

CHAPTER - IV
SOCIALIST'S ACTIVITIES

- Rashtra Seva Dal - Quit India Movement : 1942 -
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Rashtra Seva Dal

'In 1923, at Nagpur, the national flag was improperly removed by the government officials. A Satyagraha was organised against this insulting action towards the national flag by the government. The Satyagraha became known as - Zenda (flag) Satyagraha, in which many people were arrested. One of them was Dr. N.S. Hardikar, who felt that, although the response to Satyagraha from youngsters was good, the Satyagraha was neither systematic nor disciplined. He discussed the matter with his colleagues in jail and they felt the necessity of establishing a nation-wide Youth Organisation. In the same year i.e. in 1923, Annual Conference of Indian National Congress was held at Kokonada. In this Conference, Hindustani Seva Dal, a Youth Organization was established. Jawaharlal Nehru became its President while Dr. Hardikar, became the Secretary of the new organisation.

In the beginning Hindustani Seva Dal was an autonomous organisation. But when in 1931 Hindustani Seva Dal was transformed into Congress Seva Dal it came under the direct control of the Congress, and thus lost its autonomy.

In 1930, Maharashtra Congress Seva Dal was founded.

Bhausahab Ranade became its Chief Organizer.¹ But as the Congress Seva Dal did not remain an autonomous organisation, it could not work effectively. On the contrary in 1925 'Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh,' a Youth Organisation which advocate Hindu nationalism was established. Under the leadership of Dr. Hedgewar; this new organisation became more and more active. It was a challenge to the secular nationalism advocated by the Congress. To counter act Hindu nationalism of R.R.S. some sort of Youth Organisation was necessary. 'In May 1941 Shirubhau Limaye, N.G. Goray, V.M. Hardikar and others organised a Youth Camp at Pune. And on 9th June, 1941 these leaders decided to reorganise the old Congress Seva Dal as Rastra Seva Dal. S.M. Joshi became the Chief of this organisation. Shirubhau Limaye worked as an Organiser.²

Slowly and steadily branches of the Seva Dal were established at different places. Particularly during the 'Quit India Movement' of 1942, atmosphere was favourable for the growth of the organization like Seva Dal. During this movement, many other branches of the Seva Dal were established in different places in Maharashtra. Bombay being the main centre of the activities of the underground leaders, Seva Dal also became more active in Bombay. 'As many Congress leaders and worker's were in jail, Seva Dal Sainik organised flag hoisting and other such activities. Under the guidance of V.M. Hardikar, Seva Dal became a strong organisation in Bombay.³

Not only in Maharashtra but in other parts of the country the programme of establishing Seva Dal branches was undertaken. Many Maharashtrian workers travelled to different parts of the country and established branches of Seva Dal. Thus, at Karachi, Karandikar, Anna Pawar and Nana Purohit, whereas at Madras, Appa Mayadev did the job of establishing Seva Dal branches. Dr. Bapusaheb Kaldate did the same job in Bihar.⁴

The activities of 'Rastra Seva Dal' were based on five main principles - nationalism, democracy, socialism, secularism and the scientific outlook. A construction of a new society on the basis of these principles was the aim. Education, constructive work and a struggle whenever necessary, were the means of the organisation.⁵

'Dal Pramukh', was the chief of the organisation. The main divisions of Rastra Seva Dal were the provincial branches. The Chief of the branch was a Province Organizer. Provincial organisation was divided into district branches. At every district branch there was a district chief and an organizer. District branch was again divided into taluka branches. Every branch was under the control of Shakha Nayak (Branch Chief). At every level there was an executive to guide and instruct the activities of the Seva Dal.⁶

For the guidance and advice to Seva Dal Activities 'Seva Dal Council' was established in which persons like - Acharya Jawadekar, Raosaheb Patwardan, Achut Patwardan, Acharya Bhagwat, Yusuf Meherally, Harris and Anutai Limaye were included.⁷

Branches of the Seva Dal were established in all parts of Maharashtra. But the organisation was more active in the areas like - Pune, Bombay, Ahamadnagar, Khandesh, Nanded, Parbhani, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Ratnagiri and Goa.⁸

Although the branches of the Seva Dal were established in other parts of the country, it was in Maharashtra, that the organisation spread and achieved a great deal of success.

