

Chapter - IV

III. FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN ANDHRA

Right at the beginning of the Freedom Movement in 1885 A.D. the leaders of the Indian National Congress were satisfied with demanding a few political concessions or administrative reforms from the side of the British government. Their policy was to pray and petition only. But with the partition of Bengal in 1905 A.D. the nationals resorted to armed rebellion for liberating the country. For that purpose they advocated boycott of British goods and adoption of Swadeshi. The emergence of India's nationalist movement was the most prominent feature of the history of India in general and of Andhra in particular. Seeds of this movement were sown in the second half of the 19th century A.D. Alongwith the other states of India, the freedom movement took deep roots in Andhra also. During 1757-1857 the English East India Company acquired large tracts of the land in India and Andhra was no exception; and enjoyed the rights of a ruling power¹. During the rule of the East India Company Andhra was severely humiliated and suffered greatly. After the Great Revolt of 1857 the administration of the

1. Sitaramaiah, B.P., The History of the Indian National Congress, (Bombay, 1946) P.5

East India Company was taken away by the British Crown. Even then, no basic changes were introduced and on the other hand, the accumulated wealth of the local rulers, nobles and zamindars was grabbed. Reaction of the native chiefs against the authoritarianism and expansionism of the English East India Company was reflected in the Battle of Padmanabham (1794), the revolts of the land lords of Visakhapatnam in A.D. 1830 and the outbreak of the Mutiny at Vizianagaram on 28th February 1857 from sporadic incidents². The upper classes of the society like the chiefs and landlords revolted against the inequities of the British administration. The revolts of the landlords (1843) in the Visakhapatnam district show restiveness of certain sections of the people against the restrictions imposed on them by the British administration³. The cultural renaissance and the economic exploitation of the British and the activities of the Christian missionaries, produced hatred against the British. The economic drain resulted in the impoverishment of the people. Loss of territory and the establishment of a foreign rule all created resentment. This discontentment was outburst in the shape of the Great Mutiny of 1857. The Revolt, though failed, quickened the

2. Ramesan, N. Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer,
Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P.40

3. Bipin Chandra & others, Freedom Struggle (New Delhi, 1972),
P.5

feeling of nationalism throughout India including Andhra. The Andhras were inspired by the 'Vandemataram (Bandemataram) Movement. The Vandemataram song invoked them. The tour of Bipin Chandra Pal in Andhra awakened the Andhras⁴. The years between 1905 and 1921 was an era of militant nationalism. Finally the period from 1921 to 47 was the Gandhian era-the era of (1) Non-Cooperation (2) Salt Satyagraha (3) Civil Disobedience (4) Quit India Movement (5) Harijan uplift and (6) the use of Khadi.

Delegates from Andhra went to Bombay and attended the first session of the Indian National Congress (1885). As the activities of the Indian National Congress were growing by leaps and bounds, the Andhra Congress Committee was formed on the model of the National Congress, and later the District Congress Associations were also formed on the model of State Congress. As early as 1892 the Krishna District Association, devoted to national activity, was started in Machilipatnam. In 1895 Marepalli Ramachandra Kavi of Visakhapatnam District started a cultural association. The Partition of Bengal (1905) gave a sharp edge to national awareness all over the state⁵. The nationalists crossed the

4. Venkatarangaiya, M., The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra) (Hyderabad, 1969), Vol. II, P.V.

5. Rajagopal, M.V., APDG, Krishna District (Hyderabad 1977), P.55

limits of their political growth by 1905. The period from 1857 to 1905 was the seed time of the nationalism. It further organized Swadeshi campaigns not only in the Krishna district but spread to all other districts of Andhra⁶. The period from 1905 to 1919 was an era of militant nationalism whereas the period from 1920-1947 was the Gandhian era. In 1907 Buchi Sundara Rao, a student of Mrs. A.V.N.College, Visakhapatnam organized a terrorist movement against the Government⁷. In 1915 Visakha Swarajya Seva Samithi and in 1919 Visakhapatnam National Congress Committee were formed. It is already mentioned that the Congress is a national institution with people of all religions struggling for freedom⁸. The Partition of Bengal not only opened a new chapter in the history of the freedom movement but produced other movements like Swadeshi campaign, Boycott of foreign goods, Home Rule Movement and such other movements, shared by the state. People of Andhra went even to Japan to get trained in modern industries⁹.

