem to the police. The District Superintendent of Police proclaimed in strong terms that the possession of fermented toddy and distillation of arrack were offences whether it was for personal consumption or for sale.57 The police action proved to be effective and there was
considerable decline in the production of illicit arrack.

Prohibition in Salem created a problem with Mysore. The renters of Mysore were unwilling to stop tapping trees in Salem district till the expiry of the licences. The Madras government stood firm and instructed the officials of Mysore state to stop immediately. The Mysore government demanded adequate compensation to the renters for the loss involved in the cancellation of the contract. Madras government agreed to pay compensation and the Mysore renters suspended the tapping work in Salem district. ⁵⁸

Life in the village was thus brightened up. Wherever available the local talents were tapped for a series of entertainments like bhajans and folk dances. Apart from these counter-attractions, tea and coffee were provided for some time free and later on at a cheaper rate by the Tea Market Expansion Board and the Coffee Cess Committee. The ex-tappers in the district were nearly about 14000 in number. Alternative employment was provided for them. Jaggery making, milk-supply and other co-operative societies absorbed some of them. Others took to cultivation. A few also migrated to Malaya. ⁵⁹
The government of Madras experienced a great loss of excise revenue due to Prohibition in Salem. For the first half of the financial year 1937-38, the loss was estimated at Rs: 13,19,000. The total cost of prohibition in Salem for the year 1938-39 was calculated at Rs: 26,22,000. Prohibition was opposed on the ground that it reduced the income to the government. Finding no other way, the government resorted to fresh taxation. On the other hand it improved the moral and social welfare of the masses. The ordinary crimes in the district showed a substantial reduction. Workers showed a distinct improvement in the quality of work, discipline, health and earnings. It reduced indebtedness. Encouraged by the good results, the government extended it to other districts of the presidency, despite the revenue loss.60

Anti-Hindi Agitation

Rajaji's government made the study of Hindi compulsory in schools in keeping with the policy of the All India Congress. The measure did not have much impact since there were few Hindi teachers. Yet it was the first sign of North Indian domination. This measure made the Congress government very unpopular in
the eyes of the common man. It enabled E.V.Ramasamy Naicker and the Justice rump to join hands with student politicians. Along with them trade unionists and agricultural leaders joined E.V.Ramasami Naicker and organised an anti-Hindi conference at Salem. On 3rd June 1938. He was recognised as the leader of the anti-Hindustani movement. A boycott committee was formed and a volunteer camp was established which formulated a programme of agitation.\textsuperscript{61} The Scheduled Caste federation and the Muslim League also extended their support to the agitation. Protest meetings, black flag demonstrations and picketing were conducted. It was a long and impressive agitation in which thousand people were arrested.

\textbf{A Congress meeting was convened at Victoria market-ground under the auspices of A.E. Venkatesa Ayyar, the President of the District Congress Committee. P. Subbarayan, the Education Minister presided over the meeting. The agitators raised anti-Congress slogans and pelted stones. A stone caused a bleeding injury to the minister. The meeting was cancelled abruptly due to this disturbance.}\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{The volunteers picketed the residence of Rajaji and the Hindu School at Madras on 30th June}
1938. The Police arrested 39 picketers and two leaders. This served the cause of the anti-Hindi Movement. The leaders declared that the schools where Hindi was made a compulsory subject would be picketed. 1st July 1938 was observed as anti-Hindustani day. Boycott of schools, hartals, processions and meetings were announced. 63

In Salem district the picketing was effected on 4th and 5th July. Some picketed the house of local M.L.A. They were taken into custody. Thereafter the agitators lagged behind. The only noteworthy aspect of the movement was the beginning of sporadic picketing of schools in Salem. In the course of agitation nearly 400 volunteers including E.V. Ramasami were arrested in Salem District. Yet the movement continued till the ministry resigned on 29th October 1939 over the issue of Second World War. James Hope, the Governor of Madras took charge of the Government. He abolished teaching Hindi as a compulsory subject and ordered the release of demonstrators from prison. 64

The Congress and the Second World War

The Second World broke out in Europe on 3rd September 1939. As early as April 1039 when Indian
troops were sent to Aden, the Congress warned the British against imposing war on India. Also it was against using Indian resources in a war without the consent of the people of India. The warning fell on deaf ears. In August more Indian troops were despatched to Egypt and Singapore. Without consulting the Indian leaders, Linlithgow declared India as a belligerent country.

The reaction of the Congress was sharp. On 14th September, it declared that "India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when the very freedom is denied to her. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions." The government responded to this resolution and declared in October 1939 a promise for the re-examination of the whole scheme of constitution after the war.