Daily drill, discussion, sports and games, lectures and the entertainment programme at the different branches was the main activity of the organisation.

Rashtra Seva Dal also used to organise a Annual Camp, where Dal Sainik (workers) and their leaders used to get together. At such camps eminent thinkers, leaders and social workers were invited to deliver lectures and to guide the volunteers.

'One of such gathering was held at Satara on 2nd February, 1947. ~~Sa~~ Shahanawaz Khan, of the Azad Hind army was the chief guest. Twelve to fifteen thousand Dal Sainik were present. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha and Congress leader Shankarrao Deo were also present who delivered lectures before the gathering.'⁹

Rashtra Seva Dal, apart from the routine activities at branches, undertook other activities such as - study circle, kala pathak (art group) etc. The purpose of the Study Circle was to discuss the contemporary social, political problems; and to organise lectures of different scholars.'¹⁰

The aim of the Kala Pathak was to educate people through entertainment. Many times it organised tours and visited different places of Maharashtra. Through the presentation of folk-dances, ballads, dances, group songs etc. it tried to form public opinion against the social evils like casteism and untouchability and to create an atmosphere for the social change.¹¹

Many eminent figures in the different walks of life were associated with 'Rashtra Seva Dal' in different capacities. Sane Guruji, an eminent Marathi writer and freedom fighter was closely associated with Seva Dal. Scholars like Acharya Jawadekar and Acharya J.S. Bhagwat were from the very beginning associated with Seva Dal as advisers and guides. Political leaders like Senapati Bapat, Achut Patwardan, Raosaheb Patwardan, Yusuf Meherally, Harris, S.M. Joshi (who was Dal Pramukha (Chief)), N.G. Goray, Nana Dengale, Shirubhau Limaye, Bhausaheb Ranade, Bapusaheb Kaldate, Vimaltai Garud, Narayan Tawade, Madhu Limaye, G.P. Pradhan, Sadanand Varde, and many others were associated with Seva Dal.¹²

Famous Marathi poet, Vasant Bapat wrote many patriotic poems for Seva Dal Kala Pathak. In fact, Kala Pathak's famous programmes 'Maharashtra Darshan' and 'Bharat Darshan' were written by him. P.L. Deshpande, Raja Mangalvedhekar, Liladhar Hegde, were other eminent figures associated with Kala Pathak.¹³ In this way the Seva Dal enrolled a large number of youths in the national stream.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT 1942

In spite of the differences with the Congress, particularly with the older Congress leadership, in spite of the unsympathetic approach held by many Congress leaders towards them, inspite of the programmes that the Congress adopted usually fell far short of their ideals, the socialists within the Congress remained, sincere participants in the national struggle. 'At the Faizpur Congress of 1936, the C.S.P. leaders reiterated their aim of working inside the Congress and at the same time, broadening its base so as to take it very close to the masses. However, a striking development at this stage occurred in the form of their open attack at the dominant leadership, what they decried as 'bourgeois' that in their view was unable to develop within the framework of its conception and interests the struggle of the masses to the higher level.' For this reason, the C.S.P. leaders denounced the Government of India Act of 1935 as the 'model of the slavish constitution' and opposed the idea of implementing it. Thus at its Lahore meeting of 1937, the C.S.P. leaders resolved :

1. to organise resistance to the Federation by exposing the limitations imposed on the Provincial Ministers in their task of extending economic relief to the masses and thus to develop their day-to-day struggle for political and economic conditions.
2. Utilise the control of provincial administration to neutralise the bureaucratic resistance and to sustain and strengthen the struggle outside.