6. Ibid

7. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P.41

8. Rajagopal, M.V., APDG, Krishna District (Hyderabad 1977), P.55

9. Prasada Rao, TSV, Andhra Christians: Indian Freedom Movement (Guntur, 1997), P.23

The people of Andhra suffered a lot under the rule of the East India Company. Actually Andhra was a part of the then Madras Presidency, some rebellions occurred here and there in the Coastal Andhra. The landlords revolted in Srungavarapukota (1830) and Anakapalle (1840) tribal people of Chintapalli of Visakhapatnam revolted against the British because of certain restrictions imposed on them¹⁰. The landlords revolted in Srungavarapukota and Vizianagaram (1857) and became restless because of the restrictions imposed by the British. Korra Mallayya of Korraivanivalasa (Salur) with 5000 followers revolted to drive the English from the country¹¹. Nellore district figures prominently in its fight for the liberation of the country. Delegates from Nellore and other districts like Srikakulam went to Bombay to attend the first session of the Indian National Congress (A.D. 1885). The Partition of Bengal gave a sharp edge to the national awareness and there was a widespread protest¹². Political consciousness was very progressive. The Home Rule League started by Mrs. Annie Besant gave rise to a spate of activity in all the

10. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979) P. 37, 38

11. Sukhendra Reddy, K., APDG, Vizianagaram
(Hyderabad 2000), P.43

12. Bipin Chandra & others, Freedom Struggle (New Delhi, 2007),
P.81

districts¹³. Rebellions were mercilessly put down by the British army. The British authorities did not respond favourably to the reasonable demands of the Congress; moreover, they became hostile to the policies of the Congress¹⁴. Introduction of English language as the medium of instruction created a new class of intelligentsia and this intelligentsia led to the renaissance movement in the 19th century. English education was to spread western culture and to reduce the importance of Indian educational system. British education was secular in character, liberal in spirit and was opened to all the people irrespective of caste, colour or creed¹⁵. The English education, in turn, produced a rebellion against orthodox social institutions like caste system, superiority of Brahmins and Sati etc. The Educated Indians or an intelligent middle class agitated against the age-old social customs and demanded a reformation of the Hindu society. 'New India' a widely circulated English daily inspired the intellectuals of the Krishna district. The Educated Indians demanded that the type of administration current in England should be followed in India also.

13. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P. 36

14. Vaidehi, A. Freedom Movement in India (1885-1947),
(Hyderabad, 1977) P. 51

15. Sarojini Regani, P. 15

The real sense of political awakening emerged in Andhra with the out-break of Vandemataram and Swadesh Movements. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee was formed for the purpose of acting in Congress matters in the Andhra districts¹⁶. The Vandemataram Movement was also the result of a spirit of revolt against the foreign rules. A notable feature of the Swadeshi Movement in Andhra Districts was the manifestation of hostility among the local people towards the alien rule¹⁷. The people of Andhra responded to the Vandemataram Movement. D.V. Suryanarayana of Vizianagaram was expelled from the Government Arts College. Rajahmundry for participating in the Vandemataram Movement. Several men and women of the Vizianagaram district vigorously participated in the movement and suffered severe imprisonment¹⁸. A Swadeshi League was also formed and the well-known Congress leaders Nyapathi Subbarao Pantulu and C.Y. Chintamani toured in all districts of Andhra to popularize the above movements, particularly swadeshi¹⁹.