Congress was not happy with this. The party withdrew its support to the war and called upon the Congress ministries to relinquish office. In Madras Rajaji tendered the resignation of his ministry.65

Before the Congress launched ‘Individual Satyagraha’ Mohammed Ali Jinnah Proposed "two nation
theory' which envisaged separate state for Hindus and Muslims. This led the way to communal tension. It reverberated all over India. Salem was no exception to this. In January 1940 the Hindus assaulted the Muslims. In the same month sixteen Muslim tombs were damaged.66

Hindu Mahasabha

On 14th January 1940, a branch was started in Salem. P.Varadarajulu Naidu joined this Sabha which was against partition of India. Naidu ridiculed the demand of Jinnah for Pakistan. This branch convened the first conference on 23rd and 24th March 1940, and it was presided over by V.D.Savarkar. About twenty thousand people attended this conference. Subsequently he addressed many meetings in Salem District in which he attacked Jinnah's communal frenzy. These speeches made Hindus very emotional. To ventilate its view on the issue of crucial importance, the Sabha published a Tamil booklet entitled 'Sukkur Attooliam' against the Muslims. The government of Madras proscribed this controversial booklet.67
Pakistan Day

Muslim league celebrated the Pakistan Day on 19th April 1940. Meetings were held in almost all districts of Madras. No doubt that these developments retarded the force of the movement. Leaders like P. Subbarayan and his colleagues continued the struggle with determination. The government prosecuted 200 Congress volunteers. They were arrested under the Defence of India Act and imprisoned for terms ranging from three to eighteen months. 68

Individual Civil Disobedience

The 'August 1940 Offer' declared that the framing of a new constitution was "primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves". The Dominion status after the war was also promised. The Congress rejected the offer and authorised Gandhiji to start Civil Disobedience again. This time Gandhiji selected individuals to lead the movement.

The movement started in Salem district vigorously. The Congressmen formed satyagraha committees and issued anti-war pamphlets. They collected signatures from the public to the pledge and organised meetings to popularise the ideals of the movement. 69
Mohan Kumaramangalam, son of P. Subbarayan, was the principal anti-war speaker of Salem. He had much influence among the students. Narasimharaju of Valappady published anti-war pamphlets and a weekly journal called "Nagara jothi" from his printing press. Movement came to a stop in December 1940 due to the arrest of prominent leaders. Rajaji favoured suspension of the movement only as a political strategy. But Gandhiji directed to continue the struggle. The chief leaders of Salem who were arrested and convicted were P. Subbarayan and his wife, Radhabai.  

After a brief interval it started in January 1941. D.P. Rathanavelu led the movement in Salem. With a view to suppress the satyagraha the government arrested him and sentenced him to eighteen months rigorous imprisonment. Subsequently many Congress leaders and volunteers were arrested and put in jail. Ayyamperumal M.S. was arrested under section 38 (5) Defence India Rules, and sentenced eighteen months and kept in Vellore jail. The satyagraha in Salem district was not a great success. The main reason for this lull in the activities of the satyagraha was the Hindu-Muslim feud.
Quit India Movement

Cripps Mission arrived on 22 March 1942 to make certain constitutional proposals. But the principle of Pakistan was conceded. The Congress decided to agitate against this. All India Congress Committee passed the famous Quit-India Resolution on 8th August 1942. It gave a clarion call to the people to join the movement. The next day, Gandhiji, together with the whole Congress High Command was bundled into a special train for imprisonment. The Quit-India movement was different from the earlier ones. It assumed the character of a revolutionary one. Gandhiji's direction to the people was 'do or die'. It was the final stage of the freedom struggle. 72

In Salem, Gopal Achari, Antony Cruz, Arockiasami, R.S. Perumal Chettiar, Town Congress President and Lalitha Annaji were arrested. The Town Congress Committee immediately convened the meetings at Eswaran Temple and Perumal temple to decide the future programme of the struggle. On 9th August 1942 a hartal was conducted in Salem district. On 11th August the majority of the local Municipal college students abandoned the classes and led a procession carrying flags and placards bearing the words "Freedom, Liberty and Peace". R.V. Perumal, the Town
Congress Committee member convened a meeting at Arisipalayam. He was the author of a song in Tamil. His song appealed to the national sentiment and was much provocative. He was arrested and imprisoned at Alipuram camp jail for six months.

The other local leaders like R. Kamalapathi Pandaram, R. Lingam R.V. Arumugam of Ammapet, Govindarajulu, Arunachala Mudaliar continued the struggle. They were also arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment. Arunachala Mudaliar was sent to Alipuram jail to serve the term but he died in the prison. The District Magistrate issued an order under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, which prohibited the holding of meetings and processions. The Congress volunteers defied the ban and picketed the district Munisiff's and District Magistrate's courts in batches of two or three. The vice-president of the Salem Congress Committee was arrested under section 129 of the Defence India Rules. Two youths picketed the Sub-Magistrate court at Attur and were arrested. Meanwhile the government decided to send a military force to suppress the movement at Salem. Knowing this the nationalists under the leadership of K.L. Rangasami made an attempt to uproot the railway line to prevent the troops entering the town. The news leaked out and the police arrested them.
The armless people could not fight for long. Finding the people's response to the movement dwindling, the District and Taluk Congress Committees arranged several meetings and processions so that the message could reach nook and corner of the district. The lathi charges, brutal torture of men, and dishonouring and open insult of women silenced the people to an utter helplessness. The movement went underground. At Parapatti, near Salem, a Congressman set fire to the village chavadi. A pillar post-box was removed and thrown into a pond. In Rasipuram, the telegraph lines were cut to prevent the authorities sending report to the government. In Namakkal and Krishnagiri the same offences took place. Three Congress volunteers were arrested in this connection. Venkatachala Reddiar of Namakkal advocated non-payment of taxes and picketing of government offices. He was arrested for preaching sedition.  

