CHAPTER V

The Quit India Movement in Andhra and the Dawn of Independence

"Therefore ———— be ye lamps unto yourself——— ———— look not for assistance to any one besides yourself".

The suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement by Mahatma Gandhi caused great disappointment to his country men and it led to the formation of the Andhra Swaraj Party at Vijayawada on 24-8-1935. Prominent among those who took part in bringing about this party were Gadicherla Harisarvathama Rao, V. Ramadas Pantulu, Kolli Satyanarayana Choudari, G.V. Subba Rao and others. These leaders wanted the agitation for attaining Poorna Swaraj to be continued. They also wanted to remove all communal disharmony by accepting the Poona Pact. They were keen on improving the economic conditions of the ryot by adopting such measures that would gradually remove his indebtedness.

The Andhra Socialist Party:

Another party that was formed during this period was the Andhra Socialist Party. It came into existence at Vijayawada on 23rd June, 1934. Professor N.G. Ranga was elected the President while Madduri Annapoornayya was elected as the Secretary of the party. Other prominent leaders of the Andhra Socialist party were Rangasai, C. Rajeswara Rao, Krovvidi Linga Raju, P. Sundarayya, Alluri Satyanarayana Raju and K. Satyanarayana. This party aimed at forming labour and ryot associations in order to bring about a people’s movement for the attainment of Swaraj and also for transforming the society on socialistic principles. One of the clauses of this party was that only those who were members of the Indian National Congress could become members of the Socialist Party and they were also expected to subscribe to the Marxist principles. From the very beginning the Socialist Party had two sections, viz., the right wing and the left wing. The left wing was represented by P. Sundarayya and C. Rajeswara Rao who were
actually affiliated to the Communist Party. The reasons why both the Socialists as well as the people with Communist leanings took shelter under the name of the Indian National Congress was that neither the Socialists nor the Communists were strong enough in Andhra at that time to carry on an independent movement of their own.

Acharya Ranga also started in 1938, a Political and Economic Summer School at Madanapalli in Chittoor district and Mantena-varipalem in Guntur district where socialistic ideas were propagated and lectures on anti-imperialism and capitalism were delivered. In 1939, A.K. Kameswara Rao started one more school of economics and politics at Thallur in Guntur district.

This period also saw the growth of popular "Paise" newspapers like the 'Janmabhoomi', 'Navasakti', 'Prajasakti', which were started to bring about awakening among the masses in general and the labour class in particular. Songs based on the socialist ideology that people should awake and there should all be equal shares in the country's wealth were composed. One such song was, "'Maroprapancham pilichindi padandi munduku, samabhavam, sowhardham punaadulo illuchi Janavaliki subham poochi shanti jayistundi'" (Let us march forward. A new world is beckoning, a world whose foundations are based on independence, equality, brotherhood and fraternity and a world that is auspices and will bring peace to mankind).

Another political party known as the People's Party also came into existence under the Pithapur Raja, but it had no popular backing.

The First Popular Ministry:

In the meanwhile the Government of India passed the India Act of 1935. This Act was an important landmark in the history of constitutional development in India. The Congress under this Act contested the election in 1937 while it had already contested the Local Bodies Elections in 1935. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru undertook a tour of the Northern Andhra districts in 1936 and Sarojini Naidu undertook a tour of the East Godavari district in 1937. The Andhra Congress Working Committee at its meeting on 9-3-1937, keeping in policy with the All-India Congress Party, decided to contest the General Elections and won a sweeping
victory. It completely routed the Justice Party as well as the People's Party. The members of the Andhra Congress Working Committee at this time were T. Prakasam, President, A. Kaleswara Rao, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, B. Sambamurthi, Sharanu Ramaswamy Choudari, Maganti Bapineedu, Bezawada Gopala Reddy, T. Viswanatham, Ramakotaiah, Pallamraju, R. Srinivasulu, K. Venkatramachari and Swamy Narayana. The first Congress Ministry in Madras was headed by C. Rajagopalachari on 14th July, 1937. From Andhra T. Prakasam, B. Gopala Reddy, V. V. Giri were taken into the Ministry.

From the year 1938 onwards Gottipati Brahmayy and N. Sanjeeva Reddy of Anantapur started taking part in the Congress movement in the State and Sanjeeva Reddy was elected as one of the Secretaries of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee in 1938 while G. Brahmayya was elected as the General Secretary.

Under the Rajagopalachari Ministry several Village Officers who lost their offices during the Civil Disobedience Movement were re-instated by T. Prakasam, the Revenue Minister. Political prisoners arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement were also released. The Ministry also took up welfare measures like the opening of rural dispensaries, water supply schemes and drainage, etc. It also appointed a committee in 1937 to enquire into the conditions prevailing in the zamindari areas and it passed the Madras Agricultural Relief Bill in 1938 by which it sought to give relief to the indebted agriculturists. Rural reconstruction work was also taken up avidly by the Government. The Prohibition Act was also passed.

But very soon differences began to grow between the India Government and the Indian National Congress. In the meanwhile, in 1939, Subbash Chandra Bose, a candidate supported by the leftist elements in the Congress, was elected as the President of the Tripura Congress against Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, supported by Gandhiji and the old guard. Gandhiji declared that the defeat of Pattabhi was his own defeat. Later, the Congress High Command tried to rectify matters by asking the President to constitute the Working Committee in consultation with Gandhiji. Subbash Chandra Bose and Gandhiji could not see eye to eye over the membership of the Working Committee. So, Subbash Chandra
Bose left the Congress Party and formed the Forward Bloc Party in April, 1939. In his place Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the Congress President. From Andhra, Madduri Annapoornayya joined the Forward Bloc Party.

Congress and the Second World War:

The Second World War broke out in September, 1939 between the Allied Powers of which Great Britain was a leading member and the Axis powers comprising of Germany, Italy and Japan. The Viceroy in India, Lord Linlithgow declared through a Gazette Extraordinary on 3rd September, 1939, "I, Victor Alexander John Marquess of Linlithgow, Governor General of India, being satisfied thereof by information received by me, do hereby declare that war was broken out between His Majesty and Germany". Thus India was automatically drawn into the war by virtue of the Viceroy's proclamation which was a great humiliation to the Indian National Congress and the popular Ministries that were formed in the States.