16. Venkatarangaiah, M., Op.Cit., P.469

17. Rajagopal, M.V., APDG, Krishna District (Hyderabad 1977), P.55

18. Sukhendra Reddy, K., APDG, Vizianagaram (Hyderabad 2000), P.44

19. Sitaramaiah, B.P., Op.Cit., P.41

Soon after Mahatma Gandhi entered into the National Congress in 1920, the national spirit became full-blown in Andhra. Gandhiji saw the condition of the country – economic drain, exploitation of the farmers, heavy taxes, closure of cottage industries, frequent famines – the same conditions prevailed in Andhra also. On the 8th of April, 1921 Mahatma Gandhi along with Moulana Abul Kalam Azad and Moulana Muhammad Ali touched Waltair in their tour of Andhra. At the movement they reached Waltair, M.M.Ali was arrested at the Waltair Railway Station. Gandhiji addressed a mass rally at the Railway Station itself. This was the beginning of mass movement in Visakhapatnam²⁰. Ramachandra Kavi organized Non-Cooperation Movement in the Visakhapatnam district. The Andhras, having an aversion towards the alien rule, enmass joined the Indian National Congress. Since then, there was a tremendous progress in the Congress district-wise. During the course of his tour of Andhra, Gandhiji exhorted the people to learn Hindi, use home-spun cloth and boycott the schools and courts²¹.

English education produced tremendous changes. The Educated Indians were influenced by the ideas of the stalwarts like

20. Sukhendra Reddy, K., APDG, Vizianagaram
(Hyderabad 2000), P.44

21. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P. 44

Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, Macaulay etc. The democratic and revolutionary ideas – Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, which had been followed in England, America and France, influenced the Andhras also. Prof. N.G.Ranga, a veteran freedom fighter from Andhra, quotes, 'I could see how the American Negroes were liberated from the slavery'²². He was of strong determination to help the Andhras to such a status of working for the liberation of their own motherland. Political associations like the British Indian Association (Calcutta), The Madras Native Association (Madras), The Bombay Association (Bombay) etc. were organized by the educated classes to fight against the British Government in India. Social institutions like the Arya Samaj founded by Dayananda Saraswathi, Brahma Samaj by Raja Rammohan Roy etc. fought against the Western influence. 'The cultural and ideological struggle, represented by the socio-religious movements, was an integral part involving national consciousness'²³. These organizations awakened the Andhras culturally and politically through the papers like 'Vivekavardhini, Satihita Bodhini etc. which became uncompromising critics and condemned the repressive policies of the British Government. They brought cultural

22. Ranga, N.G., Fight for Freedom (New Delhi, 1968), P.57

23. Bipin Chandra and others, Op.Cit., P.90

renaissance in Andhra also. In a way, the Provincial Congress Committees were organized on the basis of local languages, so that they may be in touch with the local people. Village level organizations were also formed. Consequently, quite a good number of Andhras even from villages took part in the conferences of National Congress.

The Partition of Bengal gave a sharp edge to the national awareness in the coastal districts. Everywhere agitations took place against the partition of Bengal. All the Indian nationalists condemned the Partition of Bengal unanimously²⁴. Andhra also joined the movement under the leadership of Raja Munagala Kommaraju Lakshmana Rao, Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao. The veterans like Dadabai Nouroji, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajapat Rai, Mrs. Annie Besant etc. visited places like Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Vijayawada, Vizianagaram and Gooty and greatly inspired the Andhras, Mrs. Annie Besant preached Swaraj for India i.e. 'Self-government within the empire'²⁵. Newspapers like Vivekavardhini of Veeresalingam Pantulu, 'Andhra Patrika' of Pardhasaradhi Naidu, 'Krishna Patrika' of Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao played a significant role in expressing the public opinion and

24. Bipin Chandra : Op.Cit., P.126

25. Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 14, P.50

instigating political awakening among the Andhras The Vijayawada session of the All India Congress Committee in 1920, attended by Mahatma Gandhi (1920) along with Kasturba and all most all important leaders like Patel, Nehru and Azad produced a tremendous impact and revolutionized the Andhras in their fight for freedom.