During the course of the Quit India Movement, leaders like Ashok Mehta and Aruna Asaf Ali issued pamphlets from Bombay and other places. These informed day-to-day developments in connection with the movement. The pamphlets were cyclostyled in a place at the foot of Shrvroy mountain and distributed to the public.
Omalur was another storm centre of the movement in Salem District. L. Arumuga Pandaram led the movement in Omalur taluk. Theerthagiri Mudaliar, the President of District Congress Committee issued directions then and there. They distributed the cyclostyled pamphlets to the government officials and solicited their support. Pamphlets were sent to the police station at Teevattipatti, Taluk Office and the Magistrate court at Omalur. Police arrested them. They were sentenced to six months imprisonment and sent to Alipuram camp jail to serve the term.  

Issue of Pakistan

In a meeting of Congress Legislative Party held in April 1942 at Madras, a resolution was passed at the instance of Rajaji to accept the demand of Pakistan. Rajaji toured the Southern districts carrying on propaganda in favour of the partition move. Tamilnadu Congress Committee took disciplinary action on him. So Rajaji resigned from Congress to canvass public opinion outside. Also he resigned his membership of the Madras Legislative Assembly on his own accord.

The period between 1942 and 1947 witnessed an intense political activity in Salem District. There was much opposition to Rajaji suggestions with
respect to the formation of National government, conducting general election and exclusion of Indian princes. The Swadesamitran, a Tamil daily and the Mussalman, an Urdu daily welcomed the proposal. The Mail, an English daily opposed it strongly. Rajaji's formula for a Hindu-Muslim settlement became a subject matter of lengthy comments in all the newspapers. Supporting papers held the view that there was no chance of Great Britain transferring power unless Hindus and Muslims came to an agreement.\textsuperscript{78}

On 6th May 1944, Gandhiji was released. Gandhi liked this formula and it was on the basis that the correspondence with Jinna was started. Gandhi met Jinnah in September 1944 and discussed Rajaji's formula with him. However Jinnah rejected this formula.\textsuperscript{79}

The general elections in great Britain brought a sweeping victory to the British Labour Party in 1945. This paved the way for a welcome change in British attitude towards India. Viceroy Lord Wavell ordered general elections to the provinces in 1945. P. Subbarayan and others welcomed this. Accordingly, election was held in Madras. T. Prakasam formed his ministry on 30th April 1946.
The British Cabinet Mission came to India on 24th March 1946. It held a conference at Simla and discussed with the leaders of different parties. It failed to find answer to the issue of Pakistan and left India on 16th May 1946. On the same day Viceroy issued a statement about the setting up of the Interim Government until the new constitution could be brought into effect. In July election was held to the Constituent Assembly.

The Congress emerged victorious. This was a severe blow to the Muslim League. It withdrew its support to the Cabinet Mission's proposals and resorted to 'Direct Action' to achieve Pakistan. This led to riots throughout the country. 80

Hindu-Muslim Riots in Salem

The major party, Congress accepted the proposals. Viceroy invited Jawaharlal Nehru to form an interim government. Nehru's cabinet took office on 2nd Sep. 1946. Communal riots broke out in different parts of India. Salem was also hit by communal riots. A procession was organised by the Congress at Salem town in connection with Gandhi Jayanthi celebration. When the procession reached the vicinity of a mosque, stones were hurled at the processionists. This provoked the congress volunteers and they retaliated.
The police soon arrived at the scene. In order to bring the situation under control, the police opened fire. The firing resulted in the death of four and caused injuries to forty seven persons. Subsequently the Muslim League stepped up its anti-congress activities in Salem district. The communists also played havoc in this regard. Mohan Kumaramangalam, the communist leader in Salem carried on a relentless tirade against the Congress. As a result, the Communist and Congress workers clashed with each other. This obstructed the progress of the movement in Salem district.  

Independence

Lord Mountbatten assumed charge as Viceroy on 24, May 1947. He announced his plan for the partition of India. The failure of the composite government at the centre induced the Congress leaders to accept the plan. The British parliament passed the Indian Independence Act on 5th July 1947, which came into operation on 15th August 1947.
CHAPTER IX

IMPACT OF TWO WORLD WARS ON THE DISTRICT