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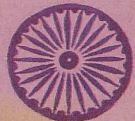
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 : மாண்புமிகு, பொதுப்பணித்துறை அமைச்சர்

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50

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Tamil Arasu

Magazine of the Government of Tamil Nadu

September 1997



In this issue :

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The First Law University in India in the name of Dr. Ambedkar.
- Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University
inaugurated by His Excellency, the President of India
Thiru K.R. Narayanan, at Valluvar Kottam,
Chennai, on 20.9.1997. | ... | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commemoration of Golden Jubilee Celebrations
of India's Independence
-Conference on the Eradication of Untouchability | ... | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anna Renaissance Scheme | ... | 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Calender of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations
of India's Independence | ... | 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thiruvalluvar-The creator of the code of conduct for mankind | ... | 14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's role in Freedom Struggle | ... | 15 |

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THE FIRST LAW UNIVERSITY IN INDIA IN THE NAME OF DR. AMBEDKAR



The first Law University in India in the name of Dr. Ambedkar was inaugurated by His Excellency, the President of India Thiru K.R. Narayanan at Valluvarkottam, Chennai on 20.9.1997.

His Excellency, the President of India Thiru K.R. Narayanan inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University at a glittering function held at Valluvarkottam, Chennai on 20.9.1997. The function was presided over by Her Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Justice M. Fathima Beevi and the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi laid the foundation stone for the university buildings.

The President in his address expressed his happiness in inaugurating the first Law University and thanked the Chief Minister for inviting him to inaugurate the university on his first visit to Tamil Nadu as President of India. He felt happy that the function was being held in Valluvarkottam, which was designed and conceived by the Chief Minister Kalaaignar built in honour of the great Saint Thiruvalluvar, who created the code of conduct for mankind.

The President said the revolution for social justice began in Tamil Nadu. He said great leaders like Periyar, Anna, Kamarajar and presently the Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi were putting the tradition into practice in society as well as in the institutional and administrative fields. He congratulated the Chief Minister and his Colleagues for the far sighted vision and efforts to start Dr. Ambedkar Law University. He noted that the Law University was the first of its kind in India and is associated with the great name and ideals of Dr. Ambedkar. He was a great fighter for social

justice and a great freedom fighter. He said Dr. Ambedkar not only fought for the freedom but also contributed for the liberation of the millions of the depressed sections of the society. He had underlined that political democracy should be supported by social democracy, if it has to be meaningful to society and survive in India.

The President said, before Independence about 300 to 400 Acts were enacted, but after Independence over 5000 legislations had been passed and the role of judiciary had increased. The question is whether these laws have brought economic freedom to people, he added.

He said, the University had a role of teaching and research studies. Legislations have to be enacted with a view of social perception and transformation. He concluded his speech by quoting verses of the great revolutionary Tamil Poet Mahakavi Bharathiar.

Her Excellency, the Governor of Tamil Nadu Justice M. Fathima Beevi presided over the function. She said the Chief Minister had achieved another milestone in rendering service to the people by establishing a separate university for Law in the name of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the first time India.

She paid rich tributes to Dr. Ambedkar. She said he was the first Law Minister of India. On the day of inauguration of a university in the name of Dr. Ambedkar, she said "Let us pledge ourselves to uphold social Justice and promote his social philosophy of liberty, equality and fraternity". She

said the students of this university should imbibe the qualities of Dr. Ambedkar. As lawers they would have more opportunities to expose the social evils and eradicate them, she said.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi, laid the foundation stone for the university buildings and in his speech he said he had great regard for two Narayanans, one late Jayaprakash Narayanan and the other Thiru K.R. Narayanan, both of them had love for the poor people. The President, despite staying in Rashtrapathi Bhavan was always thinking of the oppressed and downtrodden people, he added.

He said the objective of establishing the university, was to bring all the law colleges, five run by the Government and one privately, under the fold of the university. He said the Government had renamed the Chennai Law College as Dr. Ambedkar Law College in 1990, during the centenary celebrations of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In 1972, when a Government Arts College was started in Perambur, it was named after Dr. Ambedkar, he added.

Even after passing a resolution in the Legislative Assembly to name the Maratwada University on the name of Dr. Ambedkar it was not implemented. When people voiced their wish to name the University on Dr. Ambedkar it was Tamil Nadu which went in support of them he said.

The Chief Minister said he had placed a request to the people to send telegrams to the Maharashtra Government. Lakhs of telegrams were sent by the people. The Governor Thiru Alexander and the then Chief Minister Thiru Sarad Pawar replied immediately stating that they would fulfil the wish of the Tamils and accordingly it was done. He said Dr. Ambedkar commanded respect because he had fought for removing inequalities among people and the same Philosophy that was taught to them by Thanthai Periyar and Perarignar Anna. The Chief Minister quoted Dr. Ambedkar's words,

"There is no doubt, in my opinion, that unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress.

You cannot mobilize anything on the foundations of Caste.

You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality.

Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste, will crack and will never be a whole"

"The only question that remains to be considered is, how to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order? How to abolish caste? This is a question of supreme importance.

I am convinced that the real remedy is Inter-Marriage. Fusion of blood, can alone create the feeling of being Kith and Kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindered, becomes paramount the separatist feeling - the feeling of being aliens-created by caste will not vanish"

"The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of caste.

You are right in holding, the caste will cease to be an operative force, only when inter-dining, and inter-marriage have become matters of common course"

That was why, the Government had announced and presented gold medals weighing 1½ Sovereigns for inter-caste marriages in 1974. Inter-caste marriages meant the bride or the bridegroom should belong to a downtrodden. He said while he was occupying the office in 1989-90, the incentives given to the inter-caste marriages was Rs.5000 and in the last year in 1996 the amount was enhanced to Rs.10,000.

Recently, he said at the conference on the eradication of untouchability in Madurai, he had announced an incentive of Rs.20,000 for the inter-caste marriages, if the bride or the bridegroom happened to be an Adi-Dravidar. Community feasts are being organised in temples and other places. He said, the Government would setup "Samathu - vapuram" in 50 places with 200 houses where people of all communities could live together and this scheme will be implemented this year.

The Union Minister for Industries, Thiru Murasoli Maran said, "the first amendment of the constitution is the gift of the Dravidian Movement to the Backward Classes of India". He said the social justice was born in Tamil Nadu in 1920's when justice party was in power. Reservation policy was first introduced in Tamil Nadu in 1920's. Even in the Southern Railways and in the Imperial Bank, seats were earmarked for the backward. After India became independent in 1947 this reservation was taken away. Agitations were held throughout Tamil Nadu and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru brought in the first amendment restoring the reservation policy, he

explained. He said it was the Dravidian Movement that was responsible for making the first amendment in the Indian Constitution. The Union Minister said it was fitting that the university named after Dr. Ambedkar was being inaugurated by the President. He said the people of Tamil Nadu are immensely happy and proud in welcoming the President and that the proposal of electing him as President of India was raised from Tamil Nadu. He concluded by saying, "Honourable President! In you we see Dr. Ambedkar once again".

Union Minister of State of Law, Justice Ramakant D. Khalap said that even after 50 years of independence poor people find it difficult to get justice under the prevailing judicial system in the Country. It has been decided to bring amendments to

the Criminal Procedure Code and the Civil Procedure Code. The Bills have been placed before the Parliament, he added.

The Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Chennai High Court, Thiru Manmohan Singh Liberhan offered felicitations.

Thiru Aladi Aruna, Hon'ble Minister for Law welcomed the gathering. Thiru R.V. Dhanapalan, Special Officer of the Law University, proposed a vote of thanks.

The Worshipful Mayor, Thiru M.K. Stalin, Hon'ble Ministers, Judges of the Supreme Court and High Court, Members of the Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly and Public in large number participated in the function. ★



His Excellency the President of India, Thiru K.R. Narayanan declared open the administrative office of the Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University in the 'Poompozhi Building', Chennai on 20.9.97. Her Excellency, the Governor, Justice M. Fathima Beevi, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi, Hon'ble Union Minister for Law, Thiru Ramakant D. Khalap and the Hon'ble Minister for Law, Thiru Aladi Aruna participated in the function.

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO ADI-DRAVIDAR WELFARE

Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi while addressing at the Conference on the eradication of untouchability announced that a special recruitment drive would be undertaken to fill the vacant posts meant for SC/ST, and a monitoring committee would be setup with Hon'ble Minister for Adi Dravidar Welfare as Chairman to oversee the fillingup of the 19% vacancies. Accordingly a committee has been formed with Samayanallur Thiru S. Selvaraj, Hon'ble Minister for Adi Dravidar, as the Chairman with members of the Legislative Assembly as members of the committee. The members are : Thiru Chengai Sivam, Thiru S. Azhaguvelu, Tmt. Gomathi Srinivasan,

Thiru V.P. Rajan, Thiru S. Puratchimi, Tmt. A.S. Ponnammal, Thiru G. Pazhanichamy, Thiru S. Karuppasamy and Dr.K. Krishnasamy. The Secretary of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department will be the Executive Member. The Secretary of the Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department will also be a member.

The Chairman may form three sub committees with three members each to monitor various departments. This committee will monitor the reservations in the Government, non Government Organisations, Universities, and all educational institutions and find the drawbacks and advise the Government in filling up the vacancies.

COMMEMORATION OF GOLDEN JUBILEE **CELEBRATIONS OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

Conference on the eradication of untouchability

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had believed that inter-caste marriages were the only answer to eliminate caste differences in the society. Affectionate feelings could be created only by blood relationship among the castes. Castism will be completely eradicated, when community feasts and inter-caste marriages become common practice. Accordingly, a Human Chain, Community feasts, unveiling of the statue of renowned freedom fighter P. Kakkan and a conference on eradication of untouchability, to promote communal harmony, peace and equality were organised in commemoration of the golden jubilee celebrations of India's Independence, at Madurai on 31 August, 1997.

