

**I. MAYANDI BHARATI** (Tamilnadu)  
(Independent, Freedom fighter, INTUC, AITUC)

Biographical note

He is 88 year-old, hailing from a rich family which owned nlarge estate and also a cinema in Madurai. Now he has lost all the property.

He participated in the civil disobedience movement in the 1930s. He was active in the Congress-led movements including foreign cloth boycott, and was lathicharged. In 1940 he took part in the War boycott. Participated in the 1942 movement.

His trade union life began in 1940 itself when he began working among the workers of the RV Mills with 10000 workers. The conditions were very bad. The women workers moved about with ghost like faces. Conspiracy cases were instituted against the workers by the British govt for “advocating Bolshevik form of government”.

He came in contact with the leading figures of the nationalist, communist and trade union movement like Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya, SV Ghate, AKG, Nagi Reddy and others.

He participated in the great movement in 1969 when 42 HARijans were burnt to death. A big movement broke out and he violated Section 144.

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### Transcriptive note

(The interview was conducted in the Duke Hotel in Madurai on 16 March 2005. The respondent is of advanced age, and considering this, he was quite clear in his ideas, providing lots of facts. His attitude exuded complete loyalty to the nationalist traditions. His narration was interesting. Krishna Jha, Anil Rajimwale.)

I am 88 years old, we had large property, but all that we have lost including a cinema hall.

I participated in the civil disobedience movement of the '30s and was lathicharged. My brother took part in the Vedarayam Salt Satyagraha of 1930. I was closely associated with the CONgress movement. I visited the house of NMR Subramaniam, the 'Madurai Gandhi' when I was 4th standard student. He gave all his property to the poor, and his bungalow he gave to the Union for one rupee rent. He was my guru. I used to go to Jatin Das Memorial Hall and Lala Lajpat Rai Reading Room, where Nehru and others used to come too.

I participated in the War boycott and delivered a speech on the occasion, appealing to the people not to give money, support and people to the British War efforts. I was arrested, and when asked I replied that Madurai was father's property and India was grandfather's property! I was released from the Coimbatore Central Jail but was arrested at the gate itself and sent to the Vellore jail. I met prominent nationalist and workingclass leaders like Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya, SV Ghate, AKG Nagi Reddy and many others. I was servant of these great leaders and I am not a leader.

I was released in July 1942 and took part immediately in the '42 movement. I was sent to so many jails and was released in 1944. I was in the jails again through the late 40s and early 50s.

My trade union life begins in 1940 itself with the RV Mills. It had more than 10 000 workers including 5000 women. They really lived and worked in very bad and inhuman conditions. The women went about with faces of ghosts when they came out of the work covered with cotton threads. There was no place to sit and eat. They came with children and there was no place to keep those children. They would sit on the road itself. They ate liquid rice some days old with pickles. They got only 18/- per month. There was no other work. They got a pair of dress and that was all for a year. They all lived in tattered huts. Really it was so bad.

In 1940 the British instituted conspiracy cases against the workers, the leading force of the movement. The workers picketed and blockaded. They were accused of "advocating Bolshevik form of government".

All sorts of prominent people met me including Balasingham of Ceylon, the trotskyites, MN Roy and others, which helped in the workingclass movement.

It was a very active life for the common people and the workers. I met and worked with Jeevanadam, PR and others in TUs.