

# *Potti Sriramulu*

## *Rohit Basavaraju, (13 years)*

Liberty, freedom and justice this is what all people on this planet want and deserve, regardless of one's origin and past deeds. All people seeking refuge upon earth need to be free. Not all people share this view which may seem simple for you and me to understand, but which these "others" cannot even begin to fathom.

Against these dictators or tyrants few will stand up to the challenge of liberating their fellow men. Luckily there are men and women who do have the capability to uplift a nation from the iron-fist of another. Lucky for Andhra and for all who inhabit it, that there was Potti Sriramulu...

He was born on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1901 in house no. 165, Annapillai Street, Chennai. He studied in Madras until the age of 20. Later, he studied Sanitary Engineering in the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute in Bombay. After the death of his wife in 1927 when he was only 25, he was devastated and resigned from his job. He left his property for his brothers and mother and joined as a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian struggle for freedom against the British.

Potti Sriramulu was an avid participant in the Indian Independence Movement. He took part in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha and the Quit India campaign, and was imprisoned three times merely for protecting his motherland. When our country of India finally won its independence from the British in 1947, he went on to fight for another noble cause...

In an effort to create an individual state for us Telugu people (we were currently part of the State of Madras, despite having our own rich culture and extensive history), he attempted to force the government to listen to public demands for the creation of Andhra state based on linguistic and not to mention pure cultural lines. He went on a lengthy fast for the formation of our own state during 1952 in Chennai, and only stopped when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru promised to support its creation. However, there was no movement on the issue for a long time. He continued fasting again for the formation of an independent Telugu state. It started off without much avail but steadily caught people's imagination despite the disapproval of the fast by the Andhra Congress committee. The government however did not make a clear statement about the formation of a new state despite several strikes and demonstrations by us the Telugu people.

On the midnight of 15th December 1952, Potti Sriramulu passed away and laid down his life trying to achieve his objective! In his death procession, people shouted slogans praising his sacrifice. When the procession reached Mount Road, Madras; thousands of people joined and raised slogans hailing Sriramulu. On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the Prime minister: Jawaharlal Nehru made an announcement about formation of a separate state from Madras, our very own Andhra. On October 1<sup>st</sup> 1953, the state of Andhra Pradesh was established! On November 1, 1956, Andhra Pradesh was formed with Hyderabad as its capital.

If it were not for Potti Sriramulu perhaps it is safe to say that India would be nothing like it is today and Andhra Pradesh would never have been created. On behalf of all of our Telugu population I thank you Potti Sriramulu, for giving your life, so we may have... liberty, justice and freedom!