Human Chain

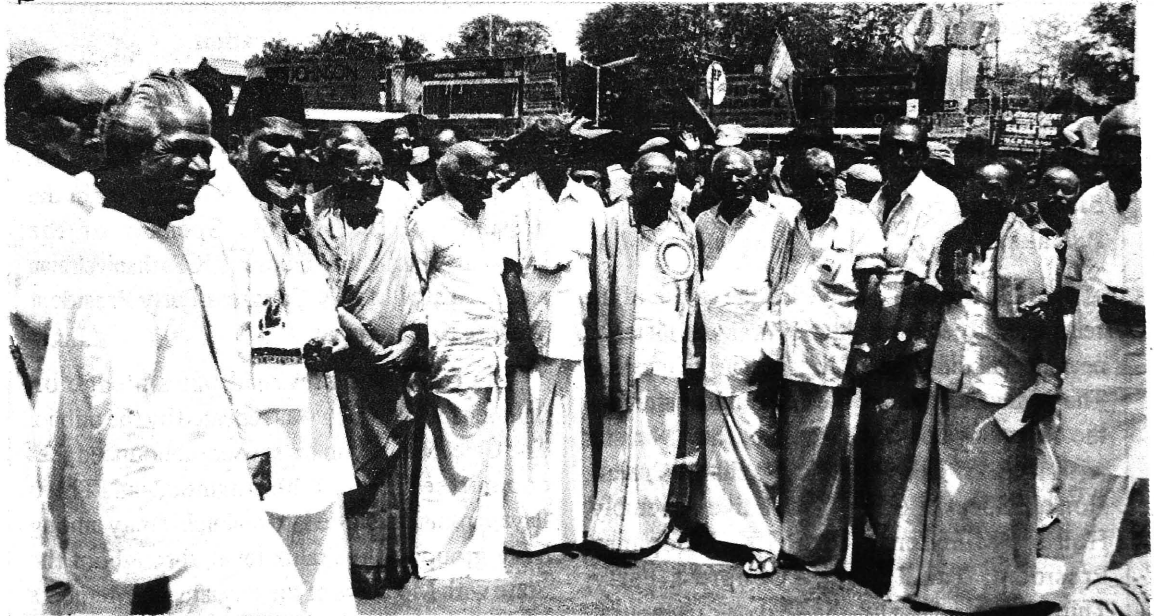
Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi, joined hands with the public to

inaugurate and participate in a 13.5 km long human chain, at Tiruparankundram. Thousands of people enthusiastically joined hands to form a chain from Thiruparankundram to Madurai K. Pudur, a distance of 13.5 Kms. While driving from Thiruparankundram, the Chief Minister got down at four different places and joined hands with school students and the public.

Hon'ble Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of the Parliament, Leaders of various parties, school children displaying placards against untouchability, members of voluntary organisations, labourers, NCC, NSS, College students and general public enthusiastically participated in the human chain.

Community feasts

Community feasts were organised in three places; Goripalayam Mosque, Sri Meenakshi





Amman Temple and St. Mary's Church. The Chief Minister participated in the community feast organised in the Sri Meenakshi Amman Temple. Hon'ble Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of the Parliament, leaders of various parties and public took part in the community feasts organised in the three places of worship.

A cultural programme was organised by the Iyal Isai Nataka Mandram between 3 pm and 5 pm.

Statue of the renowned freedom fighter P. Kakkan

The Chief Minister unveiled the statue of the renowned freedom fighter P. Kakkan installed near Thallakulam Court, Madurai in the evening. The family members of the late Kakkan attended the ceremony and honoured the Chief Minister with shawls. Thiru P. T. R. Pazhanivelrajan, Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon'ble Ministers, Thiru G. K. Moopanar, President, Tamil Manila Congress Party, Thiru Kuzhandaivelu, the Mayor of Madurai,

Thiru K. V. Thangabalu, TNCC President, Thiru Kumari Ananthan, Thiru G. A. Vadivelu, Janata Dal leader, Thiru R. Nallakkannu, Communist leader, Thiru R. M. Veerappan, leader of the MGR Kazhagam, Prof. Dheeran, President, PMK, Thiru Y. Balasundaram, leader, Ambedkar Makkal Iyakkam participated.

Conference on the eradication of untouchability

The Conference on the eradication of untouchability was presided by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi in the presence of the Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Thiru P. T. R. Pazhanivelrajan and the Tamil Manila Congress Party President Thiru G. K. Moopanar.

The Chief Minister read out a pledge on untouchability, which was repeated by the public. The Chief Minister in his speech, announced that committees would be formed, as Thiru Ilayaperumal requested, to maintain amity among caste groups, at the taluk level, throughout the State with Members of the Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly and representatives

of the people as members endowed with the task of maintaining peace, amity and stop any attempt of disrupting peace. He informed that an order to this effect would be issued within a weeks time.

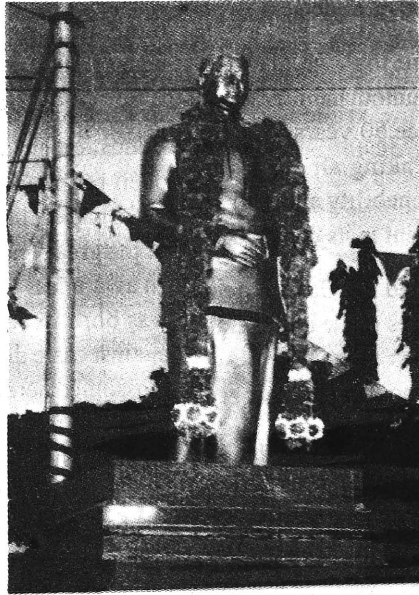
He said he did not find fault with the people raising their voice for their quota of jobs but felt that they should not touch the realm of violence. He said many posts meant for SCs and STs in the Government Departments had remained vacant due to the non availability of candidates with proper qualification and training. He said the Government had undertaken a special recruitment drive to fill up the vacancies. In the case of Secondary Grade Teachers recruitment reserved for SC/ST's, there were no sufficient candidates available. So the Government have issued orders with relaxation to recruit candidates with B.Ed. qualification for fillingup the vacancies for Secondary Grade Teachers.

He also said that a committee would be constituted to monitor the filling up of the vacancies meant for SCs and STs, with the Minister for Adi Dravidar Welfare as Convener and Adi Dravidar Members of the Legislative Assembly. The names of the members would be announced later, he added.

The Chief Minister recalled, Thiru Sankaraiah's wish that the pledge of untouchability should also register in the minds of students. He said he derived a new confidence after seeing so many students joining hands in a human chain in the morning which meant that the message of eradication of untouchability had already reached them. Human Chain, Community feast and conference on the eradication of untouchability would be organised in every district. He also announced that the Education

Minister would soon issue a circular to the schools and colleges directing the teachers to administer the 'untouchability pledge' to students in every class room, once in a week.

The Chief Minister said if community feasts and inter-caste marriages become common practice, the evil of caste will be eliminated.



He said the assistance given to the inter-caste marriages under the Anjugam Ammaiyar Memorial Marriage Assistance Scheme was increased from Rs.5000 to Rs.10,000. The Chief Minister said, he was happy to announce the enhancement of this Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000 to the couple if the Bride or the Bridegroom belong to SC/ST. Presently Rs.10,000 is being given under the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar

Marriage Assistance Scheme if the Bride, belonging to poor family had a minimum qualification of 8th standard, he added. He said Rs.46 crores were being provided for 46 thousand couples during the year 1997-98. (Recently, Hon'ble Chief Minister has announced that all the applications under Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Marriage Assistance Scheme should be processed within 15 days and eligible couples should be provided assistance without any target.)

The Chief Minister concluded his speech by announcing that the Government would take necessary steps during the Golden Jubilee year, to organise human chain, community feast and conference on eradication of untouchability at various District headquarters. He also pointed out that the success of the Conference would be in the complete eradication of 'untouchability'.

Thiru G.K. Moopnar, President, Tamil Manila Congress in his address appreciated the Government's efforts and involvement in organising the golden jubilee celebrations of India's independence. The unveiling of the statue of former minister and freedom fighter Kakkan and the organisation of the conference on the eradication of untouchability by the Chief Minister was an apt occasion, he added.

He said, it was a shame that we are still involved in fighting against untouchability, even after obtaining independence 50 years ago. He said the Government was taking all efforts to completely eradicate untouchability and said he would support the Government in its endeavour.

He thanked and appreciated the Government for remembering the sacrifices made by veteran freedom fighter Viswanathadas, belonging to Adi Dravidar Community and honouring him.

Thiru P.T.R. Pazhanivel Rajan, Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in his speech said it was pity that the conference on eradication of untouchability had to be organised even after

50 years since India attained independence. Adi Dravidars were not allowed to wear chappals and attire towel on their shoulders when they entered Aghraharam. Police actions were taken on violators. That law was abolished he added, when Justice Party came to power.

He requested the people, irrespective of their party affiliations to come forward and lend their hand in support to the Government in its endeavour to eradicate the evil of untouchability.

Prof.K. Anbazhagan, Hon'ble Minister for Education, in his address, said, an awareness had been felt among the people even from eighty years back at the beginning of this century. A few of the great-leaders of the past times had created an awareness in places. Mahakavi Bharathi who was born in an orthodox brahmin family sung against caste differences. So, good thoughts had blossomed here and there. But this awareness had not been planted strongly in the minds of the people. This awakening and realisation came at the beginning of the 20th Century when education reached the masses. When people belonging to other than forward communities,



started some organisations, questions were raised about education and equality. In this context Gandhiji hated untouchability and worked hard with an aim of eradicating untouchability. On the other side Dr. Ambedkar also brought awareness. Every individual should take in their hearts to eradicate untouchability, he added.

Thiru S. Balakrishnan, the Leader of the opposition party, requested that all the political parties should organise meetings only on eradication of untouchability throughout the year.

Thiru Sankaraiah, said in few villages of Tamil Nadu, there still prevail a practice of having two types of glasses in tea shops to serve different people. He said necessary actions should be taken to discontinue this practice. 'If not we have to organise Sathyagraha to abolish untouchability' he added. 'The cremation and burial grounds are same for all' and everybody had to work hard to bring this situation to reality, he added.

Thiru R. Nallakkannu, Secretary of Communist Party of India in Tamil Nadu quoted verses from Sangam literature and said equality has not yet been developed among the people. That is why we have repeated the pledge administered by the Chief Minister, he added. He said, as long as caste feelings are entertained in the hearts, equality cannot be created.

Thiru G.A. Vadivelu, Janata Dal leader in his speech, said organising a conference on eradication of untouchability, after 50 years of attaining freedom was not a happy occasion. Caste violence prevailed and continues to prevail in North India. But there was an awakening in Tamil Nadu and that had to be developed further.

Thiru K. V. Thangabalu, TNCC President, said they had been instrumental in implementing the ideals of Gandhiji, Periyar and Ambedkar. Eminent leaders like Perunthalaivar Kamarajar, Perarignar Anna, National leaders and leaders of Dravidian Movement had worked for the cause

of untouchability. Caste feelings should be wiped off in the political parties also. He felt happy and apt that the Chief Minister Kalaigarnar was presiding the function. 'Castism will be no more when equality is felt by hearts', he added.

Thiru A.K.A. Abdus Samad, General Secretary, Indian Union Muslim League Party, in his speech said this type of Conference could be organised and reap the benefits only by the Chief Minister Kalaigarnar who had the inward urge to do good things, with an urge to upgrade the life style of the downtrodden.

Thiru Ilayaperumal in his address, said he was thankful to the Chief Minister for organising this Conference with noble heart. He said, it was essential that leaders assembled on the stage should co-operate in the eradication of untouchability. He said a committee has to be constituted at taluk level with an Adi Dravidar as a member, and the Government had to examine the report submitted by the committee and implement them accordingly.

Thiru RM. Veerapan, leader of the MGR Mandrams said untouchability cannot be eradicated by the Government alone. The leaders and eminent personalities, who are worshiped and followed by the people also should take necessary steps in the eradication of untouchability.

Thiru Kuzhandaivelu, Mayor of Madurai Corporation, in his speech said the Chief Minister had organised the Conference to eradicate untouchability, to create Tamil Nadu a heaven of peace and to propagate the Anna's ideal, 'One community one God' to the world.

