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Contents

	<i>List of Tables Maps, Figures</i>	xiv
	<i>Preface</i>	xvii
	Acknowledgements	xx
	Contributors	xxii
1	Transition B. KESAVA NARAYANA	1
Political History, Administration & Economy		
2	Administration in Andhra ARAVIND KUMAR	15
3	Land Revenue Administration in Hyderabad State V. RAMA KRISHNA REDDY	20
4	Awakening in Hyderabad State: Salar Jung Reforms H.RAJENDRA PRASAD	35
5	Agriculture and Irrigation THANGELLAPALLI VIJAY KUMAR	55
6	Growth of Industries in Andhra MOVVA SRINIVASA REDDY	72
7	Industrial Development in Hyderabad State MOVVA SRINIVASA REDDY	84
8	Self-Assertion Movement of Telugu People in Telangana Y.SUDERSANA RAO	96
9	Andhra Jana Sangham and Its Contribution ARAVIND KUMAR	110
10	Rise and Growth of Political Consciousness in Andhra till 1905 I. DOSAGIRI RAO	121
11	Swadeshi Movement, 1905-1911 A. MARESWARA RAO	141

12	Home Rule Movement B.R. PRASAD REDDY	160
13	Theosophical Movement CHAGANTI ANTHONY	177
14	Non-Cooperation Movement in Andhra, 1920-22 A.R. RAMACHANDRA REDDY & K GAJENDRA REDDY	195
15	Nationalist Politics in Andhra, 1922-1929 P SIVA SANKARA REDDY	217
16	Civil Disobedience Movement in Andhra, 1930-1934 P. SIVA SANKARA REDDY	233
17	National Movement in Hyderabad State, 1920-1948 S. ANJIAH	258
18	Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, 1940-1948 M. A. MOID & A. SUNEETHA	278
19	First Congress Ministry in Madras Presidency, 1937-1939 TALLAPRAGADA SATYANARAYANA MURTHY	296
20	Quit India Movement 1942-1944 CH. MUTYALAYYA NAIDU	314
21	Post-Quit India Movement CH. MUTYALAYYA NAIDU	334
22	Role of Women in National Movement K. JANAKI	347
23	Non-Brahmin Movement K. C. SURI & N. ANJIAH	365
24	Kisan Movement in Hyderabad State SARAMPALLI MALLA REDDY	385
25	Peasant Movement and Struggles in Andhra G. VENKATESWAR RAO & KOLLI NAGESWARA RAO	396
26	Telangana Peasant Struggle, 1940-1956 INUKONDA TIRUMALI	419
27	Socialist Movement M. MADHAVA RAO, A. V. K. CHAITANYA & RAVELA SOMAIAH	432

28	Communist Movement in Andhra T. LAKSHMINARAYANA	443
29	Communist Movement in Telangana KANDIMALLA PRATAP REDDY	460
30	Student Movement in Andhra T. LAKSHMINARAYANA	472
31	All Hyderabad Student's Union, 1939-1956 T. LAKSHMINARAYANA	490
32	Trade Union Movement in Hyderabad State T. LAKSHMINARAYANA	505
33	Trade Union Movement in Andhra and Rayalaseema T. LAKSHMINARAYANA	520
34	Formation of Andhra State, 1953 P. KRISHNAMOORTHY	538
35	Emergence of Andhra Pradesh, 1953-1956 P. KRISHNAMOORTHY	558

Society, Culture & Art

36	Christian Missionary Activities JOLEPALYAM MANGAMMA	577
37	Growth Of Education in Hyderabad State ARAVIND KUMAR	592
38	Arya Samaj in Hyderabad State ARAVIND KUMAR	605
39	Brahmo Samaj Movement V. RAMAKRISHNA	613
40	Adi-Hindu Movement in Andhra ADAPA SATYANARAYANA	621
41	Adi-Hindu Movement in Hyderabad State E. SUDHA RANI	638
42	Social Reform in Andhra : Women, Education, Marriage V. LALITHA	651
43	Purity and Anti-Nautch Movement K.H.S.S. SUNDER	667