3. to develop the Congress and other popular movement in a non-congress provinces with a view to shake the hold of the reactionary ministries and to make their existence impossible.
4. to organise and support every struggle of the Indian States' people for democratic right and against the inhuman economic and social conditions in which they had to live, thus making state people's movement as a organic part of the national movement.
5. to emphasis in all propaganda literature the positive demand for a constituent assembly; and
6. in the event of any attempt to impose the Federation, to prepare the country for a nation-wide mass struggle, including a no-tax and no rent campaign and a general strike on a national scale.

It is for this reason that the leaders of the C.S.P. opposed the course of accepting ministerial offices of the provincial government in 1937.¹⁴ Naturally when in October 1939 Congress governments resigned the socialists hailed the decision. When in 1939, the 'Second World War' broke out, and Britain got involved in it, the socialists dubbed it as an imperialistic combat and desired that full advantage should be taken of the available opportunity. They gave the slogan 'na ek pai, na ek bhai' (neither a single penny, nor a single countryman) for war efforts. The National Executive of the C.S.P. formulated a three-point charter highlighting these tasks - (1) to carry out a vigorous anti-war propaganda (ii) to activise congress

working committee for anti-war work and (iii) to push the enrolment of volunteers'.¹⁵

It was quite natural then, that when 'Quit India' movement began the Congress Socialist not only took an active part in it but 'It was the Socialists who put some force and dynamism into the movement. Underground and terrorist movements also became a part of socialist activities. On the whole, it must be said that but for the socialist contribution, the 1942 movement would have been just another tame affair.'¹⁶

Even before the beginning of the Second World War the C.S.P. declared its anti-war policy. In its first Conference in 1934, the C.S.P. appealed to the Congress, that the Congress should oppose the war in which Britain is involved. And such situation should be used to intensify the freedom struggle. Again in 1938, at 'Lahore Conference' the C.S.P. appealed to the Congress that it should take the advantage of the international situation and a programme should be prepared to intensify freedom struggle. When in 1939 Second World War began, the Executive Committee of the C.S.P. prepared its own programme of action. It also planned the recruitment of volunteers for the possible nationwide movement.¹⁷

In 1940, many Socialist leaders including Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia, were arrested for their anti-war propaganda.'¹⁸

Congress, after much deliberation ultimately accepted Gandhiji's plan to launch a new movement. 'On 14th July, 1942, at Wardha, the Congress Working Committee accepted a proposal to start the 'Quit India Movement.' Immediately in August, 1942, at Bombay a Conference of All India Congress Committee was held. On 8th August this Conference passed a resolution to start 'Quit India Movement.' The Socialists in the Congress enthusiastically supported the resolution.¹⁹

The next day, i.e. on 9th August most of the important Congress leaders were arrested. But although deprived of their leaders and denied the guidance, people started the struggle on their own. At this stage many Socialists and others who supported the 'Quit India Movement' took the lead. Many Socialist leaders including Dr. Lohia, Aruna Asafli, S.M. Joshi, Achut Patwardhan, N.G. Goray, went underground. And they organised the underground movement. In Maharashtra, Bombay became the main centre of their activities and meetings. In Bombay a underground 'All India Congress Committee' was established. Also 'Central Directorate' was established in Bombay to organise and guide the underground movement. The Socialists were in majority in the 'Central Directorate.' At the beginning Sucheta Kriplani, Dr. Lohia and Achut Patwardan were the three members of the 'Central Directorate.' Later on Aruna Asafli and Jayaprakash Narayan were included in it.²⁰

As the censorship was imposed upon the newspapers, the underground organisation issued the bulletins from time to time to give information regarding the movement to the people. There was also circulation of underground magazines and periodicals. 'Ninth August' (English) under the editorship of Achut Patwardan and 'Krantikari' (Marathi) under the joint editorship of Achut Patwardan and S.M. Joshi were among the important periodicals during the period.²¹