Thiru M. Abdul Latheef in his speech said, he saw Thanthai Periyar in the Chief Minister while seeing him organising the untouchability conference. The Chief Minister showed respect to all people of faith and caste. It was a pity that untouchability still prevailed even after 50 years of independence and said people should dedicate

themselves in its eradication. Caste, created by man had the power of destroying the man himself. It was only after the foundation of Dravidian Movement the downtrodden society was lifted and that cannot be forgotten, he added.

Thiru Ayanan Ambalam said, it was with the help of Muthuramalingam Thevar, Vaithianathan Iyer led the Adi Dravidars into the Meenakchi Amman Temple. Certain people in order to become leaders instigate caste feelings among the people and they should not be entertained.

Professor Dheeran, in his speech, said the Chief Minister was taking several steps to change the status of Backward Class, Most Backward Class, downtrodden etc. It cannot be denied the fact that even now in certain places there prevailed separate cremation grounds, restriction on walking through certain streets etc. If untouchability had to be eradicated, the caste should be abolished, for this political parties should participate with determination, he said.

Thiru Kumari Ananthan, in his speech said 'we will eliminate caste and we will be with the Chief Minister in this endeavour'. Panchayat and Panchayat unions without caste separations could be even honoured by providing separate fund, he added.

Thiru V. Balasundaram, President, Ambedkar Makkal Iyakkam, in his address, said if the caste is not eliminated at this stage itself when Thiru Kalaignar and Thiru Moopnar are present, then it cannot be eliminated at any time. If the caste had to be completely eliminated, lessons had to be taught in schools on this subject. He said a Hindu student could read Kuran, let him read Bible, if that could be practiced, then the future generation would be advanced. 'Caste prevails to get concessions. 50 years have gone since independence. Concessions are to be reduced slowly. If the caste have to be eliminated then the concessions should be reduced. Political leaders should act as though there is no caste', he said.

Sarojini Varadappan in her speech said everyone was aware of the fact that the national leaders stood first in the eradication of untouchability by employing Adi Dravidars in their houses. The Government of Tamil Nadu had changed the names of the streets and roads which had caste names. And recently after the caste-violence in the southern districts, it had also changed the names of the Transport Corporations and the names of the Districts. People from one caste should learn to respect people of other castes on humanitarian grounds, she said.

His Holiness Thiru Kundrakudi Ponnambala Adigalar in his speech thanked the Chief Minister for bringing the function to be organised amidst the public, which was usually organised in the Government Offices. He said the history would praise the Chief Minister, Kalaignar, for creating 'Samathuvapuram' so as to enable people of different faiths, and castes to live united.

Archbishop Thiru Arokiasamy, in his address said caste sections are against the Christian principles. He said they will extend their support to the Government in eliminating the evil of castism. He requested that political parties should not go hand in hand with caste organisations.

Thiru Gopalan said a conference on untouchability was held 15 years back in Andhra Pradesh and after that to his knowledge, a conference was being held in Tamil Nadu. He thanked the Chief Minister for organising the conference at the time of need. Lessons had to be taught in schools and the campaign should be started at the younger age itself, he added.

Thiru V. Mullaivendan, Hon'ble Minister for Information and Publicity welcomed the gathering. Samayanallur Thiru S. Selvaraj, Hon'ble Minister for Adi Dravidar Welfare proposed a vote of Thanks.

The entire city of Madurai wore a festive look. Public in large number attended the function. ★

ANNA RENAISSANCE SCHEME



The objective of Anna Renaissance Scheme is to select a village in each Legislative Assembly Constituency, every year and develop it into a modern village with minimum basic facilities such as protected drinking water, primary education, primary health care, nutritious food, housing facilities, link roads and fair price shop.

In Chennai Corporation, one ward from each zone will be identified, and apart from attaining the target in providing basic amenities, implementation of social welfare schemes, improvement of basic health facilities etc. are the basic aim of the scheme. Works will be implemented in this context.

- ★ Management of solid wastes, ensuring safe environment.
- ★ Expansion and improvement of the roads and streets.
- ★ Construction of storm water drains.
- ★ Providing street lights and converting the existing lights to sodium vapour lamps.

- ★ Public health works like, free distribution of medicines, administering vaccinations, implementing welfare schemes for the child and mother, pollution control, etc.
- ★ Primary education and non-formal education schemes to attain the goal of education for all.
- ★ Development of parks and playgrounds.

In commemoration of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence, the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi laid the foundation for the Golden Jubilee Memorial Pillar, at the Rippon Building premises, on 19.8.1997. Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi released a booklet containing the Anna Renaissance Scheme at a plan outlay of Rs.30 crores at a function presided by the Worshipful Mayor of Chennai, Thiru M.K.Stalin and in the presence of the Hon'ble Minister for Local Administration, Thiru Ko.Si.Mani. The Worshipful Mayor received the first copy. Tmt. Chandravada, Deputy Mayor, Thiru Devajothi Jegarajan, IAS, Commissioner, Chennai Corporation, also participated in the function.

SELF HELP PROGRAMME

- ❑ People should come forward to participate in community development programmes.
- ❑ Every citizen should involve in formulating and implementing developmental schemes.
- ❑ Only then the Government be able to assess the needs and problems of the village and redress them.
- ❑ The mass contact programme currently in vogue can be streamlined and the grievances of the public redressed.

With these objectives, the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi had announced the Self Help Programme.

The Mass Contact Programme launched by this Government in 1969, empower various Government officials to visit villages, hear the grievances of the people and solve them. In the Self Help Programme, the basic needs of the villages are fulfilled by harnessing and integrating the human resources of the villages with the

Governmental efforts.

The officials visit the villages in their Jurisdiction and explain the features of various schemes to the people. The villagers should come forward to fulfil their immediate needs. The officials will assist them.

Self Help Programme is not a scheme it is a new approach in fulfilling the basic needs of the people. At times, the essential need of the people may not gain importance with an official. To avert this situation, the Grama Sabha is invited to place their requirements and prioritize them by discussing the needs and problems of the village among themselves and decide on the scheme to be implemented. This is the basic concept of the 'Self Help Programme'.

Hon'ble Chief Minister had announced that Rs.5 crores have been sanctioned for implementing this scheme, while addressing District Collectors during the Collector's Conference.

The Calendar of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence. 8.8.1997 to 18.9.1997



8.8.1997 - Tiruchirappalli

Re-enactment of Salt Yatra at Tiruchirappalli

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and Hon'ble Ministers participated.

9.8.1997 - Chennai

Quit India Movement

March of 5000 students started from three points in the city and converged near Gandhi statue.

Hon'ble Minister for Education and Hon'ble Minister for Information and Publicity participated. Pledge on National Integration administered. 15 freedom fighters who participated in the Quit India Movement were honoured.

Cultural programme on themes such as National Integration, freedom movement were presented by students.

11.8.1997

Farewell to freedom fighters who visited New Delhi to participate in the India March Procession.

Hon'ble Chief Minister and other dignitaries participated. Each freedom fighter was given Rs. 1000 and a set of dress. The freedom fighters were sent off at the Railway Station by Hon'ble Ministers and also received at the Station on their arrival. They were treated as Government Guests and free boarding and lodging provided. Besides, the official medical team also accompanied the team.

14.8.1997 - 6.30 P.M.

Inauguration of the year long celebrations of Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's Independence and State level sports meet.

Her Excellency the Governor, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Ministers, The Worshipful Mayor of Chennai, President of Indian Olympic Association participated. Sports persons from Tamil Nadu who bagged Gold medals in the National Sports Meet were honoured. March past by sports persons, cultural programmes by students, folk songs and patriotic songs were presented. A cultural extravaganza by popular film music directors and play back singers was also organised.

Massive cleaning programme throughout the State.

15.8.1997 - 8.30 A.M.

Unfurling of the National Flag and address to gathering by the Hon'ble Chief Minister at Fort St. George, Chennai.

Fifty freedom fighters were honoured and sweets distributed to poor and handicapped.

15.8.1997 - 10.00 A.M.

A Photo Exhibition was organised by Archaeological Survey of India at Fort St. George, Chennai.

Organised by : A.S.I. Government of India.

15.8.1997 - 5.00 P.M.

A tea party was hosted by Her Excellency the Governor at Raj Bhavan, Chennai.

15.8.1997 - 7.00 P.M.

Cultural Programme at Marina Beach

Function was organised by South Zone Cultural Centre. Her Excellency the Governor and Hon'ble Chief Minister and other dignitaries participated.

To foster communal harmony community feasts were organised at Temples located in Adi-Dravidar colonies or nearby places for 15 days from 15.8.1997 throughout the State. Hon'ble Ministers, Members of the Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, representatives of local bodies, NGOs, religious leaders, freedom fighters and eminent citizens participated in the community feasts.

16.8.1997

Inauguration of All India Artists Camp Painting Exhibition and presentation of Awards to best Artists.

Her Excellency the Governor and Hon'ble Minister for Official Language and Tamil Culture and HR&CE participated.

16.8.1997 - 6.00 P.M.

A symposium on the part played by Tamils in the freedom struggle.

Hon'ble Ministers and eminent speakers including students took part.

17.8.1997

Inauguration of Rail Exhibition at Kanniyakumari.

Organised by the Ministry of Railways. Government had issued direction to District authorities to provide necessary assistance. Hon'ble Ministers participated.

Debate on the progress made by India since Independence was organised in which Hon'ble Ministers and eminent speakers including students participated.

17.8.1997 - 6.00 P.M

Folk Drama

18.8.1997

Music and dance programme presented by young and eminent artistes.

19.8.1997

Felicitation of former Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Members of the Chennai Corporation who participated in the freedom struggle.

Organised by the Corporation of Chennai. Hon'ble Chief Minister and Hon'ble Minister, Mayor of Chennai, Freedom Fighters and eminent citizens of Chennai participated.

23.8.1997 - 10.00 A.M.

*Screening of Films connected with freedom struggle
Name of the Film : Kappalottiya Tamilan*

Free entry for public at Kalaivanar Arangam organised by D.I.P.R.

10.00 A.M.

Workshop for young women

Counselling by legal experts on womens' rights and counselling on self employment for women organised by Social Welfare Department.

6.00 P.M.

Poet Meet on freedom struggle and Independent India.

Organised by the Corporation of Chennai.

24.8.97

Folk dances of Tamil Nadu

Folk dances from various parts of Tamil Nadu performed, Hon'ble Ministers and eminent citizens participated.

26.8.97 -11.00 A.M.

Symposium on the part played by the Press in the Freedom struggle

Hon'ble Minister for Information and Publicity participated. Eminent Journalists who participated in the Freedom Struggle were honoured. Organised by the University of Chennai and Government of Tamil Nadu.

6.00 P.M.

Debate on beautification of Chennai

Organised by Corporation of Chennai

29.8.97

Dance Drama on eminence of Tamil

Organised by the Corporation of Chennai

29.8.97 to 30.8.97

Rural Sports Meet at Madurai

Organised by D.R.D.

31.8.97

*Conference on Eradication of Untouchability,
Human Chain Community feast.*

Human Chain for a stretch of 14 k.m. was organised. Community feast organised in one Hindu Temple, Mosque and Church.