Non-Cooperation Movement

Gandhiji was the right kind of leader the country was anticipating for, when the Government was exercising extraordinary powers to curb the rising tide of the national spirit in all the Indians and Andhras were no exception. The Congress stalwarts had formed a high opinion of his character and organising abilities²⁶. To Jawaharlal Nehru he seemed to be 'very distinct and different and unpolitical'. The period from 1921 to 1931 was historic in Andhra because the Government of India passed the 1919 Act to give effect to the Montague – Chelmsford Reforms²⁷. At that time, the Government left many matters unsolved – delimitation of constituencies, allocation of seats to different communities etc. to the discretion of the Government of India. Elections to the legislature were to take place in November 1920. The Andhras (1920) were anxious to safe-guard their interests in the allocation of seats i.e., the Telugu speaking district should be allotted not less than one half of the total number of seats; Of the four seats allotted to the Madras Presidency on the Council of State, two should be allotted to the Telugu speaking districts. The

26. Bipin Chandra and others, Op.Cit., P.121

27. Rao, P.R., History of Modern Andhra Pradesh
(New Delhi, 1993), P.107

Congress Session held at Calcutta in September 1920 many prominent leaders of Andhra like Konda Venkatappaiah, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah etc. attended, and accepted Gandhiji's resolution of non-violent and non-cooperation. Konda Venkatappayya gave much importance to self-government²⁸. Non-Cooperation was enunciated by Gandhiji to destroy the arbitrary system of administration of the British²⁹. Non-Cooperation was the only effective weapon left to the people. It was taken with a spirit of revenge. Large number of Andhra people were prepared to resort to National Congress. It included (1) renunciation of all Government, titles, boycott of legislatures (2) Law courts (3) boycott of Government schools and colleges (4) Picketing of liquor shops and (5) production of Khadi etc.

Gandhiji himself opened a national school known as Tilak Vidyalaya (1921) at Nellore. The temperance movement in the Nellore district was unsurpassed and hartals were observed in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales in November 1921³⁰. Nellore was the first district in Andhra to implement liquor

28. Venkatarangaiah, M., Op.Cit., P.111

29. The Collected work of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, Publication Division, Government of India (Ahmadabad, 1966), P.39

30. Rao, P.R., History of Modern Andhra (New Delhi, 1978), P.73

boycott. Sale of liquor was a total failure in the district. During the Civil Disobedience Movement (1922) Pattabhi Sita Ramaiah and A.Kaleswara Rao gave up their lucrative practices and joined the movement.

Similarly he opened a national college at Eluru and called it Gandhi Andhra-jathiya Mahavidyalaya³¹. The programme of boycotting the Government schools, colleges and the establishment of national educational institutions evoked a tremendous response. For example the Tenali Taluk High School became the National High School. The American Evangelical Lutheran Mission College, Guntur became the Andhra Christian College in 1926³². In the place of English medium educational institutions many national educational institutions were established at Eluru, Gudivada and Narasapur to impart the feelings of patriotism in the mother-tongue among the Andhras. The boycott of English (medium) educational institutions was very successful throughout the state³³. When the feeling of nationalism was rampant in Andhra, the British Government took up many steps like 'Divide and Rule' to curb the

31. Ramesan, N. APDG, West Godavari (Hyderabad, 1929), P. 46

32. Prasada Rao, T.S.V., Op.Cit., P.63

33. Bipin Chandra : India's struggle for independence
(New Delhi 1972), P.189

movement. Students were prohibited from attending the political meetings. But the national colleges established at places like Machilipatnam and Madanapalli provided national education to the Andhras. The Simon Commission was to visit Guntur and Ongole in Andhra. The Congress had called upon the country to boycott the commission³⁴. In 1928 the Simon Commission went disappointed when it passed through Vijayawada. A Kaleswara Rao, Municipal Chairman of Vijayawada sent a sealed cover to Simon, containing 'Boycott Resolution' passed by the Municipal Council (1928); and another paper informing 'Simon go back'.

The Nellore district showed great political awareness in connection with 'Simon Commission' in 1928. Gandhiji visited Nellore district in 1929 to raise funds for Kaddar Movement. Civil Disobedience Movement was observed in the Krishna District. In September 1932 shops throughout the district were closed and 8th Jan. 1933 was observed as 'Temple Entry Day'³⁵. In 1933 Gandhiji visited Krishna district propagating Harijan uplift. Consequently temples were opened for Harijan entry in Krishna district.