Commitment of India to war without consulting the popular ministries was resented by the Congress and when the Defence of India Bill was introduced on 5th September, the Congress members boycotted the Legislature. The Congress felt that without Britain conceding full independence for India it would be impossible for the Congress to co-operate in the war efforts. The India Government was prepared to concede to India only the attainment of dominion status after the war which naturally was not to the liking of the Congress. So, against this background of a constitutional deadlock, the Congress met at Ramgarh under the Presidentship of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad between 16th and 20 of March, 1940. The Indian National Congress declared, "Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism." Gandhiji declared, "Our internal policy must be guided by one consideration only-the freedom of India and the attitude of the British towards that freedom". So taking the overall picture into consideration, the Congress Working Committee declared, "Nothing short of complete independence was acceptable to the Indian people" and it resolved not to contribute to the war efforts or help in the war efforts by enlisting civil guards under official control. It also decided, if necessary, to launch once again the Civil Disobedience campaign, and issued instructions to the
effect that in anticipation of future action, Satyagraha councils might be formed all over the country for enrolling volunteers for the Non-Co-operation movement. While the Congress expressed its sympathy for democracy and freedom, it declared that, "India cannot associate herself with a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her. If the war is to defend the status quo of imperialist possessions colonies and vested interests, then India can have nothing to do with it." It declared in October, 1939 at the A. I. C. C. session that India must be declared an independent nation. Lord Linlithgow called Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Rejendra Prasad for discussions apart from Jinnah and leaders of other political parties. But he could not promise anything beyond dominion status for India in future. This was resented by the Congress. The Congress Working Committee meeting in Wardha in October, 1939 called upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

In the meanwhile Mr. Churchill became the Prime Minister of Great Britain while Lord Amery became the Secretary of State for India. With Churchill, a die-hard Tory, becoming the Prime Minister, the possibility of any settlement between the Congress and the Government became remote. The Government also, after the resignation of the Congress Ministry, proclaimed Governor’s Rule in the respective states and also ‘Emergency conditions’ in India and wherever they found people carrying on anti-war picketing, they arrested them. It used its emergency powers under the Defence of India Act in a very stringent manner and several warnings and arrests were made throughout the country. Subash Chandra Bose and the members of the Forward Bloc who had launched the Civil Disobedience Movement were arrested in April, 1940.

While matters were in such a state, Gandhiji was again empowered by the Congress Working Committee to lead the country. Gandhiji met the Viceroy and sought the permission of the Viceroy for Congressmen to make anti-war speeches. But as this request was not acceded to by the Viceroy, Gandhiji while asserting that, "we do not seek our independence out of Britain’s ruin", asked the Congress Party members to offer individual Satyagraha after all negotiations to effect a compromise with the Viceroy failed.
The Quit India Movement

The Individual Satyagraha

Gandhiji chose Acharya Vinoba Bhave as the first Satyagrahi to offer individual Satyagraha at Pallanar village near Wardha on the 17th October. Very soon Bhave was followed by Pandit Nehru and other leaders. The slogan raised by these individual Satyagrahis was, “It is wrong to help the British war effort with money or men. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance.” The second stage of the Satyagraha called as “representative Satyagraha” started on 17th November, 1940, when the Satyagrahis were selected from members of the Congress Working Committee, All India Congress Committee and the Congress members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures. In the third stage which started on 5th January, 1941, all the local Congress Committees were asked to participate, while in the fourth stage all the ‘four anna’ members of the Congress were asked to participate.

Satyagraha. The lawyers who participated in the movement were deprived of their licences.

Subhas Chandra Bose secretly left India in January, 1941 to fight against the British, in alliance with the Germans and the Japanese. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on 7th December, 1941, it looked as though a Japanese attack on India was imminent. Seeing that the Indian unrest is growing day by day, the British Government tried to assuage their feelings by announcing what is known as the “August offer” under which the promise of dominion status was once again reiterated and also the right to frame a new constitution was conceded. But at the same time Winston Churchill made it clear that the principle of Self-Government and sovereign rights promised under the ‘Atlantic Charter’ did not apply to India. However, the British Government in order to win over the Indian public opinion to their cause released all the imprisoned Satyagrahis that were arrested during the 1940-’41 individual Satyagraha.

The Cripp’s Mission:

The Congress remained firm in its attitude that the British policy to continue the war without the Indian co-operation and without arriving at an honourable compromise with Indians was a deliberate insult to Indian nationalism. So the British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps in March, 1942 for negotiations with the Indian leaders. The Cripps offer envisaged the granting of dominion status to India, with the right to secede from the British Commonwealth and also the framing of its own Constitution which was to be adopted, after the conclusion of the War, the right to conclude a treaty between the British Government and the constitution making body and till such time as the new constitution was framed, the British Government would retain control over the defence of India. Thus the Cripps Mission envisaged the creation of an Indian Union or a National Government with the liberty to secede from the Commonwealth. But it also envisaged the possibility of any province or Princely state to remain either as a member of the Indian Union or outside it, enjoying the full status of an independent State in the Indian Union.

This naturally did not meet with the approval of the Indian National Congress. So the Indian National Congress rejected it,
the Muslim League also did not find the Cripps proposals acceptable. Gandhiji termed the Cripps proposals as ‘a post-dated cheque’ because it did not envisage the granting of immediate independence to India. In the meanwhile C Rajagopalachari tried to make the Congress accept the idea of acceding Pakistan as per the demand of the Muslim League for the purpose of arriving at an agreement to install a national Government in India. Rajagopalachari’s proposals were rejected by the Congress.

On the 6th April, 1942, Visakhapatnam and Kakinada were bombed by Japan. The All India Congress Committee met in Allahabad on 1st May and once again passed a resolution that it is, “on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations”. After this Gandhiji started writing articles in the Harijan in which he asked the British to withdraw from India in an orderly manner. These articles were a forerunner of the Quit India resolution that was to be shortly adopted. Prior to the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on July 6th and under the guidance of Gandhiji passed a resolution saying, “British Rule in India must end immediately——— India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and saving the world from Nazism, Fascism, Militarism and other forms of imperialism”. Gandhiji declared on the 14th July, “There is no room left for negotiation ——— Either they recognise Indian independence or they don’t ——— There is no question of one more chance. After all this is open rebellion”.