A Conference on Eradication of Untouchability was organised.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Hon'ble Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly, Leaders of political parties, Representatives of Local bodies, students, workers, women organisations, various religious and community leaders, freedom fighters participated in all events.

4.9.97 to 6.9.97

Rail Exhibition at Chennai Central Station.

Six Video Films on Eradication of Untouchability has been produced by Films Division and being telecast in Doordarshan and Cable TVs.

18.9.97

Human Chain at Namakkal at a stretch of 25 k.m.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly, Students, various Political Party Representatives and NGOs participated.

★

Thirukkural, the treasure trove of Tamil, conceived 2000 years ago, is a code of conduct for mankind, translated into more than 60 languages.

"Each Kural is like a mustard seed with a hole drilled in the centre, which holds the seven seas within"

"Each Kural is like an atom, holding the seven seas within"

Thus has Thirukkural been eulogised by Poet Idaikadar and Poetess Avvaiyar respectively.

Valluvar Kottam - the brain-child of Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi

The idea, to construct "Valluvar Kottam" in honour of the great savant Thiruvalluvar, the creator of Thirukkural, was conceived by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi.

The concept conceived by Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi

The whole concept of Valluvar Kottam was designed by Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi - how its structure should be, how it could be made useful and constructed artistically so as to attract people from all over the world. An area of 5 acres of land was selected in Nungambakkam and the foundation stone was laid on 18.9.1974, by Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi.

All through the construction, the Chief Minister, always spared time to visit the Construction Site, despite his hectic schedules, to provide suggestions and improvements. Largely due to his frequent visits the construction work was completed in a record time, by January, 1976.

This marvellous monument was declared open to the public on 15.4.1976 by His Excellency the President of India, Thiru Fakruddin Ali Ahmed at a function presided over by His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru K.K. Shah.

The Entrance

The entrance has been constructed in line with the Dravidian Temple Architecture. Lush green lawns have been grown on either side of the path leading to the main entrance.

Kural Mani madam (Kural Balcony)

All the 1330 Kural verses have been inscribed on polished granite as if on the pages of an open book, in different colours for each of the three divisions of the Kural, viz. Aram, Porul and Inbam.

Veya madam (the Terrace) - Thiruvalluvar Statue

A magnificent statue of Thiruvalluvar decorates the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temple car located on the northern side of the terrace with Valluvar posing with his hand raised pointing three fingers, as if to point to the three divisions of Kural. And it is a marvellous sight to see the reflection of the Canopy, the Kalasam and the statue of Thiruvalluvar in the three water pools artificially constructed on the terrace.

Aranga Mandapam (the Auditorium)

The auditorium, sans pillars, accommodating nearly four thousand people to watch the programmes, is one of

THIRUVALLUVAR - THE CREATOR OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MANKIND

the biggest in Asia.

Paintings of 'Athankottasan' and 'Tholkappiar' - poets of the ancient sangam age, on either side with the painting of the Saint Thiruvalluvar at the centre decorate the stage.

Sirpa Ther (the stone car)

The exquisitely carved temple car, as though transplanted directly from the Thiruvavur temple, is exact replica of the Thiruvavur Temple Car. Two elephants have also been carved on stone giving an impression as if they are pulling the chariot.

At the central portion of the car between the wheel and the marble base where the statue of Thiruvalluvar has been installed, the contents of 133 select verses of the Kural have been given an artistic expression through beautifully carved sculptures.

When Dr. Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi was sworn-in once again as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 27th January 1989, in Valluvar Kottam, the following plaque was laid:



Valluvar Kottam

The Historic Monument 'Valluvar Kottam' is the creation of Dr. Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi, soon after assuming office as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1996, had ordered to renovate the Valluvar Kottam, and accordingly, it was renovated at a cost of Rs.84.94 lakhs.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Dr.S. MUTHULAKSHMI REDDY

Among the builders of modern India, Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy has an honourable place. She has, in a life devoted to the service of others, broken new ground. All along, her main sphere of work has been in helping women and children. She has combined the zeal of the missionary with the personal touch of a loving Indian Mother, the stern demand for equal rights for women with a selfless performance of duty first. She was the Director of the Avvai Home and Orphanage which she founded. She was also the Chairman of the Governing Body of the Cancer Institute, Adyar.



Born in 1886 in Pudukottai, Dr. Mrs. Reddy acquired her early education mostly by private study tutored by her own father Thiru S. Narayanasami. Her mother Tmt. Chandrammal was 16 years only when she was born. Her mother had given birth to eight children but lost four of them all small infants. Young Muthulakshmi went to the Co-educational intermediate College in Pudukkottai and after passing out, joined the Chennai Medical College. She graduated there with honours and medals and received her M.B. & C.M. degree in 1912. Thereafter, for a year she worked as House Surgeon in the Government Maternity Hospital in Chennai and later went to England for Post Graduate study. On her return she started practice and was a specialist in Women's and Children's diseases.

Not satisfying with a successful medical career, she deemed it her duty to contribute her capable share to the women's movement which was getting into its swing in Chennai under the brilliant direction of Dr. Annie Besant. She became a member of the women's Indian Association in 1917 and added power and prestige to its efforts to deal with the system of Devadasis among other problems.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi became the first woman member of the Chennai Legislative Council and sat there from 1926-1930. She was unanimously elected by the council members to officiate as its Deputy President. She took a leading part in the legislative programme of the council and saw to the enactment of two Acts for the abolition of the Devadasi system and for laws to close brothels and protect minor girls. She brought amendments to the children's wards. She was also an active campaigner for the Sarda Act which was passed by the Central Legislature. Dr. Mrs. Reddy also became the first Elder woman of the Chennai City Corporation for two years where she interested herself in begger problems, child-education and child welfare.

On her way from London to India in 1926, she represented India at the Paris Congress of the Women's International Alliance, as a delegate from India. In 1933, again she visited America and attended the International Women's Conference in Chicago. Since Dr. Besant's death, she had become the President of the Women's Indian Association and also of the Chennai Branch of the A.I.W.C. In 1930, she was elected President of the All India Women's Conference.

A deepening crescendo of protest against the very existence of the British in India shook the

whole country and under Mahatma - Gandhi's dynamic leadership, the Civil Disobedience Movement spread from end to end of India. Hundreds of resignations from Government jobs and limbs of Government such as a Legislature took place all over India. Mrs. Reddy resigned her membership of the Legislative Council in 1930 as a protest against the arrest of Gandhiji and devoted herself to the work sponsored by the Indian National Congress, including the propagation of Khadi.

Dr. Mrs. Reddy was felicitated on the recognition accorded to her by the Government of India by conferring on her the title "Padma Bhushan" (1956) at a function held at Rajaji Hall on 24.3.56. Thiru Sri Prakasa, then Governor and Thiru K. Kamaraj, then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu paid tributes to the remarkable and unique personality of Mrs. Reddy.

In 1936 Dr. Mrs. Reddy with her family members settled in Adyar to establish a home for homeless Orphan Children and destitute girls and women. Soon after many of the poor came to them for medical aid and so they opened a free dispensary. That was the early beginnings of the AVVAI RURAL MEDICAL SERVICE. On 18th June, 1943 Dr. Mrs. Reddy lost her husband, Dr. T. Sundara Reddy. They had two sons named Ram Mohan and Krishnamurthy.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, with years of service to the people continued to give her best in her own quiet way. The welfare of women and children claimed first place in her heart. She devoted a vast deal of attention to the running of the AVVAI HOME and ORPHANAGE founded by her in 1930.

At the age of 82, on 22.7.1968 she died in the Adyar Cancer Institute.

VALLIYAMMAI

Valliyammai was born in Thillaiyadi in Tanjore District. She joined school but her education proved failure due to her participation

in the passive resistance launched by Mahatma Gandhi against the British Colonial Government in South Africa. She was very much upset whenever the British Government united its cruelties upon the South African Indians because it was the Indians who settled in Africa toiled very hard and made South Africa a flourishing region.



So far as the South African movement is concerned a large number of women took part, the cause was the British Government's arrogant attack on the sanctity of monogamous Hindu marriages. The Indian women had to lose the status of legal wives, their children would not inherit their parental properties as per the law. The result was that a great rebellion broke out. Against the challenges of the Act Gandhiji started his Satyagraha against the Colonial British Government.

As Valliyammai had been interested in Satyagraha joined the movement, with her mother. On the way the labourers of New Cosil coal mines, joined hands with the Government. Valliyammai was arrested while crossing the boundary with her mother.

Valliyammai had to suffer vigorous imprisonment for three months. Her hardship and suffering in the Maritburg prison were beyond all words, she came out of the prison and even like an old lady. She was proud of dying for the sake of her people.

Whenever Gandhiji talked and though her fact appeared before him Gandhiji called her to console her. The strong words resolution and her sacrifice arrested Gandhiji's mind. He asked her if she was sad at her imprisonment. Valliyammai replied that even then too she was prepared to go to prison. Valliyammai dared even to die for her motherland. These words clearly disclosed her true nationalism, sacrifice and patriotism.

ANNIE BESANT

Annie Besant was born in London on October 1, 1847. Her father was William Page Wood, her mother was Emily Morris. Her father belonged to the medical profession, and while she was still a child, he died on 5 October 1852.



Miss Marryat was greatly attracted to little Annie and offered to Mrs. Wood to take over the education of her little daughter and keep Annie with her.

Annie Wood loved Miss Marryat very much and her gratitude to her was very great. She learnt to speak fluent French. Along with this education Miss Marryat insisted that all her young pupils should interest themselves in social service.

She married Frank Besant, though she had no special love for him. She married in the winter of 1867 and she herself considered that it was a fatal blunder. Two children were born to her a boy, Digby, and a daughter, Mabel. Her married life was not happy because her husband did not understand her at all and demanded complete and unquestioned obedience which was not in her to give. They finally separated in 1873.

In August 1874 Mrs. Besant became a member of the National Secular Society. Later on she became co-editor with Bradlaugh of the "National Reformer" and used her great gift of eloquent expression in the cause of free thought. She became known as Bradlaugh's second-in-command.

Slowly she started to work for social reform in many directions. She was instrumental in helping to start the first trade union in London. Her famous struggle in connection with the amelioration of the working conditions of the girls who worked in match factories is a classical

instance of the early struggles of people who worked for such unpopular things as associations of workers.

She joined the Theosophical Society in May 1889 and became Mme. Blavatsky's devoted pupil and helper. She became a prominent worker in the Society and after the death of Col. Olcott in 1907, she was elected President of the Society, which position she held till her death on 21 September 1933.

She first came to India on 16 November 1893. She landed at Tuticorin and lectured in twelve towns in South India, after which she attended the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar in Chennai. In 1894 she toured North India lecturing in eighteen places. Her lectures were mainly on the Hindu religion and on Indian culture. In 1895 she established her home in Benares and completed her great translation of the 'Bhagvad Gita'. In the year 1898 she established the Central Hindu College at Benares. This became one of the great educational institutions of the time and formed the nucleus of the Benares Hindu University.