The British Government violated the promises it made and on

34. The Hindu dated 22nd Feb. 1928

35. Bipin Chandra & others, Freedom Struggle (New Delhi, 1972), P.

the contrary implemented repressive measures. As per the call given by Gandhiji, Konda Venkatappaiah resigned to his membership of the Madras legislature. Many others withdrew their candidature to the legislatures and other elected bodies. Nearly 103 lawyers, 47 teachers left their lucrative professions. Many 'Karanams' (village accountants) also left their jobs and joined the movement. Graduates and merchants did not exercise their franchise; elections were boycotted. At Guntur 15%, Rajahmundry 1%, Chittoor 4% and in the rural constituency 6% votes were polled³⁶. The British-made goods were totally boycotted in the Krishna district. Nearly 300 Andhras were sent to jails because of Non Co-operation Movement. Gandhiji promised to bring Swaraj within one year through National Congress. Andhra responded enthusiastically to the call of Gandhiji. Nellore district ranked first in implementing liquor boycott³⁷. Guntur district took a leading part in the Non Co-operation Movement by organising.

- 1) No-tax campaign at Pedanandipadu
- 2) Forest Satyagraha at Palnadu and
- 3) Struggle of Chirala-Perala³⁸

36. The Hindu (Madras) 2 December 1920

37. Ramesan, N. APDG, Krishna District (Hyderabad, 1979), P.55

38. Rao, P.R., History of Modern Andhra Pradesh
(New Delhi, 1993), P.108

The years 1921-31 constitute a most glorious and heroic chapter in the history of the freedom movement in Andhra under the inspired leadership of Konda Venkatappaiah, Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah, Tanguturi Prakasam, Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao, Davuluri Subbamma, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, Dandu Narayana Raju, Shafi Ahmed etc. To the historic All India Congress Committee meeting at Vijayawada on 31st March and 1st April 1921 important national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Mohammad Ali etc. attended for which thousands of people from all over the Telugu districts of Andhra attended most enthusiastically. It was decided here to collect rupees one crore for Tilak Swaraj Fund and at this same session Gandhiji accepted Pingali Venkaiah's designed tricolour flag for the Congress. With some modifications it became the National Flag of our country and unfurling of the flag with solemn ceremony became very popular³⁹.

After the All India Congress Committee session at Vijayawada Gandhiji started touring in some important places in the coastal Andhra - Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Machilipatnam, Chirala, Nellore, Visakhapatnam etc. In this tour the Andhras followed Gandhiji's leadership meticulously and made splendid

39. Sitaramaiah, B.P., Op.Cit., P.346

sacrifices for the freedom of the country⁴⁰. His tour produced tremendous impact on people, especially women like Davuluri. Subbamma, Ponaka Kanakamma, Unnava Lakshmibayamma. Gandhiji's visit to Waltair on 8 April, 1921 resulted in a mass upsurge. Ramachandra Kavi organized Non-cooperation Movement in Visakhapatnam district and initiated Khadi movement. Medical students of Visakhapatnam staged Satyagraha, picketed liquor shops and courted arrests⁴¹. The Congress gained ground in the entire district. Gandhiji visited Vijayawada thrice 1921, 1929 and 1933 and exhorted the people and the leaders like Pasumarthi Veerabhadra Swamy, Kadimsetty Rama Murty, Jagannadha Gupta and Women like Bhamidipati Mahalakshamma, Masuganti Venkatanarasamma etc who also worked for Harijan uplift⁴².