He appealed to the British, “Leave India in God’s hands, in modern parlance to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internal warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these a true India will arise in place of the false one we see”. The All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay on 8th August, 1942. Gandhiji declared in a speech that he was a greater friend of the British than he ever was. But at the same time he said, “We shall get our freedom by fighting; it cannot fall from the skies——— The voice within me tells me I shall have to fight against the whole world and stand alone. I cannot wait any longer for India’s freedom ———— This is the last struggle of my life”. After this the Quit India resolution was passed by the Congress. It demanded the withdrawal of the British power from India and the
immediate recognition of Indian independence, the creation of a
responsible Government to govern and defend India against
foreign aggression along with the Allied powers. It also authorised
the Working Committee to take all the steps “for the vindication
of India’s inalienable right to freedom and independence; the
starting of mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible
scale under the leadership of Gandhiji”. The Government retaliated
by immediately arresting all the prominent Congress leaders
who had attended the A. I. C. C session as well as those leaders
remaining in the various provinces. The Congress leadership had
anticipated this move on the part of the Government.

In Andhra the Provincial Congress Committee had issued a
circular popularly known as the “Kurnool Circular” even in
advance of the Bombay A. I. C. C. session. This circular was
drafted by Kala Venkat Rao on 29th July, 1942 and was sent for
the approval of the Congress Working Committee through Dr.
Pattabhi Sitaramiah, a member of the Working Committee. This
seems to have received the approval of the Working Committee as
well as the A. I. C. C. This circular was known as the ‘Kurnool
circular’ because only in the Kurnool District Committee office the
full text of the circular was available. Some of the prominent
leaders who were taken as detenus during this period in Andhra
were Pattabhi Sitaramiah, A. Kaleswara Rao, T. Prakasam,
Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Maganti Bapineedu, Dandu Narayana
Raju, T. Viswanatham, Shankar Reddy, B. Gopala Reddy, Kakani
Venkatratnam, B. V. Subba Reddy, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy,
Madduri Annapurnayya, Gottipati Brahmayya, Manthena Venkat-
pathi Raju, Kodali Anjaneyulu, Dr. Paturi Tirumala Rao, Pappuri
Ramachari, Ananthasayanam Iyengar, M. Tirumala Rao, V. V.
Giri. Acharya Ranga remained underground for some time but
later on he was arrested. Another leader, Nivarti Venkatasubbayya
of Kurnool succeeded in remaining underground throughout this
period and surrendered himself to the Government only in 1944
on the advise of Gandhiji. Dandu Narayana Raju died while a
prisoner in the Vellore jail during this period.

Originally the Andhra leaders thought that the fight should
not begin until and unless Gandhiji were to give the signal for the
commencement of the struggle. It clearly stated that “imme-
diately after Mahatmaji gives the order, the Civil Disobedience
Movement must be begun and the German "blitz krieg" pattern must be followed." It also laid stress on the spirit of non-violence and insisted that no established law should be violated in contravention of the first rule. But the sudden arrest of the leaders all over the country upset the non-violent nature of the struggle envisaged in the programme. The 'Kurnool Circular' envisaged a programme of defying prohibitory orders, lawyers to give up practice, students to leave colleges, picketing salt and foreign trade and industry, cutting of communications, cutting of spathe of the toddy yielding trees, travelling without tickets, pulling chains to stop trains and blow up bridges so that communications might be disrupted and the movement of the Army Personnel retarded; the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires, non-payment of taxes excepting municipal taxes, picketing of recruitment offices, and hoisting of national flags on all Government buildings as a sign of independence. It also expected the Indian businessmen in particular to withdraw their deposits from the banks, to demand only Rupee payment (cash) and not to deposit fresh amounts in the banks so that there would be a drain on the British Economy. All sections of the people, including non-Congressmen, were asked to join in the struggle. The instructions were to carry on the struggle till the finish. "Do or die" was the slogan. The rule that one should wear 'khaddar' and spin khadi was also given up so that a real mass movement could be created.

But the sudden removal of the leaders at all levels-all-India, provincial, district, taluq, and firka-left the country without any experienced and responsible men to guide the popular movement. The Government thought that by arresting the leaders and by declaring the Provincial Congress Committees as unlawful assemblies they would be able to nip the movement in the bud, and that being leaderless it would fizzle out in a short time. But they very soon realised to their dismay that they were greatly mistaken in their estimates. When the people found that they were leaderless they grew intensely angry and it led to spontaneous mass upheaval where each one proved a leader unto himself. Groups of people in a frenzy of fury and anger resorted to acts of destruction and directed their anger against the symbols of British power with the intention of paralysing the entire administration in the country. They wantonly destroyed Government property and the security
forces incharge of protecting them were very often taken by surprise. In the beginning of the struggle peaceful demonstrations and processions were held but later on they took a very violent turn.

One of the main features of the plan of action according to the 'Kurnool circular' was to paralyse all means of communications and machinery of administration so that the Government would be brought to a dead stop. The 1942 movement in India as well as in Andhra was a country-wide movement in which all sections of the population participated. It was able to attract a large section of the student population and there were several student strikes during this period. Railway and Police stations were burnt at several places during the course of the movement. This was done when the revolutionaries realised that they could not blow up bridges due to lack of enough dynamite.

The Tenali Disturbances:

On the 12th August, 1942, the town of Tenali observed a complete Hartal as a protest against the arrest of the Congress leaders. The students of the Tenali Taluq High School and the Bharat Tutorial College, Tenali, convened a meeting on the night of the 11th August and on the instigation of Kottamasu Mohan Rao, Kaganti Venkatramayya, Dacepalli Subba Rao and Kolli Prasad, all students of the Taluq High School, decided to boycott the schools in the town and to see that a complete Hartal on the 12th August was observed by the closure of shops, hotels and other business concerns. On the same night the Congress workers under the leadership of Kalluri Chandramouli also decided to observe a complete Hartal on 12-8-1942 and this decision was communicated to all the shop-keepers and hotel proprietors. On the morning of 12-8-1942, batches of Congress volunteers and students went round the streets of Tenali to see that all the shop owners observed the Hartal.