In 1907, on her election as President of the Theosophical Society, she made Adyar, Chennai, her permanent home. In October 1913 she spoke at a great public meeting in Chennai recommending that there should be a Standing Committee of the House of Commons for Indian affairs which would go into the question of how India might attain freedom. She founded a weekly newspaper Commonweal in January 1914 for her political work. In June 1914 she purchased the Chennai Standard and renamed it New India, which, thereafter, became her chosen organ for her tempestuous propaganda for India's freedom. She called this freedom "Home Rule" for India. She was a delegate to the Indian National Congress in 1914. Her firm belief was that India should have her freedom but should remain in the British Commonwealth. In 1915, in Bombay, at a meeting called by her, she explained her plan for the establishment of the Home Rule League. In

1916 this work intensified. People eagerly read the 'New India' for news of the progress of the movement and read Dr. Besant's editorials in the paper. The Home Rule League was started on 1 September 1916. She failed in her first effort to persuade Bal Gangadhar Tilak to combine their two movements. In 1916, after she had addressed a meeting at Cuddalore in South India, Lord Pentland, then Governor of Chennai, asked her to leave India. She refused to do so. In June 1917, with G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia, two of her principal workers, she was interned at Ootacamund. Because of the wide protest all over India and abroad, the internment order was withdrawn, and in August 1917 she was made the President of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress.

Gandhiji returned to India and was slowly developing his technique of non-violent non-cooperation. In 1920 Gandhiji launched his campaign of Satyagraha, and at the Congress of 1920 in Lahore, Annie Besant with five others stood against the overwhelming flood of support in favour of Gandhiji's plan.

Her work for education went on steadily. In 1915 she established the National College at Madanpalle in South India. In 1917 she started the Society for the Promotion of National Education. In 1918 the National University was established by her at Adyar in South India. The Chancellor of the University was Rabindranath Tagore, the Vice-Chancellor, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, and the Principal, Dr. G.S. Arundale. She also started a number of schools for boys and girls. In 1925 she delivered the first three Kamala lectures at the Calcutta University.

In 1917 she started the Women's Indian Association to which she gave her powerful support. She was assisted in this by Dr. (Mrs.) Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first woman legislator in India, and by Mrs. Margaret Cousins. In 1924 the Association had 51 branches. In 1927 the first All India Women's Conference was held in Poona and it became a permanent and powerful body.

Her health began to give way very slowly in 1930, and she passed away peacefully on September 21, 1933. She herself desired as her epitaph only the simple words "She tried to follow Truth". Her whole life was a striking vindication of this determination.

LAKSHMI BAI (RANI OF JHANSI)

Rani Lakshmi Bai, daughter of Moropant Balwant Rao Tambe and Bhagirathi Bai, was born at Kashi (Banaras) on 16 November 1835, according to D.B. Parasnis, or possibly in 1827, according to S.N.



Sen. She came of a Karhada Brahmin family of Satara district which had migrated to Kashi in 1819 with its patron Chimnaji Appa, brother of Peshwa Baji Rao II. Her mother died during her infancy and her father shifted to Bithur after the death of his patron. There she grew up in the political atmosphere of the peshwa's household and came in close contact with Nana Sahib, Rao Sahib and Tatya Tope. Her original name was Manikarnika, but she was affectionately called Manu by her parents and Chhabili by the Peshwa, she received traditional education and learnt horse-riding and wielding of small arms. She was beautiful, highly intelligent, energetic and courageous.

After her marriage in 1842 with Maharaja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi, Manikarnika was named Lakshmi Bai. With her father she shifted to Jhansi where her talents blossomed fully. She developed a magnetic personality, high-spirited, resolute and domineering demeanour, generous disposition and administrative skill. Her only male child died in infancy and her husband expired prematurely on 21 November 1853, nominating her as Regent of his adopted son, Damodar Rao, aged five years.

As a widow Lakshmi Bai became deeply religious and led a very simple and austere life. By

efficient administration she endeared herself to her subjects. Lord Dalhousie, however, annexed Jhansi on the plea of lapse on 27 February 1854 despite her remonstrances and resentment. The Rani's resolve not to give up her Jhansi was of no avail. She had to quit the fort palace and retire on a small annual pension of Rs.6,000/- . Her appeals to the Governor-General and the Court of Directors to revoke the decision proved ineffective.

This unhappy treatment drove the Rani to rebellion in 1857. After the massacre of the British at Jokhan Bagh by the sepoys on 8 June and the departure of the Sepoys for Delhi, she assumed the reins of government, and met successfully by force the challenge posed to her authority by an imposter Sadashiva Rao and by the neighbouring pro-British states of Datia, Pihari and Orchha. On being attacked by Sir Huge Rose on 20 March 1858, she offered very stiff resistance for two weeks and ultimately escaped to Kalpi on horseback, with her son tied on her back, to prepare for another encounter in conjunction with Tatyá Tope and Rao Sahib. The combined forces were, however, routed by General Rose at the battles of Poonch and Kalpi. Lakshmi Bai then reached Gwalior and established the Peshwa's authority. At last, when Rose attacked Gwalior, she fought stubbornly to the finish, swords in both hands and the reins of the horse in her mouth, and died a glorious death in the thick of the battle on 16 June. She was cremated in a nearby garden where a memorial was erected after independence in honour of her martyrdom.

By her matchless heroic deeds Rani Lakshmi Bai made a mark in history. General Rose considered her as "the bravest and the best military leader of the rebels". In the Indian freedom struggle she has been compared with the British Boadicea and the French Joan of Arc and remains immortalized in ballads.

RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHI AMMAL

Rukmani Lakshmipathi was born at Chennai

in 1891. She came of a respectable ancient Brahmin family. She was the daughter of H. Srinivasa Rao, a landlord and a member of the Provincial Government Service, and grand daughter of T. Rama Rao, Dewan of Travancore.

She belonged to a family of social reformers deeply interested in women's education. Her father refused to marry her off at an early age and educated her. So she had the benefit of obtaining both traditional and western education, a privilege which was enjoyed by very few girls at that time. Through private tuition at home she learnt Latin and French from a Roman Catholic teacher, one Thambi. She later learnt by herself Hindi and Urdu. She did her Intermediate in the Women's Christian College and graduated from the Presidency College, Chennai.



In her marriage also her family defied all conventions, for hers was an inter-sect marriage. Though a Vaishnavite Brahmin, she married Dr. Achanta Lakshmipathi, a Shaivaite Neogi Brahmin, on 10 December 1910. Her husband was a staunch nationalist and got her also interested in politics.

Before entering politics she was busy with social work and social reform. She was the Secretary of the Bharata Stri Mahamandal, Chennai, and was a prominent member of the Women's INDIAN Association since its inception, she was also the President of the Youth League in Chennai, which was dedicated to social work. She felt very keenly about the social injustice done to women and worked for the amelioration of their condition. Along with the other great social reformers of the time, show as responsible for the passing of social legislation raising the age of marriage, age of consent, etc. She tried to enrol the help of women both to carryout social reforms and in the political struggle.

She attended the 10th International Women's Suffrage Alliance Congress at Paris in June 1926, as a delegate from India. She utilised this opportunity to travel all over Europe and also to visit England where she used every opportunity to do propaganda for India.

She was also one of those few who were worried even then about the growth of population and believed in family-planning, she believed and took a great interest in the debates of the Malthusian League founded in Chennai in 1931.

Her social activities coupled with the influence of her husband and the times in which she lived brought her into politics and the Congress-fold. She was connected with Congress activities much earlier, though she became a Congress member only in 1928.

In politics, Gandhiji, Sarojini Naidu and more locally C. Rajagopalachari influenced her. She did not show any interest in international affairs. She believed that it was "a mere camouflage and a delusion to think of internationalism before strengthening ourselves...from within".

Her activities were spread over the whole of Chennai. A great patriot and an ardent Congress-Woman, she served the Congress as a active member until her death in 1951. She gave up all her jewellery for the Harijan Welfare Fund of Gandhiji. She participated in the Salt Satyagraha in 1931 at Vedaranyam and was sentenced to one year simple imprisonment. The Political Prisoners' Section in the Vellore Women's jail was inaugurated by her. She was arrested in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932 and sentenced to six months imprisonment. In 1935 she was elected to the Chennai Legislative Council on a Congress ticket. In the same year she was made Secretary, Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee and Secretary, All India Swadeshi Exhibition. In 1935-36 she was the Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. In 1936 she presided over the Tamil Nadu Provincial Conference held at Karaikudi. In

1937 she was returned to the Chennai Legislative Assembly and also became a member of the working committee of the Indian National Congress. She was made the Deputy Speaker of the Chennai Legislative Assembly during the first Congress Ministry. At that time she visited Japan as a member of a goodwill mission (1938). In 1940 she took part in the Individual Satyagraha Movement and was sentenced to one year imprisonment. After the war, when the Congress assumed office, she was elected again to the Chennai Legislative Assembly and was made Minister of Health in the Ministry formed by T. Prakasam in 1946. After Independence she continued to be an M.L.A. till her death in 1951.

She served on several local bodies like the Corporation of Chennai and the Chingleput District Board. She also served as an Honorary Presidency Magistrate.

She believed that agricultural prosperity depended upon the well-being of the ryots. She sympathised with the labourers and felt that their condition should be improved.

She was not very religious and was more practical minded. She defied caste rules, employed Harijan servants and encouraged interdining between different communities. She criticised the orthodox Hindus cry religion in danger and appealed to the youth to create a public opinion for the enactment and successful working of social legislation on problems like the castesystem, child marriage, drink, untouchability, devadasi system etc.

Being intensely patriotic she was opposed to regionalism and communalism in any form. She condemned the idea of partition and appealed to the youth not to encourage separatist ideas.

She was very much concerned about education and had certain very decided opinions about it. Initially she had a lot of faith in western education but later on became more interested in primary and basic education. She pleaded for the extension of the Elementary Education Act and

advocated adult education and compulsory female education. For some years she was member of the Senate of the Chennai and Annamalai Universities. During her tour of the western countries, and especially of Japan, she made a study of the educational systems there and wanted India to adopt their good aspects. She said, "India could not rest content with the old system of education...they should evolve a system which would embrace all progressive ideas". She was critical of the British education policy in India which encourage loyalty to a foreign government and foreign ideals. She said, "Western culture, with all its merits, has produced a slave mentality among our youth". She also pleaded for the inclusion of military training in our educational curriculum.

A simple and heroic woman possessing innate courage and a magnanimous nature, she overcame the obstacles of domestic life and won the distinction of being a great social reformer and freedom fighter. An accomplished musician and a forceful speaker, she also occasionally contributed articles to magazines on the freedom struggle and on social problems.

All Congressmen regarded her with respect and affection and called her 'Mummy'. In 1942 when all the Congress leaders were arrested and the Congress was declared unlawful, she as the Acting President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee took the initiative to keep the organisation active. Though the Congress had resigned from office in 1939 on principle, she decided to contest and set up a Congress candidate for a bye-election to the Central Assembly and won the seat for the Congress.

She was one of the great leaders who had sacrificed their whole life to the cause of the nation, working for it unceasingly and unostentatiously and ultimately gaining satisfaction for having obtained the objective.