As per the direction of the All India Congress Committee Andhra boycotted the visit of the Prince of Wales. Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah was drawn to Vandemataram Movement even at the age of sixteen. Coomara Swamy introduced Gopala Krishnaiah to

40. Rao, P.R., History of Modern Andhra Pradesh
(New Delhi, 1993), P.108

41. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P. 41

42. Sukhendra Reddy, K., APDG, Vizianagaram
(Hyderabad 2000), P.45

Gandhiji in London in 1915 as the 'coming man of your country'⁴³. Chirala-Perala were two adjacent villages called the Chirala union. In 1919 the government constituted these two villages into a municipality and in 1920 the tax burden was increased to Rs.40,000/- against Rs.4,000/- per annum. The people were not anxious to have a municipality. In February 1921 the people appealed to the Raja Ramarayaningar, of Ponagal, Minister for Local Self Government for revoking the municipality but of no avail because the Chief Minister belonged to the Justice Party and at the same time the people who were led by Duggirala Gopala Krishnaiah a Congressman and that too a Brahmin⁴⁴. The minister had antagonized the Congress party because they refused to pay municipal taxes under the leadership of Gopalakrishnaiah. He organized a voluntary corp called 'Ramadandu'; the villagers constituted a new town called 'Ram Nagar' to avoid municipal taxes. Gopalakrishnaiah was awarded nine months simple imprisonment in October 1921 because he created disaffection against the Government⁴⁵. The morale of the people was badly

43. Subba Rao, G.V., Andhra Ratna Gopalakrishnaiah
(Amalapuram, 1967), P.13

44. Rao, P.R., History of Modern Andhra Pradesh
(New Delhi, 1993), P.110

45. Sitaramaiah, B.P. Op.Cit., P.196

affected. Another episode in the Non-Cooperation Movement was the Forest Satyagraha at Palnadu. The poor people were not allowed to graze their cattle or collect dry wood for fuel without paying taxes/bribes. Representation to revoke the taxes was not paid any heed by the Government. The social boycott in Macherla was a cent per cent success. Forest laws were violated. Clashes between the people and the forest guards became frequent. In February 1922 the no-tax campaign was at its height. No tax campaign of Pedanandipadu was one of the most important episodes in the Non-Cooperation Movement in Andhra. Governor Wellington confessed that it shook the very foundations of the British Empire in India⁴⁶. The leader of the no-tax campaign of Pedanandipadu was Parvataneni Virayya Chowdari. The Deputy Collector came to Pedanandipadu on the 24th early morning of February 1922 and wanted to see Veeraiah who was leading that soul-stirring movement⁴⁷. The people organized social boycott of all officials. The Collector of Guntur reported to the government that the 'present movement is an open rebellion'. Government tried all its means to subvert the movement but totally failed. At the same time Veeraiah Chowdari was to tender an apology on the

46. Rao, P.R., Op.Cit., P.113

47. Venkatarangaiah, M., Op.Cit., Vil.III, P.224

pain of being short dead⁴⁸. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee appointed a subcommittee consisting of K.Nageswara Rao, T.Prakasam and D.Narayana Raju to tour in the area and to report the situation. On February 10, 1922 Gandhiji sent a letter to Konda Venkatappaiah to call off the campaign and it was called off much to the chagrin of the people. By the end of March 1922 the Non Co-operation Movement in Andhra was fizzled out.

Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR)

Alluri Sitarama Raju was a great freedom fighter. His aim was to defy the British Government and to establish an independent principality of his own and to spread the torch of independence to other areas also. He attacked Police stations at Chintapalli, Krishnadevipeta and Rajavommangi and looted their weapons in 1922 and defied the Government and eluded a number of military contingents sent by the government at Addatigala and Chodavaram⁴⁹. Between 1922 and 1924 he terrorised the British Government but he was shot dead at Krishnadevipattanam by the Government in 1924 and the rebellion was put down. Sitarama

48. Ibid, P.115

49. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad, 1979), P. 40

Raju was undoubtedly a great hero inspired by noble ideals⁵⁰. The country can not forget Alluri Sitarama Raju who started a revolution in Andhra desa and earned worldwide reputation for himself by making the government tremble⁵¹.