Some people who were accustomed to taking their morning coffee in hotels, finding that the hotels were closed, went to the Railway Refreshment Room at the Tenali Railway Station and took their coffee there. When the students and Congress volunteers heard about this they marched from Morrispet to the railway station and demanded that the Railway Refreshment room should
be closed. The Manager of the Refreshment Room refused to close down the refreshment room without the orders of the Railway authorities. In the meanwhile, the Guntur bound train was about to leave the station. So, one section of the crowd demanded from the Station Master to stop the train from leaving the station and not to issue the tickets. Inspite of their insistence the Station Master moved the train upto the North Cabin of Tenali station, when another section of the crowd rushed to the signal post and destroyed it. The crowd also attacked the engine driver and stoned him, upon which he left the train and ran away. The compartments of the train were completely smashed. The crowd tried to set fire to the Railway Station by pouring kerosene oil over the building. They also wanted to set fire to the Booking Office which was forcibly opened by them. The books, records and currency were destroyed while the staff incharge of the office fled. Another train from Madras was Stopped by the crowd and after destroying the signals of the South Cabin assaulted the engine driver. By this time the Reserve police from Guntur arrived, accompanied by the District Collector and the Police Superintendent. The crowd started moving towards the Morrispet bus stand. The Tenali Deputy Superintendent of Police brought along with him an individual by name Chintamaneni Sivaramayya who was anti-Congress and was working as an agent of the Government and another by name Prayaga Veeraraghaviah who began to tell the crowd that the police would open fire if they would not disperse. The crowd on seeing Sivaramayya got infuriated and demanded that he should be asked to leave before they dispersed from the railway station. Thereupon the police opened fire and in this firing three people were killed, namely Bhaskaruni Lakshminarayana, Majeti Subba rao and Sripathi Panditaradhyula Srigiri Rao. Prayaga Veeraraghaviah was also killed in the firing while five others who received wounds in the firing died later in the hospital. Among them were Jasti Appayya, Ammineni Subba Reddy, Gali Ramakotayya. The crowd dispersed only after the firing was stopped. The damage caused to the Railways was Rs. 2,50,000/-.

Chirala Railway Station Burnt:

On the same day at Chirala, a procession of 500 students marched to the sub-Magistrate’s court and asked him to close the court. Afterwards they raided the Office of the Sub-Registrar and
the Sales Tax Officer. The crowd went in a procession to the railway station by which time the number had swelled to 1,500. It then set fire to the station building after cutting off the telephone and signal wires. They even threatened the staff not to interfere on pain of death. The military recruiting officer and the railway permanent way officer who happened to be travelling on a trolley at that time were let off only when they shouted *Gandhiji ki Jai*. The crowd dispersed after the arrival of the police. The damage caused to the Chirala Railway Station was about a lakh of rupees.

**Guntur Firings:**

At Guntur, on the 13th of August, a crowd of 2,000 gathered at the Gandhi Park. The police followed them and suddenly opened fire on them without any provocation, on account of which two people died while several were wounded. This created a great commotion and the Guntur Bar Association passed a resolution condemning the action of the authorities. Educational institutions were closed down for a week.

Palakonda Railway Station was also attacked and the goods shed was completely gutted. This was done by a gathering of students, coolies and labourers amounting to about 1,500. Several other stations like Akiveedu, Attili, Ongole, Nidubrolu, Dendulur, Undi, etc. suffered the same fate.

The Non-Co-operators also tampered with railway tracks in order to derail trains. A special train carrying police was derailed at Uppuluru on the 14th August on the Vijayawada-Masulipatam railway line. An engine and 80 empty wagons capsized on the 21st–22nd August while another passenger train derailed on the 23rd August between Panapakkam and Chandragiri due to the removal of fish plates. In most of these cases volunteers of the Quit India movement took part but in some cases there were some hired saboteurs.

**Communications system disrupted:**

Telegraph and telephone wires were cut off in as many as 1,500 places in Andhra.

**Attack on Police Stations:**

Police Stations also became targets of attack. On the 17th August a crowd at Palakol smashed the quarters of the Sub-Inspector and the Police Constable. They also assaulted the police
on duty in the sub-jail and the sub-treasury and caused grievous injuries to one of the policemen and took possession of the carbines from them. Seeing the situation getting out of control, the Reserve Police opened fire on the mob in which one person was killed.

At Akiveedu about 100 people gathered and overpowered two constables and after seizing their muskets and lathis, burnt down the records at the police station. The Allur police station was surprised on the 16th September by a crowd of 50. The three constables on duty were tied up hand and foot and the station records and furniture were set on fire and burnt. Chirala police station was also attacked on the 12th August, but the crowd retreated when the police arrived.

Several Post Offices like the ones of Akiveedu and Kalingapatnam were completely ransacked during this period. In Bapatla the Sub-Registrar's office was attacked by a mob on the 12th August.

The Bhimavaram Firings:

On the 17th of August, 1942 Gokaraju Sriramaraaju, Gottumukkala Ramachandra Raju, Ayyagari Subbarayudu and Kapilajogi Jagannatha Rao organised a meeting in which more than 2,000 people participated. At the meeting it was decided that the students should boycott schools and the local U. L. C. M. School should be closed down. When the school authorities refused to close down the school, the students broke the desks and chairs in the school building with the result that the school had to be closed. Then they started in a procession towards the main road where they were joined by Vesgesina Narayana Raju, Pedda Subbarajulu and Bhoopathi Raju Subba Raju and all of them arrived before the Revenue Divisional Office. The Revenue Divisional Officer closed the doors of his Office but the crowd forced open the doors and insisted that the Divisional Officer should resign his job. Then dragging him out of his Office they forced him to hold a Congress flag in his hand and made him march some distance with them. Then suddenly the idea seems to have struck the crowd that the Magistrate's Office should be burnt. So they went and set fire to the Office of the Divisional Officer as well as to the building of the Deputy Inspector of Schools. From there they went to the Collector's Office. Seeing the crowd approaching the Collector and his
staff came out. The crowd insisted that the Collector should resign from his office and also made him hold a Congress flag. Then Gokaraju Venkatapati Raju hoisted a Congress flag on the Collector’s Office. The records in the Office were burnt. From there they proceeded towards the police station where the police opened fire on them. While the firing was going on, a section of the crowd went and set fire to the police lines. In the firing four people died, among them were Gottumukkala Balarama Raju, a student aged about seventeen and Vegesina Narayana Raju. A section of the crowd marched also towards the Railway Station and set fire to a railway trolley while some others attacked the Sivarao-pet station and burnt it down.

