

FORMATION OF FORWARD BLOCK AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN DISTRICT OF UNNAO: A CASE STUDY

Dr. Meenu Mishra*
Dr. Rajesh Tewari**

ABSTRACT

This paper briefly deals with the unprecedented events which created a sense of revolutionary political consciousness of Communist and Leftist ideology in the remotest corner of district Unnao in United Provinces. Civil Disobedience of 1930 and 1932 made a landmark in growth of Leftwing movement along with the widening of the scope of National Revolution. During the same period an economic depression of an unprecedented magnitude was devastating the whole earth and its effect on Indian masses particularly the peasants and workers, was not of less importance. Besides the anti salt campaign, the No-Rent drive had formed one of the items of Congress struggle during those days and they further linked up the economic life of the people with their national organization. The same period also witnessed the emergence of intensified trade union and peasant movement. In that political and national stream the Unnao district successfully organised huge demonstration of workers and Kisans in front of the Council House in Lucknow on 1st March 1938. It initiated the process of amalgamation of Communist trend and its radical consciousness in the movement which raised eye brows of Congress leadership.

Keywords: National Revolution, Congress Leadership, Political Stream, No-Rent Drive, Amalgamation.

Introduction

The world war had been declared in 1939. The peasants of Unnao had understood that they had to face a No-Rent movement before undertaking the course of armed revolution. There was no unanimity of opinions in district committee of Unnao on the question, that small units be formed for the protection and safety of workers and peasants.

Those units for defence in due course will start party-people-war fare. The president of Youth wing, Bal Ganga Dhar Tripathi had accepted this view point. Hence immediately after the war was broken a pamphlet was issued under the signature of Sri Shekhar Nath Ganguli, Sri Bal Ganga Dhar Tripathi and Nand Kishore Dubey directing the peasants, "Go ahead with the movement of No-Rent Campaign." Youth leaders of Communist and Congress alike suggested that Socialist leader of Unnao district should organize the campaign of No-Rent movement. Sri. V.D.Tripathi, the then only acknowledged popular Socialist leader of labourers and peasants accepted the Communist leader's suggestion but he expressed his doubt that Communist party may not accept this policy. Comrade Shiv Kumar talked to Comrade Bharadwaj on this issue. Comrade Bhradwaj suggested youth workers of the party to remain in support of Sri Tripathi but the communist of the district had a direction from the High Command to confine themselves to the opposition of war. Youth wing of district advised Sri. Tripathi that before launching the

* Head, Associate Professor, Department of History, Mahila Vidyalaya Degree College, Lucknow, U.P., India.
** Head, Associate Professor, Department of History, J.N.P.G. College, Lucknow, U.P., India.

movement of No-Rent campaign he should consult the Communist Party. Subhash Babu and provincial revolutionary Sri. Jharkhan Rai and provincial youth organization should give its decision and suggestion on this issue. Turning a deaf ear to the Local communist and Congress leaders, V.D. Tripathi declared the scheduled programme of organizing seven meetings in the district and invited Subhash Babu for the deliberation on the question. Preparation was started for establishing secret provincial centres.

It would not be out of place to mention that in heat of internal crises and skirmishes the supreme issue of preparing the anti-imperialist forces of country of a final assault on imperialism was being lost and it laid on Neta ji to formulate the issue and bring it to the forefront in crystallised form in his presidential address to the Haripur session of the congress in 1938. He was the first president of Indian National Congress at Haripura who advocated the consolidation of Trade Union and Kisan, Subhash into their independence call organization and extended their greetings to the congress socialist party.

After Tripathi where the Left CSP and CPI had proved spineless came the Calcutta session of AICC. Neta ji's all efforts to form a composite cabinet as a requisite to lead the national struggle failed despite Nehru's mediation. The Right-wing leadership including Gandhi ji's struck to its zid stubbornly. Neta ji consequently laid down the reins of congress president ship and subsequently launched the formation of Forward Block early in May 1939 in Calcutta.

Forward Block was thus founded by Neta ji to meet the new situation that had arisen in India, owing to the refusal of British to hand over power to the Indians to rule their country in their own way, and the opportunity was offered to India by the international situation to wrest that power by force from the unwilling hands. The unwillingness of Congress High Command to take full use of opportunity was the internal factor that necessitated a separate and compact organization that could push forward the congress to the necessary line of action eschewing all pseudo-sentimentalism born of exaggerated concern for the self-created troubles of British ignoring altogether the perpetual and woe of 400 millions of Indians.