44	Evolution of Kuchipudi Dance JONNALAGADDA ANURADHA	679
45	Theatre Movement PEDDI RAMA RAO	689
46	Popular Culture Movement V. RAMAKRISHNA	702
47	Development of Art B. SUDHA REDDY	710
48	Cinema Industry A. MARESWARA RAO	725
49	Tribes in Andhra Pradesh	
	A. Banjaras V. Lalitha	739
	B. Chenchus V. Lalitha	748
	C. Gonds P. Venkata Rao	755
	D. Kolamis V. Lalitha	767
	E. Konda Reddis V. Lalitha	776
	F. Koyas V. Lalitha	785
	G. Savaras V. Lalitha	796
	H. Yanadis V. Lalitha	809
	I. Yerukalas and Ex-Criminal Tribes Malli Gandhi	818

Revolts

Medicine

50	Rampa Rebellion, 1922-1924 P. KRISHNA MOORTHY	829
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51	Tribal Revolts in Hyderabad State N. VENUGOPAL	842
52	Revival of Ayurveda Medicine P.V. RANGANAYAKULU	853
53	Medicine and Health Services in Hyderabad State N. PURENDRA PRASAD	868

Language & Literature

54	Telugu Journals in Andhra GOPARAJU NARAYANA RAO	885
55	Telugu Journals in Hyderabad State GOPARAJU NARAYANA RAO	903
56	Urdu Journalism in Hyderabad M. A. MAZID	911
57	Library Movement in Telangana A.A.N. RAJU	919
58	Library Movement in Andhra VELAGA VENKATAPPAYYA	935
59	Telugu Language and Literature, 1858-1905 P. GOPICHAND	951
60	Nationalist Literature in Telugu VELUDANDA NITYANANDA RAO	965
61	Romantic Movement in Telugu Literature C. MRUNALINI	977
62	Progressive Literary Movement S.V. SATYANARAYANA	989
63	Literature of Social Reform Movements KATYAYANI VIDMAHE	1003
64	Dalit Literature in Telugu, 1900-1950 BANNA AILAI AH	1012
	Glossary	1020
	Index	1031

CHAPTER ONE

Transition

B Kesava Narayana

The year 1858 marks the beginning of many new changes in the public life of Indians. It divided two eras almost of equal duration and each one different from the other in terms of goals and achievements. Two crucial decisions immediately followed. First, the first phase of colonial rule was ended by breaking up the rule of the English East India Company (EEIC) which did not do much by way of development. Second, in the place of the English private company a new beginning with parliamentary control was brought into play. During this phase the imperialist nature of colonial rule basically remained unchanged. Nevertheless, the policy of safeguarding colonial vested interests was accompanied by a slew of progressive reforms to bring about changes in different aspects of public life. Indeed, this was an indication of the metamorphosis in the outlook of alien rulers and the spirit in which the administration of India was conducted. Under new leadership the attitude of native people too underwent a perceptible change towards the policies of colonial dispensation, and a new awakening was beginning to dawn in the country, setting new dimensions to the aspirations of not just a few but every section of people.

Obviously, the events of 1857 triggered the changes in the attitudes of the rulers and the ruled. Unlike in North India popular discontent in the Andhra districts (coastal and rayalaseema) which were directly under the English Company's rule, and the Nizam's dominions, a native Muslim State, was evidently at a low pitch. However, the 1857 revolt served as a catalyst. The fate of the English Company which had established its rule in India over the preceding nearly a century was sealed. Its place was assumed by the British Crown. This transition from a purely private, profit-oriented and commercial system of the pre-1858 Company's rule to the rule by the Crown was swift and bloodless. The crucial difference between them lay in their policies and administrative schemes implemented in the region. While the Company's rule concentrated on earning profits by pursuing policies without any regard to the welfare of people and neglected developmental schemes,