**Pentapadu Post Office Burnt:**

At Pentapadu, near Tadepalligudem, the people hearing about the death of Mahadev Desai held a condolence meeting on the 17th August. Then later they set fire to the Pentapadu post office. The police not only made a severe lathi-charge on the crowd and also arrested several people.

The Government adopted severe repressive measures against this phase of the popular movement by passing two special Ordinances, (1) The Penalties Ordinance of 1942, under which the District Magistrates were empowered to impose penalties of death and whipping for offences involving attacks on railways, canals, telegraph and telephone wires, etc. and also against Government property and (2) the Collective Fines Ordinance by which the Provincial governments were empowered to impose collective fines on the inhabitants of any area concerned in committing of offences prejudicial to the defence of British India or who prevented the efficient prosecution of war. Armed with these two ordinances it tried to intimidate the people. But the people refused to be intimidated, they not only refused to co-operate with the Government but also to give evidence against the offenders. The Government imposed punitive fines of Rs. 3, 21,681 on Guntur, Rs. 2, 48, 285 on West Godavari and Rs. 45, 250 on Krishna districts. Apart from them collective fines were also imposed on Anantapur, Cuddapah, Kurnool and Nellore districts. But the determination of the people to fight and win Swaraj remained as firm as ever.
Public Meetings:

Side by side with this programme of disruption, a non-violent Non-Co-operation Programme was also maintained. From time to time leaders addressed gatherings and issued statements to conduct the struggle in a non-violent manner.

Students’ Role in the Quit India Movement:

The students played a very commendable part in the Quit India Movement by trying to bring about an effective boycott of educational institutions as a mark of protest against the Government’s repressive policies. In fact, the Bhimavaram and Tenali incidents had their origin in the student movement. During this period a large number of college and high school students abstained from classes. Students belonging to the colleges of Guntur, P. R. College, Kakinada, Eluru, A. V. N. College, Vizagapatam, Anantapur, Madanapalli and Nellore went on strike. The High School students of Chittoor, Penugonda, Hindupur also went on strike. A student gathering in Anantapur on 14th August was lathi-charged while 13 students were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in Vijayanagaram on 27th August. The College Principals were instructed by the Government to rusticate those students who were found to be irrepressible.

Picketing of toddy and arrack shops:

During this period some attempts were also made to picket the toddy and arrack shops. The arrack shops at Lankalakoderu and the toddy shops at Palakol were burnt down on the 17th of August when the owners of the shops did not respond to the appeals of the picketeers. In other places like Bapatla and Allur picketing was done in a peaceful manner. But the picketeers were arrested by the Government and were awarded three years Rigorous Imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 50 each as a deterrent punishment.

Appeal to the public servants to quit their Offices:

Some of the Congress workers like C. Veerabhadra Rao wrote letters to the Personal Assistant to Collector, Visakhapatnam, the Revenue Divisional Officer, the Post Master of Visakhapatnam, and the Deputy Superintendent of Police of Vijayanagaram to give up their jobs and join the Quit India Movement. For this he was awarded six months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500.
Similar punishment was meted to Dr. Korukonda Subba Raju of Anakapalli and K. Subbarao of Kalingapatnam for having written letters to one Major F. M. Colling, I. M. S., Madras, to leave India, and to the District Magistrate of Kalingapatnam to join the freedom struggle. The Government freely employed Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code for prohibiting meetings, processions, etc. It also vigorously acted against all those local bodies who expressed their sympathy with the resolutions taken by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. The District Boards of East Godavari, Chittoor, Nellore and the Municipal Council of Palakol and Vijayawada were superseded for a period of six months.

Police repression:

The police acted in a very high-handed manner and frequently lathi-charged or resorted to firing upon the crowds. In Guntur they fired upon a non-violent gathering on account of which four persons were killed while twelve others were wounded. The repressive measures adopted by the Government resulted in the growth of terrorist activities. When the District Magistrate of Krishna was witnessing a Telugu drama entitled ‘Chintamani’ at Jaggayapeta in aid of Red Cross fund on the night of 20th September, 1942, two crude country bombs were thrown at the audience on account of which six persons received minor injuries. Nine people were arrested in connection with this incident. In 1943 attempts were made at Ongole to manufacture explosives by three persons who were later tried, convicted and executed.

The Nature of the Quit India Movement:

From the statistics available in the Government records we know that the number of times the police had to fire on the crowds was 21, killing 39 people and inflicting 177 fatal casualties, while the number of cases when the military was employed to fire against the crowds was 68, causing 297 casualties, 308 non-fatal, 14 fatal casualties. The number of military personnel who defected on account of the persuasion of the movement was 13 in the Madras Presidency while the number of police who defected was only one. The total number of police stations and outposts destroyed or damaged during the movement was 5, Government buildings 50 and buildings which came under Municipality 57
and 11 important private buildings. The number of bomb explosions was 17, number of bombs and explosives discovered 35 and the number of casualties to the public by means of bombs including 6 of the bomb-makers was 11, number of cases of sabotage 732 to roads, 41 to electricity supply installations, one to canals or tube well irrigation systems, and other types of sabotage 383. The number of cases in which collective fines was imposed was 71, and the amount of collective fines imposed and collected was Rs. 10,36,701, number of persons convicted during the movement upto 1943 by special criminal courts was 897 and the number of persons convicted by ordinary courts was 3,134 and the cases disposed off by ordinary courts was 1,644. Number of death sentences imposed was two, number of sentences of whipping 285, total number of arrests made 5,729. The total loss of property suffered by the Posts and Telegraphs was Rs. 3,34,875, other Departments Rs. 1,27,456. Collective fines during this period were imposed on the villages of Ganjam and Edupugallu in the Krishna district to the extent of Rs. 800 and Rs. 500 respectively. Hundred bags of paddy belonging to Prof. Ranga and his brother which were stored in the godown near the Peasants Institute at Nidubrolu were seized by the Government under the levying of punitive tax. Other villages on which collective fines were imposed were Boddapadu in Bezawada taluq, which was asked to pay Rs. 3,000 and Gudlavelluru in Gudivada taluq was asked to pay Rs. 500 while the inhabitants of Pasumarru village in the Gudivada taluq were asked to pay a fine of Rs. 700. Here also the Government strictly adhered to its policy of ‘Divide and rule’ and exempted the Muslims, the Christians, the Scheduled castes and all Government servants, title holders, families of the Indian Army Personnel, Railway and Local Board employees from paying these collective fines.

The National Youth League branch of Andhra at Vijayawada apart from making attempts to collect arms and ammunition also attempted to manufacture bombs. The police came to know about this when they discovered a letter addressed to one Potina Venkanna. On the discovery of this letter on 3rd February, 1943, they made a search of the bank of the Bandar Canal and were able to recover 15 rounds of live cartridges, one country made pistol and various kinds of bombs. The house of Rampalli Suryanaryana was also searched and a box containing a hand treadle press and
a match box bomb were recovered. Vadipena Maridaiah’s house was also searched and the latter surrendered a muzzle laden country pistol. In this connection P. Nageswar Rao of Chebrolu, a member of the Youth League, was sentenced to 8 years Rigorous Imprisonment. Inspite of the evidence of these terrorist activities one must say that the people by and large believed in the creed of non-violence of Gandhiji to fight against the British. Hence the terrorist activities did not find as fertile a ground in Andhra as they were able to find in Bengal and elsewhere.

On account of the Quit India Movement the normal functioning of the administration was badly affected. The Government banned all student organisations like the National Students Union and the National Youth Organisation under the Defence of India Rules. On account of this stringent action of the Government the momentum of the Quit India Movement had to be slowed down. Gandhiji went on a fast from 10th February to 30th March, 1943, in order to repudiate the charge that he was responsible for the violence and destruction of the Quit India Movement.

The whole country was thrown into a state of anxiety on account of the fast taken up by Gandhiji at the advanced age of 74. The atmosphere in the country became tense. Several students in Andhra and elsewhere in India undertook a sympathetic fast. Processions were taken out by college students and they demanded the release of Gandhiji. At Madanapalli, the police lathi-charged a student procession and injured 25. Several Bar Associations, students unions, merchant associations, agricultural labourers, nay one and all, passed resolutions demanding the immediate release of Gandhiji. At Guntur about 1,000 signatures were collected and sent to the Government urging the release of Mahatma Gandhi. The students of Mrs. A.V.N. College, Visakhapatnam, and the students of the women’s hostel of the Andhra Medical College observed fast. The staff and students of the Andhra University met on 26th June, 1943, under the Presidentialship of Prof. Mamidipudi Venkataramayya, Head of the Department of History and passed a resolution urging the unconditional and immediate release of Mahatma Gandhi in view of his deteriorating health. The staff and students of the Andhra University also passed a resolution saying that the University authorities should send by telegram the resolutions adopted by them to the Viceroy. In Kakinada the Pleaders’ Clerks Association also passed a similar resolution.
The P. R. College students abstained from classes and went on fast. But the Government remained adamant. In protest against this attitude of the Government three Indian members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council resigned their posts. Mr. Winston Churchill, in reply to the Non-Party Leaders Conference appeal to release Gandhiji said, “The Government of India decided last August that Mr. Gandhi and leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which are well understood. ————

There can be no justice for discrimination between Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore entirely rests with Mr. Gandhi”. Gandhiji was able to survive the ordeal of the fast and amidst the singing and chanting of his favourite hymns, “Vaishnava Janatho” and “Lead kindly light”, he broke his fast. During this period, as the Congress was under ban, other organisations like the National Youth League and Grama Sevak Sanghams sprang up and started working among the masses. These organisations also made arrangements for starting a Rashtriya Sevak Dal for carrying on systematic political work. Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm on the 2nd October, 1943. Hartal was observed on 9th August commemorating the anniversary of the arrest of the leaders. However the political situation in the country was comparatively more quiet than it was in 1942.

Lord Wavell succeeded Lord Linlithgow as the Viceroy in October, 1943. Commenting about Lord Linlithgow Gandhiji wrote in a letter to him “... ... Of all the high functionaries I have had the honour of knowing, none has been the cause of much deep sorrow to me as you have been”, while V. P. Menon says, “His regime was conspicuous by its lack of positive achievement”.

By 1944 the momentum of the Quit India Movement was considerably slowed down, though the spirit to oppose the British was as strong as ever among the people. All over India, 26th January was celebrated as the Independence Day and on that day Prabhat Pheris were taken, national songs were sung, pamphlets were distributed and large sized Quit India posters were pasted on all public Buildings. The Government retaliated by arresting the agitators in large numbers and also by declaring the National Students Organisation and the National Youth League as unlawful organisations. On 22nd February the nation was plunged in
sorrow on the death of Kasturba Gandhi. Gandhiji had already suffered another irreparable loss in the death of Mahadev Desai in August, 1942. Throughout Andhra meetings were held to pay respects to the memory of Kasturba. The Government could not brook this. They banned the meetings that were to be held in Bhimavaram while in Guntur even some arrests were made when the volunteers went to ask the shop-keepers to close down their shops.