ARUNA ASAF ALI

Aruna Asaf Ali, a nationalist in her early youth and later a socialist, was born in 1909 in a Bengali

Brahmin family that came from East Bengal and settled in Calcutta. Aruna Ganguli lived with her father (who ran a hotel in Nainital in modern Uttar Pradesh), went to school, attended social functions and



showed little interest in politics. At the age of 19 she became engaged to Asaf Ali, a prominent lawyer and Congress leader of Delhi, twenty years older than herself and married him in 1928 despite her father's vehement opposition. They lived happily and the furore that followed their marriage died down. They have no children. She accompanied her husband to the United States, went to Mexico as a member of the Indian delegation to the UNESCO, and also travelled in the Soviet Union and East European countries.

The marriage with Asaf Ali proved to be a turning-point in her life. Since her husband was active in politics she became drawn into the national movement, met Congress leaders like Gandhi and Azad, and attended political meetings. In her political life she came under the influence of Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and Ram Manohar Lohia, leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, who helped to remould her outlook. Although she did not hold any university degree she was a voracious reader and studied politics, economics and Marxist literature. She became a radical nationalist and an advocate of uncompromising struggle against British rule. She participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930's and went to jail, she courted arrest in 1941 when Gandhi started individual satyagraha against British war effort.

A second turning point in her life came during the August Movement in 1942. Following the arrest of Congress leaders there was an upheaval in the country. Deeply moved by the Anti-British feeling of the people, Aruna went under-ground along with her socialist friends, sought to build up

an underground centre to guide the movement, toured Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi evading police hunt, and made heroic efforts to regroup the forces after the collapse of the movement in 1943. She remained underground till 1946 when the warrant of arrest against her was withdrawn. Meanwhile her revolutionary activities came in for criticism, Gandhi said: "Aruna would rather unite Hindus and Muslims at the barricades than on the constitutional front". In a letter to Abul Kalam Azad, Aruna and Patwardhan defended their activities during the August movement; "We were responsible along with those other colleagues (Congressmen not arrested yet) for setting up an organisation to convey what we believed to be necessary directions to thousands of Congress workers and others who were still out of jail and who were anxious to implement the resolution of 8th August, 1942".

Emerging from underground in 1946, Aruna with the help of a national leader, was elected President of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee in 1947. But her radical views came into conflict with Congress politics in the post-independence period; in fact she could not accept her husband's political views. In 1948 she joined the Socialist Party. Two years later she broke with it and formed the Left Socialist Group, and took an active interest in the trade union movement. In 1955 this group merged with the Communist Party of India, and she became a member of its central committee, and a Vice-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress. In 1958 she left the CPI and remained unattached to any political party. On the morrow of Nehru's death in 1964 she came back to the Congress but ceased to play any active part in politics.

Aruna Asaf Ali has been active in public life for many years. In 1958 she defeated the Jana Sangh candidate and was elected Delhi's first Mayor, and held the office for a second term until April 1959 when she resigned. She has been a leading member of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, All India Peace Council and National Federation of Indian Women. She is associated with the Link

and The Patriot, two left newspapers published from New Delhi.

Aruna Asaf Ali, selfless, sensitive and emotional, charming in her manners, radical in her views, belongs to the heroic age of India's freedom movement. She could not adjust herself with political realities when the heroic age was over and finally chose to live in retirement in New Delhi.

K.P. JANAKI AMMAL

K.P. Janaki Ammal is one of the veteran freedom fighters who had sacrificed her wealth and life for the cause of freedom. She joined in a drama troupe at the age of 12, in 1928 and got herself married



to Gurusamy who was also in the troupe who had intense faith in the Congress, in 1934. Her sweet voice acclaimed her fame.

I.S. Viswanathadas an actor who was well known for his stage performance and patriotic songs, who kindled patriotic feelings in the onlookers mind could not get women artists to be paired with him in his plays since he was a downtrodden by caste. K.P. Janaki Ammal acted along with him in plays. When Viswanathadas stood for the District Board election, K.P. Janaki Ammal paid the deposit money on his behalf by selling her jewels.

She was imprisoned along with her husband for six months of rigorous imprisonment, for indulging in anti war propagation in 1939. She was the first woman to be punished for anti war propaganda in the whole of South India. She came out the imprisonment as an asthma patient. She was imprisoned for her participation in non-cooperation movement in 1940 for one year and in 1943. She was sentenced imprisonment for four years and three months. She joined politics and served first in Congress and then in Communist Party. She was also a MLA. Her

service to humanity speaks volumes - She demised in the year 1992.

M. ANJALAI AMMAL

Anjalai Ammal brought fame to the South Arcot District by her involvement in the freedom struggle. She was imprisoned along with her family members several times, during the freedom struggle. Her



entire family participated in the agitation for the removal of the statue of Neelan. She was imprisoned along with her husband Murugappa Padayatchi. Her eleven year old daughter was also not spared and was given four years term of imprisonment.

She suffered six years imprisonment in 1931 for her participation in Salt Satyagraha; three months imprisonment for participating in an agitation in Cuddalore; six months imprisonment in 1940 for indulging in individual Satyagraha and later eight months and 2 weeks imprisonment in 1941. She had served terms in Cuddalore, Trichy, Vellore and Bellary prisons.

She headed the banned Congress Conference at Chennai and courted arrest along with her women supporters. After India's independence, she had served as the Member of the District Board.

ASALAMBIGAI AMMAL

Asalambigai Ammal was an orator. She had written a book on the freedom struggle 'Gandhi Puranam' with Gandhiji's as the hero written according to ancient custom. Thamizh Thendral Thiru Vi Kalyanasundaranar have written the foreword hailing the work.

Asalambigai wrote and read the welcome address on behalf of the District Women's wing, when Gandhiji visited in 1921.

SARASWATHI PANDURANGAN

She had participated in several agitations organised by the Congress. She was taken imprisonment in 1930 for six months for her participation in Salt Satyagraha and a half year of imprisonment in 1932 and 4 months imprisonment in 1941. Due to her imprisonment, she had sacrificed her 2 year old son and 1½ month old baby. She had voiced for the rights of women and worked hard for it. She served the public by establishing a 'Kanniya Gurukulam'.

VELU AMMAL

Velu Ammal from Thiruvadana of Sivagangai district was imprisoned for 2 years for her participation in the freedom struggle in 1942.

CAPTAIN LAKSHMI

Captain Lakshmi, the daughter of veteran freedom fighter and social worker Tmt. Ammu Swaminathan was a captain in the Nethaji's Indian National Army. She was arrested in the jungles of Burma by the British. Captain Lakshmi, a doctor also a member of Marxist Party continued to serve the public.

PADMASINI AMMAL

Padmasini Ammal had participated in each and every agitations against the British. She encouraged the first two men who went to participate in the agitation from Madurai for the removal of Neelan statue by giving them money after pledging her anclets. She had been taken imprisonment for agitating in front of liquor and textile shops.



She gave away her own land measuring three and a half acres, as gift for Bharathi Ashram established in Moonandipatti Village. She had been imprisoned for a total period of two years and served her term in the Vellore Womens Jail.

A true follower of Gandhian philosophy, Padmasini Ammal spindled thread and encouraged others to do so.

V.K.T. PANGAJATHAMMAL

Pangajathammal had involved herself fully in the freedom struggle along with her husband right from the age of seven, by singing bajans and speaking against the British on the stage. She was imprisoned on several occasions for her participation in agitations against liquor shops and for burning foreign clothes.



LAKSHMI BHARATHI

Lakshmi Bharathi, wife of the Veteran freedom fighter Krishnasamy Bharathi had participated in the freedom struggle. She participated in the non-cooperation movement and was imprisoned in 1933 and 1941 and was a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1937.

PADMAVATHI ASHKER

Ashker was sentenced to 6 weeks imprisonment in 1930 for participating in the Salt Satyagraha and one year imprisonment in 1932. Gandhiji had stayed in their house during his visit.

SAKUNTALA BAI

Sakuntala bai, wife of Govindarao Gurjali, a patriot hailing from Maharashtra, had indulged in service to the people by establishing a charity organisation 'Kruba Ashram' in Thiruvennainallur, providing education and medical care to the poor. She courted arrest in 1930 for participating in Salt Satyagraha. She was imprisoned for 6 months in Vellore Jail for agitating against the British rule in 1932.

She indulged in individual struggle against the British and travelled upto Ward addressing the public and was arrested on several occasions in different places. The Thirukovilur Court

sentenced her for 9 months imprisonment during the August agitation in 1942.

MANJUBASHINI AMMAL

Manjubashini Ammal, an advocate, had worked for the upliftment of women. She had been arrested in 1942 and sentenced to one year imprisonment.

AGILANDATHAMMAL

Agilandathammal wife of Madurai A. Vaidyanatha Iyer had fed the freedom fighters at her house. She was imprisoned for two months for participating in the struggle in 1932 and 1933 and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment in 1941 for indulging in individual Satyagraha.



PARVATHAVARTHINI

Parvathavarthini, wife of the veteran freedom fighter N.M.R. Subraman was arrested for agitation against textile shops in 1932.



KITTOOR CHENNAMMA

'The seed of freedom struggle was first sown by a woman' says a book titled 'Karnataka in freedom struggle'. The struggle of Kittoor Chennamma in 1824 is an event of National importance. Kittoor Chennamma had fought with the British imperialism even a decade before Jansi Rani, being the first freedom fighter.



SANTI GHOSE

Swami Vivekananda once exhorted Indian youths, "Don't's forget, from your very birth you

are destined to be sacrificed at the altar of the Motherland” who knew this message of the Swamiji was one day to find an amazing fulfilment in one of his close relations-his sister’s granddaughter, Santi Ghose, exquisitely beautiful, a singer with a golden voice, Santi, even in her early teens felt herself marked for a life dedicated to the cause of her country’s freedom.

Santi was born in Calcutta on 22 November 1916. Her father Devendranath Ghose, who originally came from Barisal District, was a professor in the Comilla College. His patriotic fervour influenced Santi in her very early age. Once Santi sang at a reception meeting in honour of Sarojini Naidu. After the meeting proud father smilingly blessed his daughter, “Try to be like this great lady in future”, In Santi’s autograph book Bimalprativa Devi, a well-known revolutionary, once wrote, “Be like the Santi of Bankim’s Anandamath”, and Netaji Subhas Chandra wrote, “To preserve the honour of womanhood, take up arms yourselves, Yes mothers”. All these blessings gave added inspiration to the young girl who was preparing herself for the mission that she felt awaited her, when she was a student of the Faizunnesa Girls’ School. She came in contact with the Jugantar Party through her classmate, Prafullanalini Brahma and undertook various kinds of training necessary for a revolutionary worker.