Neta Ji's Modus Operandi

It means that Neta ji adopted for the purpose were consolidation of the Left forces in the congress to accelerate the speed of congress movement in general. Establishment of contacts with foreign powers that were hostile to the British imperial policy, establishment of contacts with Indian services specially the military, to secure help for the Indian patriots in their struggle against foreign rule. Thereafter Subhash Babu embarked on the national tour for propagating and populating the ideology and the principles of a separate progressive forward wing, absolutely different from the leftist wing of the congress party. The first significant meet where these ideas found fullest expression was organised in the district of Unnao. A Youth League conference was organised in Mankoor village of Unnao district on 14/05/1939. A history was going to be created in this ever-greatest political conference held in the wake of National movement. More than five hundred delegates participated in this historical youth conference which was presided over by one of the brightest luminary of Indian independence Sardar Bhagat Singh along with Sri. Batkeshwar Datt ji, the famous revolutionary who threw bomb in the Central Assembly.

Besides this, the conference was attended by Sri. Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Sri Ram Kumar Sinha, Manmath Nath Gupta, Ram Krishan Khatri, Ram Dulare Dwivedi, Vijay Kumar Sinha of Lahore conspiracy case including Bhagwan Das, Yashpal ji and Jharkhande Rai participated in the conference under the banner of revolutionary organization. Among the regional youth leaders Sri. Haldhar Bajpai, Ram Swaroop Pandey, Ram Chandra Rasia actively participated in the conference. So far as the communist young Turks of Unnao district are concerned the youth like Shekhar Ganguli, Ram Gulam Singh and Shiv Kumar Misra had already sowed the seed of revolutionary communist ideology.

Sri. V.D. Tripathi for the first time openly expressed his views in his address strikingly divorced from the ideology of congress to which he previously stood committed and also dwelt at length before the general public in this conference on the ground and reasons of ideological differences of rightists and left wing. He explained the cogent causes as to why the Forward Block is called forward. " In the year 1907 and 1908 there was a quarrel between Leftists (Garam Dal) and rightists (Naram Dal). In 1910 both cooperated. however in the year 1917, 1918 and 1920 the party people called Leftists were turned out from congress. The people called rightists who were the followers of old custom were getting out. There are two parties, one which wants to remain silent and other which wishes to proceed on, Subhash is the leader of the party which wanted to proceed on. He had marched ahead.....you know energy of the Leftists will increase more the public will rely on them." Those who consider this episode as the cause for the division of congress Sri Tripathi ji said for them. I say that the division which agitation of the country to proceed on was far better than union and calmness of the dead bodies.

After the perusal of the available materials the historical significance of conference and its contribution can be summed up under the following heads:

- The declaration for the advent of war in the country was made in this conference and clarion call was given to change the imperialistic movement in revolutionary war.
- It was in this conference where Subhash Babu declared for the first time for organising or forming the Forward Block in United Provinces.
- The edifice of mutual conflicting differences between armed revolutionaries and communists were dismantled.

References

1. Programme of Post War Revolution issued by H.V. Kamath, Central Secretary, All India Forward Block.
2. Ibid.
3. Weekly Report of Intelligence Dept. 1938 1, Gokhlay Marg, Lucknow.
4. Shiv Kumar Misra, Unnao Zilla ka Communist Andolan.
5. Ibid.
6. Interview with Comrade leaders of Unnao District.
7. Ibid.
8. Programme of Post War Revolution issued by H.V. Kamath, General Secretary, All India Forward Block.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Policy and Programme of Forward Block- Caveeshar.
13. Ibid.
14. State Archieve of U.P. English translation of speech of Pandit V.D. Tripathi.
15. Shiv Kumar Misra, Unnao Zilla Ka Communist Andolan .
16. Ibid.
17. State Archieve of U.P. English translation of speech of Pandit V.D. Tripathi.
18. Ibid.
19. Conclusion drawn on the basis of oral-regional documents collected and gathered from the alive freedom fighters of Socialist and Communist School of thoughts.