Release of Gandhiji:

As days were passing, public opinion both in India as well as abroad began to feel that the only way to resolve the stalemate was by releasing Gandhiji. The British Government yielded to public pressure and released Mahatma Gandhi on 6th May, 1944 on grounds of health. This release of Gandhiji was greeted by a chorus of approval throughout the world. After recouping his health, Gandhiji once again tried to start negotiations with the Government to solve the deadlock. On 27th July, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy saying that he was prepared to advise the Congress Working Committee to give up Civil Disobedience Movement and to co-operate with the Government in its war efforts if a declaration of immediate Indian independence was to be made and a National Government responsible to the Central Assembly were to be formed. Lord Wavell did not immediately respond to Gandhiji’s overture of friendship and raised several objections to the proposals put forward by him. The Government still continued its policy of oppression and even the holding of meetings by Congressmen to shape public opinion was forbidden while other parties like the Liberals, the Communists and the Swarajists were allowed to do so. The people in Andhra wanted to celebrate 9th August as the anniversary of the Quit India Movement and they sought the permission of Gandhiji to do so. Gandhiji replied that the Quit India resolution was as much valid in 1944 as in 1942. But under the altered conditions he said that it was advisable to avoid all risks by not discarding special police prohibitions. He asked all those who shared in his faith to observe the 9th August by fasting and prayer and appealed to all Congress workers who had gone underground to discover themselves. Gandhiji also opened negotiations with M. A. Jinnah for solving the communal problem in India. At the behest of Gandhiji, Nivarti Venkatasubbayya, a member of the All-India Congress Committee and
the General Secretary of the Kurnool District Committee, who had remained underground throughout the 1942 Movement, after having secretly met Gandhiji in August, 1944, surrendered himself to the police. He was put on trial for having incited students to boycott schools and Village Officers to resign, but later on the Government withdrew the case against him and he was freed. As a prelude to achieving an understanding with the Indian leaders to resolve the political deadlock, the members of the Congress Working Committee were released by Lord Wavell in June, 1945 with the consent of the British Government. In the meanwhile the discussions between Gandhiji and Jinnah did not bear any fruit and the whole political situation in the country was in a state of impasse. Under the circumstances the Congressmen in India turned their attention to constructive programmes in the villages. They tried to form District Congress Assemblies to carry on these constructive activities from which Communists and Royists were excluded. Before the starting of these Congress Assemblies in West Godavari, Guntur, Krishna and Nellore, Kalluri Subba Rao and Smt. Rukmini Lakshmipathi toured all the districts in Andhra. Prof. Ranga who was also released by this time tried to reorganise his Kisan Sabhas in close co-operation with the Congress and fly the Kisan flag along with the national flag of the Congress. Lingaraju, Kalluri Chandramouli, N. Sanjeeva Reddy, who were released by this time, formed an organisation for carrying on constructive activities. Camps were opened in several places to train volunteers to go round the villages and do the village upliftment work. Special committees were formed to look after the problems dealing with the ryots, labourers and Harijans. This state of affairs continued till 1945.

Lord Wavell convened a Conference in Simla in July, 1945 and invited the prominent leaders representing the Congress and the Muslim League to resolve the political deadlock. He wanted to reconstitute the Viceroy's Executive Council whose members would be drawn from the political parties representing Indian public opinion. He also said that an Indian member would be placed in charge of external affairs and the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief would be the only British members on the Council. The tasks of the Council were three-fold (1) To conduct the War till Japan was defeated, (2) to carry on the Government of British India until a permanent constitution was drawn up [11]
and (3) to explore the means by which such an agreement would be achieved. But the Conference failed on account of the insistence of Jinnah that he and the Muslim League alone should have the right to nominate Muslim members to the Viceroy’s Council. Several Congress leaders reacted against this claim of the Muslim League. T. Prakasam questioned the claims of the League to be the sole representative of the entire Muslim community while Gopala Reddy and Kaleswara Rao spoke saying that the Congress was an all-India body and it had as much right to nominate Muslims to the Viceroy’s Council as the Muslim League.

Shortly after the breakdown of the Simla Conference, Japan was defeated by the Allies and general elections were held in Great Britain. In these elections, the Labour Party under Mr. Clement Attlee was returned to power. The viceroy of the Labour Party was hailed by the Andhra leaders. The Labour Government in Britain lifted the ban on the Congress Party, released all political prisoners and ordered that general elections be held in India to solve the political crisis. Lord Wavell announced on 16th September, 1946, that it was the intention of His Majesty’s Government to promote the early realisation of full self-Government in India and that general elections are to be held for the Central and Provincial Legislatures in order to ascertain the views of the people and also to bring about an Executive Council which would have the support of the main Indian parties. The Congress Party and the Muslim League decided to contest the general elections. In Andhra T. Prakasam toured the various districts, addressed several meetings and appealed to the people to vote for the Congress. He warned the people to be careful about the communists and other advocates of violence. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, Kalluri Subba Rao, Kala Venkat Rao and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy were the other leaders who actively participated in the election campaign.

The Indian National Army:

While the general election campaign was at its full swing in India, the trial of the Indian National Army (I. N. A.) personnel that was constituted by Subhash Chandra Bose in Japan, was held by a military tribunal set up by the Government in the Red Fort at Delhi. The trial of these I. N. A. officers roused the emotions of the people. Processions, demonstrations and Hartals were held
throughout Andhra as in other parts of the country for the release of these patriots. They also raised an I. N. A. Defence fund to defend the I. N. A. personnel. This trial once again roused the righteous anger of the people against the Government. The Government, realising the angry mood of the people, remitted the sentences awarded to the I. N. A. personnel. Subhash Chandra Bose had left India to organise a military revolt against the British in association with the Japanese. He was successful in raising an army known as the ‘Indian National Army’ or I. N. A. with the personnel of the Indian military Prisoners Of War taken by the Japanese. The news of the death of Subhash Chandra Bose was announced in the year 1945. After the conclusion of the Second World War, 20,000 personnel of the I. N. A. were repatriated to India. Three of its Officers, Shah Nawaz Khan, Shegal, and Dhillon were charged with having waged a war against the King and they were put on trial at Delhi. The trial of I. N. A. Officers roused the anger of the Indian people and there were countrywide student demonstrations against the trial. Several Municipalities and District Boards passed resolutions condemning the trial. The Congress Party raised a fund for the defence of the I. N. A. Officers and constituted a panel of lawyers consisting of such eminent legal personalities as Bhulubhai Desai, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Pandit Nehru. Though the accused were convicted, the Government hesitated to provoke the people and remitted their sentences.