Soon, one day came to her the great call to dedicate her young life at the altar of the Motherland. And unhesitatingly, smilingly and bravely she responded to it. On 14 December 1931, she along with her classmate Suniti shot dead Stevens, the District Magistrate of Comilla. This heroic action of the two young girls thrilled the country from one end to the other. Under the gaze of wonder, admiration and affection of millions of her countrymen, Santi along with Suniti went behind the prison bars with a sentence of life-transportations bidding a lieu to a life of ease, comfort and worldly success that could have been hers for the mere asking. Her worthy mother, Sailabala Ghose, wrote to her in prison, “Darling,

the God of Prahald has put on shackles on your tender young hands. And it is He who will protect you and return you back to my blossom”.

In prison Santi was separated from her comrade Suniti and kept in solitary confinement. For some time it was too much for an exuberant girl of fifteen. But soon she got complete mastery over herself and all those lonely days rather gave her a deep contemplative turn of mind. In the later part of her prison life, she was kept with other political prisoners and to them Santi, with her songs, laughter and infinite fund of sympathy and affection, was a source of great joy.

In 1937, along with many other political prisoners, she got an early release. After her release she continued her studies and in 1942, married Chittaranjan Das, an ex-revolutionary worker of Chittagong. Santi is the mother of two children - a daughter and a son. She continued her political work as a member of the Congress. She was a member of the West Bengal Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly for a long period. She has been connected with various social and educational institutions. Her autobiographical book, “Arunbandhi”, won great appreciation from many.

MATANGINI HAZRA

Matangini Hazra is an unforgettable name in the history of Indian Independence movement. She was associated with the nationalist movement in the District of Midnapore in West Bengal, more specifically Tamluk, the little village-like sub-divisional town near which she lived her life of sacrifice and service to the poor and laid it down in the cause of her country.

Matangini was born in 1870, in a poor peasant family of Hogla, a small village under the Tamluk, Police Station (Midnapore district), Her father was Thakurdas Maity who had two other daughters besides Matangini, but no son.

Matangini came to know of the Independence movement when in 1930 a few young men of her

village joined this movement. There was a volunteers' camp near her hut in 1931. But she had not yet joined the movement.

On 26 January 1932-the twenty-sixth of January came to be known as the Independence Day-after the flag-hoisting ceremony in the morning, a procession was taken out in her village. There was no woman in the procession, only a few girls, blowing conch shells, led it. When the procession came near Matangini's hut, she, an old woman of sixty-two came out, joined the procession and moved with it through the whole union. This was the most memorable day of her life, as she so often said; and the pledge of independence and non-violence that she took that day, she stuck to with undivided and unflagging devotion till the last moment of her life. On this very day she gave up opium, which habit she had formed for her gout under medical advice. It is interesting to note that after this she had no attack of the gout, though she gave up opium and would often travel ten to twelve miles on foot to join Congress meetings in far away villages.

In this year, i.e. 1932, she took an active part in the Salt Campaign, led several processions and was arrested more than once. In every case, in consideration of her age, the police let her off after detention for a few hours. Besides, in this very year she hoisted the National Flag on the Tamluk Court, heavily cordoned by the Police. She was belaboured mercilessly, she fainted, blood came out of her mouth. She was carried in a stretcher to the Congress hospital.

Even after the Congress movement was withdrawn, Matangini's zeal for Congress work remained unabated and she was intimately connected with all the congress activities of Tamluk till her death in 1942. Her eyesight was not good, but she was a regular spinner and would put on nothing but khadi. She was an ardent constructive worker devoting the major part of her life in works which Gandhiji loved most, such as, propagation of Khadi and Village industries, removal of untouchability and bringing

about lasting communal harmony. For her selfless service she was known in the Sub-Division as "Gandhi-Buri"(Old woman).

From what she had heard of Gandhiji from Congress workers she thoroughly absorbed Mahatma's cult of love and non-violence. She would do her best to remove the sufferings of the downtrodden and the distressed. She would often go without food, giving her own food to a beggar. She was specially anxious to help those who had suffered for the cause of the Country. Kumar Jana, President, Midnapore District, Congress Committee and Member, AICC, as also the present contributor had often been guests in her humble hut.

So great was her reverence for Gandhiji and her love for the country that when she fell ill, she took no medicine but drank water hallowed in the name of Gandhiji and said this would cure her. And her faith did cure. She did not care for any illness and would never take any medicine, saying "I shall not die of any disease; I shall die for my country". And it was a glorious sacrifice, indeed.

29 September 1942 was a red-letter day in her history of Tamluk, for it was on this day that five big battalions of non-violent army marched along with the five main roads to Tamluk and went on to capture its Court and Police Station. Matangini was in the biggest of these processions. She wanted to lead the procession; but she could not be granted the permission, for it was against the code of the non-violent army to plant women in the front to march behind them in safety like cowards.

Matangini was disappointed that she would not be able to lead the procession. But like a disciplined soldier, she agreed to do what she was asked to do-only securing for herself the concession that if there was any trouble in the front ranks of the procession in which she was she would be allowed to take the lead.

Strangely enough, a trouble did crop up, when the procession came face to face with the armed

soldiers near the courts, on the bank of Banapurkur (a tank). The soldiers cried 'Halt' and aimed their guns with fixed bayonets at the front rank. The ordinary villagers who pushed their way to the front got nervous, and did not know what to do. There was a little confusion in the procession.

Matangini saw her chance. The desired moment had arrived in her life. She pushed forward from her position in the middle and took the lead with the National Flag in hand - like 'Mother India' incarnate-and addressed the congress army.

"Ye, sons of Midnapore" she cried, "waver not, falter not, Midnapore expects her children to do their duty. You are her brave children. Show not any cowardice and make her hang her head in shame. Onward, my fellow-fighters, remember the words of our Commander-in-Chief, Mahatma Gandhi-do or die".

Matangini had never delivered any lecture before; but this address electrified the assembly. The broken ranks soon came to order and the army with Matangini as its head marched on "Halt", cried the soldiers and aimed their guns at her. She cared not. "Halt, if you don't want to die" cried the soldiers. Matangini replied, "Bande Mataram" and marched on.

Bang went the gun. They had shot Matangini in her leg. She limped but still went forward-the tricolour held high in her hand. Another shot-bang. She was hit in her hand. The hand fell limp. She still held the flag aloft with one hand and pressed forward still, with "Bande Mataram" on her lips. Boom-boom this time it was the forehead and she fell dead on the ground, her face upwards. The Tricolour-the symbol of the aspiration of Mother India-was still held high in her hand. "Do or die"-she obeyed her Master.

UNNAVA LAKSHMIBAYAMMA

Lakshmiyamma Unnava was born in 1882 in Ameenabad, a village in Sathernapalli taluk of

Guntur district (now in Andhra Pradesh), in a middle-class Niyogi Brahmin family. She was the last and fourth child of Nadimipalli Seetharamayya and Lakshamma.

At the age of 10, at her own choice, she was married to Unnava Lakshminarayana. This was really an ideal marriage. She married not merely the person but also his social and political ideologies. From the day of her marriage she accepted cheerfully whatever he said and did. She acted as a mouthpiece of her husband. In her, one could see Lakshminarayana, the novelist, the writer and the philosopher. All his ideas were transformed into public speeches by her. Next to her husband, Gandhiji made a deep impact on her which turned the 'rebel' in her into a 'revolutionary'. Among the others that influenced her were Duvvuri Subbayamma, Ponka Kanakamma and Yaminipurna Thilakam with whom she worked in close association during the Non-cooperation, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movements.

Towards the end of her life she became stern and whimsical and even went mad when the institution 'Saradaniketanam' was threatened with a severe financial crisis. She never knew failure in life. At a time, when she and her husband were expelled from society and prohibited from all kinds of social and religious functions, she displayed unusual courage and withstood the onslaught.

She was god-fearing but not orthodox. She zealously worked for the revival of Hindu religion and culture, but she was not opposed to other religions. She evinced keen interest in cottage industries, khadi, eradication of untouchability and uplift of Harijans, though her main fields of activity were social reforms like widow-marriage, women's education and political freedom.

The year 1910, 1911 and 1921 marked significant stages in the development of her public career; the first when she carved out a footing by undertaking social reform activity like widow-

marriage; the second when she entered politics at provincial level by joining the movement for a separate Andhra Province, and the third when she rose to the level of national politics by entering the Non-cooperation Movement. Between 1911 and 1942 she was arrested altogether six times. In 1921, 1930 and 1942, for participating in the Non-Cooperation Salt-Satyagraha and Quit India Movements, she was sentenced to long periods of imprisonment.

Soon after her release from jail she found Saradaniketanam a residential school for women, at Guntur in 1923. The Niketan was shifted to its present premises in Brodipet, Guntur. The land was donated by the Raja of Muthyala and the buildings were raised with the donations given by Kasinathathuni Nageswararao Pantulu.

Primary importance was given to the study of Sanskrit, Telugu and Hindi in the traditional methods and to the learning of crafts like weaving, tape-weaving, cane-weaving, plying of charkha and wheel, crocheting, embroidery, drawing, painting and music. The school conferred its own degrees, viz. 'sahiti' and 'vidushi'. Though English was not introduced in the beginning, classes were opened later on to meet public demand. In the thirties the school prepared students for the Vidwan Oriental Degree of the Chennai University. In 1944 it obtained affiliation from the Andhra University.

Lakshmbayamma was equally active in the political field also.

In 1922, 1930 and 1942, she toured the whole of Andhra region and gave hundreds of public lectures exhorting the people to join the freedom struggle. At the time of the Quit India Movement, she made a memorable speech in the Nellore Town Hall. After Independence she retired from politics. She just remained a guardian and Trustee of Saradaniketan.

She deserves a worthy place as a great woman leader in Andhra. The inmates of the Saradaniketan still cherish her sweet memories.

She was a great patriot, wore Khadi throughout and strictly adhered to Gandhian principle. She died in 1956 after a long illness.

S. AMBUJAMMAL

Only daughter of Ranganakiammal and S. Srinivasa Iyengar, a prominent lawyer and a reputed Congress leader of Chennai, Ambujammal was born on 8 January 1899. The family originally came from the Ramnad district. Being orthodox she was educated only at home. An Anglo-Indian lady teacher taught her English, drawing, stitching and embroidery. She also learnt music and is a good veena player. She was married at a very early age, in May 1910, to S. Desikachari, an advocate of Kumbhakonam belonging to a middle-class landlord family.



Very early in life, besides her parents and her aunt Janammal, she was very much influenced by Gandhiji. She was greatly attracted by his constructive economic and social programme. In her later life she was influenced by Sister Subbalakshmi, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi and Mrs. Margaret Cousins who were mainly responsible in getting her interested in social service. Among the books that influenced her were Valmiki and Tulasi Ramayana, Vivekananda's Lectures, especially on Bhakti Yoga, and Tilak's Karma Yoga.

Prior to her entry into national service in 1930, she had obtained teacher's training and was working in the Sarada Vidyalaya as a part-time teacher. From 1929 to 1936 as a Committee Member of Sarada Ladies' Union, she worked under Sister Subbalakshmi. In 1929 she became Treasurer of Women's Swadeshi League, Chennai, and continued in that office till the abolition of the League. The League was a non-political organisation but was a wing of the Congress, implementing only Gandhiji's social

and economic programme. In 1930 she joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and courted arrest.

