

Vol 2 Issue 7 April 2013

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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COMRADE S. A. DANGE'S ROLE IN INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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Abstract:

Maharashtra is among the states that have along and glorious legacy of the communist movement. It goes back to the struggle for independence against British imperialism. A large number of communist, as well as workers and peasant owing allegiance to the communist party, have been martyred in this Indian freedom struggle.

This movement commenced in the decade of the 1920 with the massive strikes and other militant struggles of the textile workers of Mumbai, under the red flag of the famous Girni Kamgar Union. Which was led by the communist leaders Co. S. A. Dange was one of the most important leader. One of the most memorable of these strikes was six months strike of textile workers in 1928. It was as a result of these bitter class struggles that the working class of Mumbai was comrades and Co. Shripad Amrut Dange among the legendary first generation leader of the working class and others were B. T. Randive, S. S. Mirajkar and many others. Co. Dange worked along with prominent congress leader Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, and Jawaharlal Nehru in Indian Freedom struggle. After post independence Dange played very important role in modern Indian politics. He supported Indira Gandhi and her emergency policy. Dange contributed for the nation hence he was a great leader of the India.

INTRODUCTION:-

Co. Dange was born on 10th Oct. 1899. His native place was Karanjgaon in Nipad taluka of Nashik district. Dange was drawn in to active political by the favor of nationalist movement against the British rule. 'He inspired by Lokmanya Tilak at the age of 6th years in Mumbai.' Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a veteran leader of Indian nation Congress from Maharashtra, the earliest proponent of Swarajya. Complete Independence' greatly inspired young Dange. When Tilak come to India Dange was close to him. Tilak appealed to the workers in India to come together and establish workers union. All India level workers organization was established by Lokamanya Tilak named 'All India Trade Union Congress' (AITUC) Tilka introduce to Dange to work with AITUC and Dange worked with All India Trade Union Congress long time. He was elected Assistant secretary of AITUC. Even after takeover of AITUC by communist. During the year 1943 – 1944 Dange was elected for the first time as the Chairman of AITUC. After 1920 leadership of the Congress come to Mahatma Gandhi. Dange was inspired by the thoughts and dynamic personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi was did not agree with British rule. Later Mahatma Gandhi launched the 'Non-cooperative Movement' in 1920 Dange gave up his study and joined the independence movement. Co. Dange became interested in Marxism, while following the Russian Revolution in 1917. He increasingly skeptical about Gandhism especially about Gandhi's promotion of cottage industries as the sole solution of India's economic ills, while overlooking possibilities of an industrial economy. The second

Title: COMRADE S. A. DANGE'S ROLE IN INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Source:Review of Research [2249-894X] DEVIDAS B. WAYDANDE yr:2013 vol:2 iss:7

decade of the 20th century proved to formative years for young Dange. The period also witnessed worldwide economic crisis. There were long strikes in the industrialized world especially in Britain. In India the working class movement gained steady momentum during this period. It was during one of the long textile mill strikes that Dange got himself acquainted with the condition of laborers. The periods also happen at the same time with influence of Bolshevist ideas, following the Russian Revolution of 1917, manifesting in political event in countries outside Russia.

In 1921 Co. Dange published a pamphlet titled 'Gandhi Vs Lenin' a comparative study of the approaches of both the leaders, but Lenin coming out as better of the two. This book was the turning point of Dange's life. Prominent Marxist leader M. N. Roy read the work and went on to meet Mr. Dange when he came to Mumbai, Ranchoddas Bhavan Lotwala a four mill owner from Mumbai who concerned himself for radical causes, Lotwala sponsored Dange's study of Marxism several years. In 1922 with the help of Lotwala Dange launched the English weekly 'Socialist', the first Indian Marxist journal. Dange's contemporary and well known communist leader Co. Mohit Sen work that Dange's articles in the socialist impressed Lenin himself.