'The first underground broadcasting centre was established in Bombay. This radio centre known as 'Congress Radio' was in the operation for more than two and half months. The persons who operated it got the help from Dr. Lohia.' 'The radio centre gave day-to-day information of the movement as well as it broadcasted from time to time, speeches of the leaders like Achut Patwardan and Dr. Lohia.'²²

The Socialists and other revolutionary groups, either openly or secretly encouraged the use of bomb and other explosives. The socialists were also in favour of the use of the techniques like sabotage. On the issue of using the violent means and techniques, the Gandhians in the 'Central Directorate' were in disagreement with the Socialists. and this disagreement among these two groups ultimately led to the break-up of Central Directorate. The Gandhian group in the Central Directorate broke away from it and formed a separate group 'All India Satyagraha Council.'²³

In Nagpur city and in the district - 'Hindustan Red Army' - an organisation under the leadership of the

Congress Socialists like Maganlal Bagadi, Shyamnarayan Kashmiri, Narayanrao Dandekar was active. And this organisation was responsible for most of the sabotage and other aggressive activities in the district and the city.²⁴

The establishment of a parellel government in Satara District was an outstanding feature of the movement in Maharashtra. Underground Socialist leader Achut Patwardan was closely associated with the uprising in Satara and played a role of a guide and co-ordinator among different underground workers in the district.²⁴

During the period of uprising due to the awakening in the people, the branches of Rashtra Seva Dal a youth organisation - were established in large number. Members of this organisation actively participated in the uprising. And Rashtra Seva Dal did a great job by involving youth into the struggle.

Thus, while the leftist groups like Communists and Royist opposed the 'Quit India Movement,' the Congress Socialists and the Forward Bloc took active part in it. In fact, the Congress Socialists were the leaders of the underground movement. The 'Quit India Movement' was their day of glory. Because of their patriotic activities Jayaprakash Narayan, Achut Patwardan, Ram Manohar Lohia Aruna AsafAli became legendary figures during the freedom movement.

LITERARY ACTIVITIES :

We have taken a brief survey of the Socialists literature during the first decade after the Russian Revolution. After 1930, many Socialist groups and organisation sprang up in the different part of the country. In 1934, the C.S.P. was formed and many Maharastrian leaders joined the party. Many thinkers got attracted towards Socialism, and the Socialist movement took a momentum. In such circumstances articles on Socialism were written more frequently in different Marathi Magazines and periodicals. Books on Socialism were written in more quantity.

'In 1935 Lalji Pendse's book 'Navamatwad' was published. In this book the basic principles like Historical Materialism and Dialectical Materialism were explained and supported. This book was the first effort in Marathi to take a historical survey of India through the materialistic point of view. Lalaji Pendse also wrote two other books which shows his faith in Marxist ideology.²⁶

'S.R. Sunthankar wrote two important books on Marxism - one was 'Marxism' (1936) and the other 'Experiment of Marxism (1938). Both of them are introductory in nature. in which the important ideas of Marx and Engles are discussed.²⁷ P.V. Gadgil who was associated with the C.S.P. was one of the most important thinker on Marxism and Socialism in Maharashtra. He wrote following books on Socialism - 1) Socialism (1934), (2) Sulabha Samajwad (1938), (3) Marx's Materialism (1940), (4) Revolution in Russia, (5) The Summary

of the Capital (Capitalcha Sargranth) (1943) (6) My View (1944), (7) Towards Socialism (1947).

'His first book on the subject 'Socialism' was mainly introductory in nature. In 'Sulabha Samajwad' he argued the necessity of Socialism. This book is written with the help of the ideas of British Socialists like G.D.H. Cole, MacDonald and Shaw. 'Marx's Materialism' is a critical study of Marx's ideas. Here the author tried to explain the Marxian concepts in his own language. He has also compared the religious thoughts in Hindu religious books with Marxist thoughts. Gadgil also for the first time in Marathi made a summary translation of Karl Marx's 'The Capital.'

'My Views' is a collection of essays. These essays show the influence of Marxism as well as Gandhism, on the author's thinking.