In 1932, nominated by the Congress as the "Third Dictator", she led the Satyagrahis in the foreign cloth boycott and was arrested and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment.

In 1936 she became the Secretary of the Mylapore Ladies' Club, where she conducted Hindi classes. From 1939 to 1942 she was the Secretary, and from 1939 to 1947 the Treasurer of Women's Indian Association. During this time she actively worked for the abolition of child marriage, polygamy, devadasi system and for bringing about legislation for protecting women's property rights. On behalf of this Association she was nominated as a member of the Chennai Corporation. In 1947 she was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of All-India Women's Conference held at Chennai. From 1948 she has been serving as the President and Treasurer of Srinivasa Gandhi Nilayam. In 1956 she participated in the Padayatra of Tamil Nadu along with Vinobha Bhave to popularise the Bhoodan Movement. From 1957 to 1962 she was Vice-President, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee; and from 1957 to 1964 Chairman, State Social Welfare Board.

She is a very good and eloquent speaker both in Tamil and Hindi. Author of great repute, she has contributed articles in Tamil magazines on women's upliftment and education, Gandhiji and national movement. She has also several Tamil publications to her credit, 'Tulasi Ramayanam', 'Gandhi Ninaivu Malai', 'M.K. Gandhi' and 'Reminiscences of My Father'.

She donated all her jewellery for the national movement, which was utilised by Gandhiji for the support of the Mahilashram in Wardha.

Although coming from an orthodox family, she holds liberal views on caste-system, untouchability, status of women, etc.

In the economic sphere she believes in Vinobha Bhave's Village Programme based on self-sufficiency as the ideal method which would make India economically self-sufficient and independent. She does not favour too much industrialisation.

A loyal and true devotee of Gandhiji, her greatest tribute to his memory is her founding of the Srinivasa Gandhi Nilayam in 1948. This school is a branch of the Women's Indian Association. It provides free coaching to poor girls and runs a free dispensary. It has also a printing press, an envelope-making unit and a co-operative society which provide training and employment to poor women.

KAMALA DAS GUPTA

Kamala Das Gupta, a brilliant luminary in the galaxy of women revolutionaries of Bengal, was born in a respectable Vaidya family of Vikrampur in the district of Dacca on 11 March 1907. Her father Surendra Nath Das Gupta was a scholar and a journalist.

He was very simple in his habits, his motto being 'plain-living and high thinking'. Kamala Das Gupta inherited these noble traits from her father. Kamala was the first born among five sisters and three brothers.

There was no conflict whatsoever with her parents till Kamala became a graduate of the Calcutta University and joined the M.A. class of the Calcutta University in History in 1929. But soon the rebel in her flared up and she took a vow to dedicate her life for the emancipation of the country. She was then a staunch Gandhite. She believed that Gandhiji's non-violent non-co-

operation movement would succeed in winning freedom. She wanted to join the Sabarmati Ashram to prepare herself for the coming struggle, but her parents did not agree. She then proceeded on with her studies in the M.A. class. Through some of her friends and class-mates she came in touch with some prominent revolutionaries who had no faith in the efficacy of Gandhiji's movement and firmly held that the freedom of the country could not be won without a bloody revolution.

She was soon converted to the cult of armed revolution and joined the Jugantar Party.

After her initiation in the revolutionary doctrine she plunged headlong into the secret activities of the party. Finding difficulty in her own house for this sort of work, she left it in 1930 and became a manageress of a hotel for poor women. In the store room of the hotel she secretly kept bombs and dispersed them according to the instructions of the party. In September 1930 she was arrested in connection with the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case but was released for want of evidence. She then took up a teaching job in a girls' school. In 1932 she helped Bina Das (Bhowmik), a member of another secret organisation, with a revolver for shooting at the Governor of Bengal, Sir Stanley Jackson, at the University Convocation. Kamala was also arrested in this case but was released for want of evidence against her. In March 1933 she was arrested again under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and was lodged in the Presidency and Hijli jails as a detenu. She was home-interned in 1936. During her long and varied prison life she had the opportunity of coming into close contact with many women revolutionaries. She also recruited some girls for revolutionary activities; one of them was Subhasini Ganguly, an accused in the Titagarh Conspiracy Case.

Kamala also joined the Congress, and since then she has been a sincere and devoted worker of the Congress. She became Secretary of the Women's Subcommittee of the B.P.C.C. in 1941 and started many Women's organisations in Calcutta and villages. In 1942 she joined the "Quit India" movement and toured many villages in the districts of Jessore, Khulna and Barisal. She was arrested in August 1942 and imprisoned in the Presidency Jail. She undertook many social and educational enterprises, two of such were vocational training-cum-production centres for women known as Congress Mahila Silpa Kendra and Dakshineswar Nari Swabalambi Sadan. The object of both the organisations was to provide destitute women with honourable means of living and to make them self-reliant.

In the field of journalism and literature also, Kamala had made her mark. For several years she edited with great ability a monthly journal in Bengali, the 'Mandira'. Her 'Rakter Akshare' and 'Swadhinnata Sangrame Nari' have earned a permanent place for her in the field of biographical literature. She had also contributed many articles in various journals and newspapers.

RAMA DEVI

Rama Devi, the Grand Old Lady of Orissa, was born on 3 December 1899 at Banka Bazar in Cuttack Town. Her father, Gopal Ballav Das, was a Deputy Magistrate and her mother, Basanta Kumari Devi, was a pious lady. Rama Devi hailed from a very well-to-do family, maintaining a high social status.

Rama Devi was married at the age of fourteen, in 1914, to Gopabandhu Choudhury, who was then working as a Deputy Magistrate.

Gopabandhu Choudhury was a true patriot. He did not hesitate to give up the coveted Government service when Mahatma Gandhi gave

the clarion call to all Government servants to give up their jobs and to join the Non-Cooperation Movement. In course of time, Gopabandhu Choudhury emerged as one of the most trusted and sincere followers of Mahatma Gandhi.

It was Gopabandhu who inspired his noble wife to work wholeheartedly for the national cause. Rama Devi was ever present by the side of her husband in all his activities. Through her husband she came into close contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Thakkar Bapa, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya J.B. Kripalani and C.F. Andrews. She had also close personal relationship with Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Shusila Pai and Annie Besant. In her later life she came under the influence of Vinoba Bhave with whom she had worked for many years. Besides these personalities, she was also influenced and inspired by the sayings and writings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindara Nath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and also by the biographies of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Napoleon.

Though she herself belonged to a very respectable 'Karan' family, she did not hesitate to work with the 'Harijans'. She was in favour of widow remarriage and denounced child marriage. She advocated equal status for men and women. She was a Hindu in her religious convictions, but she strongly believed in the harmony of all religions. Though not against western education, she favoured a system of national education, especially the basic model. Her attitude towards nationalism was determined by the Gandhian ideal of non-violent struggle.

With her renowned husband, she jumped into the freedom struggle and dedicated herself to the service of the nation. During the Civil

Disobedience Movement when the top leaders were imprisoned, Rama Devi acted as the 'Dictator' of the Orissa Congress. She was a member of the Provincial Congress Committee from 1930 to 1934. During that period she was also a member of the All India Congress Committee. During the 'Quit India' Movement, Rama Devi courted imprisonment in 1942 and was released in 1944. She inspired many women in Orissa to take part in the national movement.

Especially she dedicated herself to the cause of the 'Harijans', the 'Adivasis' and women. She was the Secretary of the 'Pradeshika Harijan Sangha' from 1932 to 1935, and even now she is associated with the various schemes for their development. She has established a large number of 'Mahila Sanghas' in different parts of Orissa in order to improve the status of women in various ways. A famous maternity centre, named 'Kasturba Nari Mangal Kendra', was established at Cuttack by her initiative in 1945. She was also associated with her husband in the foundation of some 'Ashramas' devoted to the service of the down-trodden class. The most famous of them are 'Alakashrama' in Jagatsinghpur in the district of Cuttack and 'Bari' Ashrama in the same district.

She was one of the Trustees of 'Nikhil Bharat Charkha Sangha' and always took an active interest in the development of the khadi and village industries in Orissa. In times of natural calamities like flood, drought etc., Rama Devi had always been in the forefront of relief operations. She started a number of 'Seva Sanghas' in different parts of Orissa, and her name had become a household word for social service throughout the State.

After independence, Rama Devi had withdrawn herself from active politics, thus

avoiding all power-politics in the State, and had concentrated wholly on social service. She was held in the highest esteem by all sections of the people. In the fitness of things, her name had been perpetuated in the Women's College (Rama Devi Women's College) in Bhubaneswar.

URMILA DEVI

Urmila Devi, sister of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, was born at Telirbagh in Dacca on 3 February 1883, in an upper middle class Hindu Vaidya family. Her father Bhuban Mohan Das was an eminent lawyer and solicitor.

Teenage found her married to Ananta Narayan Sen and burdened with the social and family duties of a wife and mother.

She closely followed the fast-changing political scene of Bengal right from the days of the Swadeshi movement. In the twenties her brother's house was the hub and centre of Calcutta, and here she came into contact with people of various shades and opinions, which was an education by itself. Among those she met here, she felt most powerfully attracted to the quiet-spoken Mahatma Gandhi, for whom religion and politics were one and the same.

In 1920 Gandhiji gave the call for non-violent non-cooperation. Her husband's death occurred the same year.

From 1921, when she joined the non co-operation movement, till 1933, when at Gandhiji's behest she toured South India to promote eradication of the evil of untouchability, she remained a close adherent of Gandhiji. Even her brother's shortlived estrangement from the Mahatma could not interfere with her strong loyalty to Gandhiji.

Urmila Devi was among the first batch of women in Bengal to have defied the ban of selling Khadi during the non-cooperation movement. It was while calling for a hartal to be observed on 24 December 1921, on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales in India, that she was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. On her release, she organized the Nari Karma Mandir to act as the women's wing of the non-cooperation movement and also to undertake the work of national reconstruction. The association was banned as an unlawful organisation soon after it was started. In 1926 she toured all over India accompanying the Congress President, Sarojini Naidu. In 1930 she setup her Nari Satyagraha Samiti for picketing in front of shops dealing with foreign cloth. The Samiti was banned soon after for the offence of organising a mammoth procession, in defiance of the Government order, on the occasion of Deshabandhu's birth-anniversary, and Urmila Devi was sentenced to six months imprisonment. On her release in 1931, she vehemently upheld the right of the detenues for being represented on the Commission of Enquiry set up in connection with the Hijli outrage, and was arrested once again for presiding over a conference held in Howrah district in that connection. Later, she was placed under house-arrest on two occasions and was bound over for defying the order both the times.

She went to South India in 1933 on Gandhiji's Harijan mission, and, while there, succeeded in throwing open a temple in Malabar to the untouchables. In 1946, worn-out as she was physically, she unhesitatingly attached herself to Gandhiji's party when he toured Noakhali in his peace mission.

The old campaigner was laid to rest on 10 May 1956.

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PURE
silk

PURE
zari
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Royal purples...
daring reds...
bright yellows...
exquisite silks
in almost every
imaginable hue.
From Co-optex.
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VALLUVAR KOTTAM