II. The Simon Commission:

Sir John Simon was appointed on 8 November 1927 to visit Guntur and Ongole and to report on the working of the 1919 reforms. As there was no Indian appointed in that Statutory Commission, all the political parties and the municipal councils of Tirupati, Kurnool, Vijayawada, Eluru, Srikakulam etc resolved to boycott the Commission. On 3 February 1928 all the towns in Andhra observed hartals. The Simon Commission was not 'wanted' by any party⁵². On their way to Guntur, Simon and his party was halted at Vijayawada railway station, A.Kaleswara Rao, Chairman of Vijayawada Municipality sent sealed cover to Simon, containing the 'Boycott Resolution' of the municipality and a paper with the words 'Simon, go back'⁵³. At Guntur and Ongole the

50. Chandrasekhar, M., History of Freedom Movement in West Godavari District (Tel.) (Penugonda, 1992), P.65.

51. Venkatarangaiya, M., The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra) (Hyderabad, 1974), Vol. IV, P.744.

52. Sitaramaiah, B.P., Op.Cit., P.315

53. Rajagopal, M.V., APDG, Krishna District (Hyderabad 1977), P.56

Commission was greeted with black flags. T.Prakasam propagated against the Commission. Complete hartal was observed in Madras also. One man died in the police firing. Prakasam wanted to visit the site of police firing. When he was prevented to go forward, Prakasam exposed his chest to the police and declared, 'we are determined to move on and have a look at the dead body of our comrade, 'shoot me if you want'⁵⁴. The police were taken aback and allowed him to proceed; for this act of bravery, Prakasam was called 'Andhra Kesari'. The creation of Andhra province was on its heels.

III. Civil Disobedience Movement:

Madam Sarojini Naidu called for prayer before the March started and the entire assemblage knelt. Gandhiji started his Civil Disobedience Movement on 12 March, 1930 by setting out from Sabarmati to Dandi with 78 followers to break the salt laws. The Civil Disobedience Movement was a nationwide mass movement⁵⁵. The Salt Satyagraha came to be known as Civil Disobedience Movement 'On 6 April 1930, by picking up a handful of salt,

54. Kaleswara Rao, A., Navya Andhramu (Vijayawada, 1959), P. 373.

55. Bipin Chandra & others, Op.Cit., P.160

Gandhiji inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement that was to remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian National Movement' (Bipin Chandra). National consciousness, in general, was electrified when Gandhiji began his Dandi march. Gandhiji said that wherever possible, Civil Disobedience of salt laws should be started. Liquor and foreign cloth shops should be picketed. Konda Venkatappaiah was appointed director of the Civil Disobedience Movement for the entire Andhra. Salt packets, prepared by Konda Venkatappaiah himself were bought by the students of the Andhra Christian College, Guntur and that money was contributed to the national fund⁵⁶. K.Nageswara Rao, V.L. Sastry, Durgabai Deshmukh, Gade Rangaiah Naidu and Tanguturi Prakasam were other prominent members. Many women – Bharati Devi Ranga, Vallabhaneni Sitamahalakshamma, Digumarti Janakamma and Khambampati Manikyamba etc. participated in the Salt Satyagraha.

Nellore district responded magnificently to break salt law. The volunteers in some places prepared salt in 1932. There was a wide-spread protest against Communal Award of Macdonald. Gandhiji visited this district in 1933 on the cause of Harijan uplift. In 1935 the district displayed its solid patriotism by returning 5/6

56. Prasada Rao T.S.V.Op.Cit., 47

candidates to the Provincial Legislative Assembly. Ramakurti George, a student of Machilipatnam was lathi charged and imprisoned because of civil disobedience. Under the leadership of D.Narayana Raju and Atmakuri Govindacharyulu 400 people in the West Godavari district prepared salt on 11-4-1930 for fifteen days on the bank of river Vasista Godavari⁵⁷. Picketing of liquor shops and boycott of foreign goods were seriously done. Leaders were arrested and imprisoned. The Visakhapatnam Congress workers including women distinguished themselves in the Salt Satyagraha of 1930 and themselves courted arrests. The First All India Swadeshi Exhibition was organized in Visakhapatnam in December 1930 and it gathered all the sympathizers and workers of the Congress together⁵⁸. In 1931 picketing of foreign cloth shops were seriously attempted. Merchants themselves stopped selling the foreign cloth and thereby showed their patriotism. Meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison on 8 May 1933 and he suspended the movement on 14 July 1933.