Communists played a significant role in Indian freedom struggle. In the contemporary period of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1922 Gandhiji called off the Non-cooperative movement at its peak. This generated in all nationalist circles angry debates an search of an alternative path, for a way out of the leadership and the quest led the most radical freedom fighters to the crimson path heralding a new dawn on earth. A particular confluence of national and international factor was born on the soil of India. Due to the anti imperialistic thought and spreading communist thought S. A. Dange was sentenced for various terms of imprisonment. After long time he was released from prison in 1925. In 1925 conference of difference communist groups under the chairmanship of Singaravelu Chettiar, S. A. Dange, M. Ahmed, Nalini Gupta, Shaikat Usmani were among the key organizers of the meeting. The meeting adopted a resolution for the formation of the communist party of India.

The British rulers recognized communist as their most dangers enemies was evident from a series of conspiracy cases Peshawar, Kanpur Meerut and others hatched against them during 1920 and early 1930. The revolutionary activist Bhagat Singh and his associates coming closer of communists and a section of the nationalist leadership the British Government stack back in 1929 with chain of repressive measures. Most important among these were the Meerut conspiracy case, the republic safety bill and the prosecution of death sentence to Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru. In 31st March 1929, labor from Calcutta, Mumbai and other parts of country were rounded up. They were brought to Meerut for the conspiracy case.

In 1938 world war clouds gathering overhead the communist 1938 come up with a "Peace policy" for India and opposed the British campaign for army recruitment with slogan.

"Yeh jung samrajyashahi – Hum na denge ek pain a ek bhai"
The movement led by S. A. Dange and other communist leaders.

Architect of Netaji SubhasChandra Bose's dramatic escape from India : Shripad Amrut Dange was the architect of Netaji Subhaschandra Bose's dramatic escape from India to Afghanistan and on to Italy and Germany in 1941.

Dange's daughter Roza Despande 82, has wrote biography of S. A. Dange. She maintained that, "D (She calls her father) was lodged in a prison in Rajasthan in 1941. When Talwar a communist party worker, was released D gave him a letter for Subhash Babu and asked him to accompany him. Talwar helped Bose cross the border in to Afghanistan. Talwar accompanied Bose till he boarded his flight in 1945, which crashed. By the time Talwar returned to Rajasthan." It can be most possible, Dange's association was Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Babu and Mahatma Gandhi.

Dange was a nationalist when China attacked India, communist's leader wanted to welcome China but Dange said that, "We have to fight China because our nation should be our priority."

In Feb. 1946, Royal Indian Navy revolted against British Imperialism, which took place in Mumbai and which spread like wild fire to others ports across the country. After both the Congress and Muslim League refused to support the revolt of Navy. The Naval ratings approach to Co. Dange not only extended its full and active support but also mobilized thousands of textile workers of Mumbai in solidarity with this struggle. The working class erected barricades on the streets of Mumbai to prevent the passage of British armored vehicles which were dispatched to crush the revolt. In five days Feb. 18 to 22 the British Government gunned down over 400 workers in Mumbai. Among those killed was woman leader Comrade Kamal Dande.

Comrade Dange played an important role in bringing the labor activists among Bombay textile workers under the communist umbrella against the British Government.

CONCLUSION :

Comrade S. A. Dange was a great communist leader of India. He was great contributed for the Indian freedom struggle. He died on 22nd May 1991. He was a founder member of Communist Party and stalwart of Indian Trade Union Movement. During the British power. Dange was arrested by the British authorities for communist and trade union activities and was jailed for an overall period of 13 years. After independence a series of events like Sino-soviet split, Sino Indian war and the revelation that while in jail. He had written a letters to the British Government, offering them co-operation, led to a split in the communist party of India in 1964. Dange who was remained the chairman of the communist party of India till 1978.

Dange was removed in the year 1978 because majority of the party worker were against him due to the supporting Indian National Congress. He played a significant role in the formation of Maharashtra state. He was a great writer philosopher well known workers leader and politician.

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