'Towards Socialism' was also the collection of essays. The essays like - 'Maharashtra and Socialism', 'Hindustan, Maharashtra and Socialism', 'New Concept of Democracy' clearly advocates the Marx's concepts of Socialism.

Gadgil's contribution to the Marxist literature in Marathi lies in the fact that he introduced Marxism to the Marathi readers in a very simple and lucid language. His writings thus became very useful to the ordinary reader to understand Marxism.²⁸

N.G. Goray, one of the founder member of the Congress Socialist Party wrote two important books

'Imperialism' (1939) and 'Vishwa-kutumbwad' (1941). 'He used the word 'Vishwakutumbwad' for Communism. Here he explained the origin and growth of the Socialist ideology, so also, other Marxian concepts like the Theory of Surplus Value. In 'Vishwakutumbwad' we find a translation of Engles ideas regarding the origin of family, wealth and government from Engles book - 'Dialectics of Nature.'²⁹

Acharya Jawadekar was associated with the Congress Socialist Party from its very birth. He greatly contributed to the Socialist Literature in Marathi. The outstanding feature of his writings was that he tried to show a co-ordination between Marxism and Spiritualism. Through his writings in different periodicals and through his books on socialism - viz., - Rajanitishastra (Political Science) 1926, Vishwakutumbwad 1929, Arthashastra ki Anarthashastra 1941, Adhunik Rajyamimamsa 1940-41, Scientific Socialism 1943, Democracy 1940, Gandhism-Socialism 1949, Socialism and Sarvodaya 1957, Acharya Jawadekar expressed his views regarding Socialism.

In an article written in 'Satyakatha' in 1945, Jawadekar wrote ... "The writings of Fabian Socialists in Britain acquainted me with the ideas of Socialism ... From the very beginning my approach towards the Russian Revolution was sympathetic. After 1926 my study of Marxist Theory began ... Marxian Philosophy gave me a new outlook What I learn from Marxism is that, without the Socialist revolution there cannot be a stability in the society. And today's capitalism and imperialism themselves are creating the necessary revolutionary forces."



When he wrote his first book 'Rajanitishastra' his socialist ideas were mainly influenced by the writings of the British Socialists. But after 1926, when he studied Marx's philosophy Marx's ideas also exercised its influence. This is clearly visible in his second book 'Vishwakutumbwad' published in 1929. During this period the articles he wrote in different magazines show's his favourable approach towards Marxism.

Jawadekar through his different articles explained in detail different concepts in Marxian Philosophy. To 'remove misunderstanding in the minds of the people regarding socialism, and to put forth before them the scientific nature of socialism' was his objective when he wrote 'Scientific Socialism.'

His ideas regarding spiritualism and materialism constitute the most critical portion of his writings. At the same time his comparison between Gandhism and Socialism is also important. Jawadekar, from the very beginning was basically Gandhian. And even after the acquaintance with the Marxian philosophy the influence of Gandhism on his thinking never diminished. He was totally against the Capitalist system, at the same time he was not in favour of the proletariat dictatorship and the establishment of the communist society through violence. He described himself neither 'Gandhian' nor 'Marxist' but a 'Satyagrahi Socialist.'

In his famous book 'Adhunik Bharat' (Modern India) he hoped that with the combination of Gandhi's revolutionary

ideas of Satyagraha and democratic socialism, a new and modern ideology will come into existence.'³⁰

'From 1947 publication of a new periodical 'Nav Bharat' under the editorship of Shankarrao Deo, began. Acharya Jawadekar and Acharya S.J. Bhagwat were on its editorial staff for many years. Jawadekar wrote many articles in 'Nav Bharat.' Through these articles he put forth following ideas ...

- 1) Capitalist Society must be changed, but by peaceful means.
- 2) The Socialist Revolution is inevitable but for that violence is not necessary.
- 3) We must sought co-ordination between spiritualism and materialism.'³¹

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