IV. Quit India Movement (1942)

Every effort of the nationalists in Andhra was sabotaged by the British Government. Krishna Patrika wrote that the Government

57. Prasada Rao, TSV, Op.Cit., P.48

58. Ramesan, N. APDG, Visakhapatnam (Hyderabad 1979), P. 42

was trying to cut out at the root of fundamental rights of the Indians⁵⁹. In November 1939 ministers of the Congress resigned to their offices. By 1941-42 war situation was not favourable to England. Sir Stafford Cripps Mission to solve the Indian political deadlock also failed. Japanese forces threatened to knock at the door of India. Under these circumstances, the All India Congress Committee which met at Bombay on 6 Aug. 1942 passed the Quit India resolution because Gandhiji was arrested along with the members of the Congress Working Committee. The year 1942 was a momentous one in the history of the Indian National Congress. It was a final stage in the struggle⁶⁰. The movement took a violent turn, people were angry and ready for reaction, riots broke out in different towns. Salagala Benzamin in Chirala caused damage to government property and hence he was imprisoned for two years at Allipuram jail⁶¹. Amos of Palakol destroyed railway station and goods shed and burnt them. Police opened fire at Tenali, killing 9 persons, similarly at Guntur and Bhimavaram. Nellore district played a notable part in the Quit India Movement – a country bomb was thrown against a military lorry, travelers bungalow at

59. Rao, P.R., Op.Cit., P.105

60. Venkatarangaiya, M., Op.Cit., Vol. IV, P.142

61. Prasada Rao, TSV, Op.Cit., P.34

Nayudupet, police station at Allur were burnt, removal of rails, fishplates and damage to the telegraph wires and posts. There were strikes and picketing of educational institutions. All the offices under the control of district Board were closed on 28-8-1942⁶². As a counter method, the government suspended the District Board, Municipal Council and Panchayats at Allur and Sullurpet for six months. A number of students of Visakhapatnam gave up their studies and joined the Quit India Movement in 1942. In Vizianagaram there were violent incidents – cutting of five Railway Telegraph Wires, removed four rail joints, fish plates and bolts etc. during the course of Quit India Movement. The government followed a policy of repression. Vedula Suryanarayana Rao of Salur and Durvasula Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Vjayanagaram worked in the Indian National Army of Subhaschandra Bose⁶³. Leaders like Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham, Manthina Venkata Raju, Kala Venkata Rao etc. were put in jail. The appeal given by Kala Venkatarao was rejected⁶⁴.

Thus the national movement thoroughly inspired the Andhras

62. Rajagopal, M.V., APDG, Nellore (Hyderabad 1977), P.40

63. Sukhendra Reddy, K., APDG, Vizianagaram
(Hyderabad 2000), P.45

64. Venkatarangaiah, M., Op.Cit., P.542

and in turn, the Andhras participated in all the political demonstrations, hartals and strikes. Many of them were lathi-charged, imprisoned and shot-dead by the British government. The sufferings of the Andhras were untold. Yet, their love for the freedom of their mother country was so great that they bore all the sufferings happily to the end. Indian independence could no longer be delayed. Various developments abroad and at home convinced the British to concede to the demand of the Indians for getting freedom. The situation in India was explosive and made it clear that the British could no longer continue to exercise their power. It would be unsafe for the British to suppress the national movement. The British government therefore, decided to transfer the power of ruling to India. On 20 February 1947 the British government Prime Minister, Clement Atlee announced that power would be transferred to India⁶⁵. There was pride and joy in the achievement of freedom. There was widespread rejoicing throughout the state of Andhra when power was finally transferred to the Indian National Government headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister on the 15th Aug. 1947 for Independent India.

65. Bipin Chandra & others, Op.Cit., P.227