

## The Quit India Movement in Andhra and Telangana



Quit India Movement or the August Movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi on August 8, 1942 to gain independence from British rule. Gandhiji gave call to the British to withdraw from India. He decided to launch a mass civil disobedience movement ‘*Do or Die*’ call to force the British to leave India. The Cripps Mission and its failure also played an important role in Gandhi’s call for the Quit India Movement. The British government on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1942, sent Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate terms with the Indian political parties and secure their support in Britain’s war efforts. A Draft Declaration included terms like establishment of Dominion, establishment of a Constituent Assembly and right of the Provinces to make separate constitutions. These would be granted after the cessation of the Second World War. According to the Congress, this Declaration only offered India a promise that was to be fulfilled in the future. Commenting on this Gandhi said; “*It is a postdated cheque on a crashing bank.*” After the rejection of the Cripps proposals the Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement.

### ***The Quit India Movement in Andhra***

Quit India Movement spread to all the states and provinces across the country. In Andhra the Provincial Congress Committee had issued a circular popularly known as the ‘Kurnool Circular’ as the police ceased the copy when they ride ‘Kurnool Congress Office. This was drafted by Kala Venkat Rao, on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1942 and was sent for the approval of the Congress Working Committee through Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, a member of the working committee.

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 toddy yielding trees, travelling without tickets, pulling chains to stop trains and blow up bridges to disrupt communications and retard the movement of Army personnel: the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires, non-payment of taxes excepting municipal taxes, and hoisting of national flags on all Government buildings as a sign of independence. ‘Kurnool Circular’ intended to paralyze all means of communications and machinery of administration. Some of the prominent leaders who were taken as detenus during

this period in Andhra were Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, A.Kaleshwer Rao, T.Prakasham, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Maganti Bapineedu and several others.

*On the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942*, the town of Tenali observed a complete Hartal as a protest against the arrest of the Congress leaders. The crowd tried to set fire to the Railway Station. They also destroyed the books, records and currency in the Booking Office while the staff incharge of the office fled. There upon, the police opened fire and in this firing three people were killed, namely Bhaskaruni Lakshminarayana, Majeti Subbarao and Sripathi Panditaradhyula Srigiri Rao.

*On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942*, a procession of 500 students marched to the Court of the Sub-Magistrate in Chirala and asked him to close the court. After causing damage to the building the crowd raided the offices of the Sub-Registrar and the sales tax officer and then stoned the police station. They dispersed only after the arrival of the police and the civic guards.

*On 13<sup>th</sup> August*, a crowd of 2,000, consisting mostly of students, gathered in front of the Hindu College, Guntur. The police opened fire as a result of which several were wounded and two persons died instantaneously. On the night of 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942, an attempt was made to cut the telephone wires between Dowleswaram and Rajahmundry by Bommakanti Venkata Subramanyam, Chekuri Veera Raghava Swamy (Student), Chekuri Venkata Rayudu, G. Sathi Raju, K. Rama Krishna Rao, T.V. Venkanna, V. Seetharaman and K.V. Seetharama Sastry of Rajahmundry. All of them were arrested and were awarded eighteen months rigorous Imprisonment each.

*On 12th August 1942*, telephone wires were cut by organizers between Palacole, Lankalacoderu, Bhimavaram and Vendra. On 12th and 13th August they took out processions in the streets of Nellore town and damaged electric lights on the streets and destroyed telephones and signal equipment in the railway station. At Kavali the Head Master's room of the local Board High School was set on fire. In Venkatagiri Raja College, Nellore, the Principle hoisted the national flag. The struggle was at its height in August and the first half of September with the mantra "Do or Die", given to them by Gandhiji. They continued the struggle till 1943.

### ***The Quit India Movement in Telangana***

The Quit India Movement had its repercussions in the Hyderabad State. Swamy Ramanand Tirtha met Mahatma Gandhi at Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee and obtained permission to conduct the Quit India Movement in Hyderabad State. Not only State Congress but various Praja Mandals in the State participated in the Quit India Struggle. Swamy Ramanand Tirtha left Bombay via Sholapur for Hyderabad and anticipating that he might be arrested, sent a letter to Dr. Melkote envisaging the demands of the Hyderabad State Congress so that it could be signed and sent to the Nizam. He was arrested as soon as he got down at the Nampally station. Dr. G.S. Melkote duly signed the letter on behalf of the State Congress the release of all political prisoners. Some reactionary elements in Hyderabad tried to take advantage of the slogan "Quit India" saying that the British withdrawal from India would automatically mean the Independence of Hyderabad and raised the slogan, "*Azad Hyderabad*".

During the Quit India Satyagraha, in Hyderabad several leaders like Pandit Narenderji, Harishchandra Heda, Gyankumari Heda, Vimalabai Melkote, G.S. Melkote, Jethandra Rashtravadi, Padmaja Naidu, Smt. and Sri Ramaswamy, B.Ramakrishna Rao, G. Ramachari, Gangadhar Krishna, Ganpat Rao, Krishna Dube (Kothagudem Trade Union leader of Singareni

Collieries), L. Narayana, Rajeshwar Rao, Somyajulu, D. Narasaiah, Komaragiri Narayana Rao, M.S. Rajalingam, Sridhar Rao Kulkarni, Kodati Narayan Rao, Vande Mataram Ramchandra Rao, Prem Raj Yadav and Mallayya Yadav, Kaloji Narayana Rao got arrested. Apart from the Satyagrahis in the city several volunteers participated in the Satyagraha movement from Osmanabad, Parbhani, Aurangabad, Nanded, Umri, not only on behalf of the State Congress but also on behalf of the Maharashtra Parishad and the Karnataka Conference. Govind das Shroff, the Secretary of the Maharashtra Parishad was placed under detention in Aurangabad. Padmaja Naidu was arrested for placing the Congress flag on the Residency building.

Before the Quit India movement was launched in Hyderabad, several nationalist leaders like Kasinath Rao Vaidya, Hassan Thirmiji, Vinayak Rao Vidyalankar, Ravi Narayana Reddy, Fataullah Khan, Janardhan Rao Desai, Hanumanth Rao, appealed to the Nizam to form a Ministry consisting of duly elected ministers. Seeing the demand for the restoration of civil liberties and Responsible Government growing day by day, the Nizam's Government engaged the services of Prof. Rushbrook Williams, who was an employee of the B.B.C., on a honorarium of 200 pounds per annum to carry on propaganda on behalf of the Nizam's Government by writing articles in different newspapers and journals saying that the people in the Indian States, particularly in Hyderabad enjoyed political rights to the same extent as the people in the neighboring Indian provinces. During the 1942 movement two Hyderabadis, Abid Hasan Safrani and Prof Suresh Chandra joined the Indian National Army (INA) of Subhash Chandra Bose.

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