General Elections:

General Elections were held to the Central Legislative Assembly in December, 1945. The Government also removed the ban imposed on meetings and processions under the Defence of India Rules. The Congress was returned with an overwhelming majority in almost all the general constituencies but the Muslim League also won a great majority of the Muslim seats that were demarcated for them. From Andhra, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Ananthasayanam Iyenger and Gangaraju were returned unopposed. Nine Andhras were returned to the Assembly.

Revolt of the Royal Indian Navy:

During the intervening period between the general elections to the Central Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures, a significant incident took place. That was the revolt of the Royal Indian
Navy personnel at Bombay. On 18th February the ratings of the Signals School of Bombay went on hunger strike as a protest against some of the regulations in their establishment and also against the derogatory remarks made by their Commander about the Indian national character. This strike was soon joined by other ratings from Naval establishment. They took hold of some of the ships, managed the guns and were even prepared to open fire on the military areas. The whole incident would have developed into a serious situation but for the efforts of Vallabhai Patel who was able to persuade the ratings to surrender. The occasion was taken advantage of by unruly mobs in Bombay who set fire to banks, shops, post offices and also looted the countryside. In this context the police had to open fire several times and also call the military to their assistance. As a result of these disturbances 200 people were killed. The mutiny of the ratings in Bombay had its repercussions in Visakhapatnam, Madras, Ahmedabad and other places. The Naval ratings at these places also went on strike. The ratings belonging to H. M. I. S. Sonavati removed the flagstaff and in its place inscribed on the masts of the Sonavati, *Jai Hind* and hoisted the National Tri-colour flag. About 600 of them marched in procession through the streets shouting national songs. Similar demonstrations were staged by the ratings in the Madras harbour also.

The Cabinet Mission:

All these incidents made the Labour Ministry to decide upon granting independence to India and it is in this connection that the Cabinet Mission was sent to India on March 24, 1946. The special mission of Cabinet Ministers consisted of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Patric Lawrence, the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Stafford Cripps and the first Lord of the Admiralty, A.V. Alexander. This Mission held parleys with the Indian leaders. It did a constructive job in bringing about a better understanding between the Indian leaders and the British Government. Apart from the Congress they also met the leaders of the various parties like the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, etc. It stayed in India for nearly two months. The Cabinet Mission also discussed the probability of an interim Government being established in India and handing over the administration to a responsible Indian leader. The Congress and the Muslim League could
not come to an understanding over the question of creation of a separate state of Pakistan.

Interim Government:

In the Provincial elections also the Congress Party swept the polls, in several instances the candidates being returned unopposed. In Andhra almost all the Congress candidates were returned with a great majority. On 6th August, 1946, Lord Wavell invited the Congress Party to form the Interim Government at the Centre and the latter accepted the invitation. The Muslim League fixed the 16th August, 1946, as the 'Direct Action Day' and in order to facilitate the action of the League, the League Ministry of Bengal declared 16th August as a public holiday. On that day communal frenzy was unleashed by the League Ministry in Calcutta and it led to an orgy of violence and bloodshed in Calcutta and Sylhet. The Calcutta killings were retaliated by violent incidents in Naokhali and Tippara. Amidst these scenes of violence and communal frenzy, the Interim Government was sworn in on the 2nd September, 1946. Lord Wavell later admitted five nominees of the Muslim League into the Interim Government. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held on 9th December, 1946. The Muslim League boycotted it saying that the resolutions of the Constituent Assembly were, "Ultra vires, invalid and illegal". Throughout this period riots took place in Bihar, Garmukteswar, Lahore and Rawalpindi. The Muslim League threatened to revive the days of Hallaku and Chengiz Khan. Nothing was done to suppress the agitation of the League in the Punjab and there was a complete breakdown of law and order. It was in this atmosphere of lawlessness that Lord Attlee, the Prime Minister of England, declared that it was the intention of the British Government to transfer power into the hands of the Indians by not later than June, 1948. The Indian States also, through their representative body, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, reiterated their willingness to extend their fullest co-operation in framing a Constitution and also in setting up of the Union of India. But the Muslim League wanted the partition of the country on the basis of the representation of the communities in each province. On 20th February, 1947, Lord Attlee envisaged the partition of India and the final transfer of Power to the Indian hands by June, 1948.
The Mount Batten Plan:

This statement was followed by another on 3rd June, 1947, reiterating its previous decision and Lord Mount Batten was sent as the Viceroy to India to work out the final transfer of power and he announced on 3rd June, 1947, what was known as the 'Mount Batten Plan' which provided for the establishment of two separate Dominions of India and Pakistan and the withdrawal of the British Government from India on 15th August, 1947. The Provinces of Bengal and Punjab were to be partitioned on the basis of communal demarcation. The Congress accepted the scheme and on 3rd June, 1947 Nehru in a broadcast announced the decision of the Congress to accept the Mount Batten Plan for the division of India into India and Pakistan. On the 15th July the Indian Independence Bill was passed by the House of Commons and it received the Royal assent on the 18th July. The All-India Congress Committee accepted the Mount Batten Plan on the 15th June, 1947 and accordingly on 15th August, 1947, India became independent.

The freedom struggle in Andhra, as in most other parts of the country, reached its culmination with the elections of March, 1947. Throughout the Vandemataram movement and particularly from the 1921 Civil Disobedience Movement the Andhras were in the forefront of the freedom struggle and their consistent enthusiasm for achieving the country's independence was unequalled. This final contribution to the cause of the Country's solidarity and independence could be seen in the elections of 1946 when they elected Congress Party members by an overwhelming majority.

The dawn of independence was received with universal rejoicing in the Andhra country, though, to a certain extent, it was mingled with a tinge of sadness that many of the old veteran who had participated in the earlier phases of the struggle were no longer there to see their beautiful dream come true.