

Anant Nagapurkar, Nanded, Maharashtra

His full name is Anant Shankarrao Nagapurkar. He was born on 6th October 1920. His father was a “*Talathi*” (Kulkarni), and incharge of 5 villages for revenue collection. Nagapurkar grew up in intense political background. Maharashtra Parishad was launched in 1935 on the pattern of Andhra Mahasabha (1920). There was another movement, that of opening libraries and Akharas that merged with the Parishad. A political school was started in his home district, in which R.D. Deshpande taught, with whom he later became associated. “Vande Mataram Strike” took place in 1938-39, in which several of such persons participated, who later became prominent and famous names. A “revolutionary youth league” was established on 26th January 1940 in his hometown Ambejogai. After this he went to Hyderabad, to Osmania University. He came in contact with All Hyderabad’s Students Union, and with Makhdoom Mohinuddin and others. He joined CPI in 1941.

In Trade Union movement:

In May - June 1943, the N.S. (Nizam State) Railway Employees’ Union decided to open branches in Purna, Marathwada and Kazipeth. The party (CPI) asked him to organise the union in the Marathwada region. The union was an affiliate of the AIRF and the AITUC. He attended a conference of the M. & S. M. Railway Workers’ Union. He helped open the union office in Purna. He ran a membership campaign on line from Purna to Manmad and other places.

He fought against malpractices of and pilferages by the railway authorities. The railway tracks in this area were under the Indian Police, and this gave the union a good to work with – the railway workers.

Nagapurkar attended the AITUC session held in Madras in 1944 as an observer. Makhdoom Mohinuddin also attended the session, who was a well-known leader that time. The popularity and strength gained by the Railway union established by Nagapurkar frightened the liberal leadership, consequently, it was so arranged that the delegates from Purna would not be able to attend the General Body of the Union in 1945. But the move backfired under the pressure of the workers, and work resumed as usual. Nagapurkar opened sub-branches at Jalna, Parli, Manmad, etc. A conference of AIRF was held in Secunderabad under Presidentship of V.V. Giri. A delegation from Purna also attended.

In 1946, he toured the Marathwada region for a proposed all India railway strike. In November 1946, he organised the textile workers, in particular those of the Osmanshahi Mills of Nanded. In 1947, he assumed the responsibilities of the secretary of the office of Road Transport workers’ union at Hyderabad. He organised the strike of ST workers, the Lalguda railway workers, strike of engine cleaners on 7th August 1947. In a notable

event, at the call of the Congress and the CPI, he organised and participated in hoisting the national tricolor to press for the accession of Hyderabad in India, at Lalguda ST and Railway Headquarters, Goliguda, etc. He organised the strike of Kazipet railway workers. He protected the workers' settlements during the Secunderabad "Sitaphal Mandi" area communal riots. There was an agitation for appointment of Pay Commission for railway workers in 1946. He campaigned actively. He fell ill with pleurisy in the meanwhile. The strike however was deferred. A postal strike began and ended in the appointment of A-I wage-board.

Arrest:

He was jailed for almost four years from November 1947 to September 1951. He was arrested at Nampally station and sent to Chanchalguda Jail. Later he was in Aurangabad, Beed and other jails. Before this, he functioned underground for quite some time.

Resumes 'Open functioning':

After release in 1951, he helped in the reorganising of the Trade Unions in Hyderabad. The AITUC fractions and RT workers' unions were revived. The railway workers fraction was reorganised. Road Transport union was regrouped and reorganised in 1953-55. Nagapurkar played a leading role, along with Raj Bahadur Gour in a 40-day strike of coal mining workers in Kothgudem during this period. He reorganised the Shahabad Cement Factory workers' union and Hotel workers union. He represented them before the Labour Appellate. Nagapurkar actively organised the Hutti Gold Mines workers union and participated in organising their long-drawn struggles and strikes.

Nagapurkar shifted to Nanded from Hyderabad in 1955. Here he helped reorganising and organising the Usmanshahi Mills workers, Municipality, Press, Beedi and other workers. He was on the different "Minimum Wages" and other Committees, e.g. Automobiles, Wood and furniture minimum wages committee, State minimum wages advisory committee, Shelke and Datar Committee on Cotton Textiles, State (Kale) Tripartite committee on textile industry, Cardboard Industry minimum wages committee, Beedi Industries high-powered Committee, etc. He is still active in some of them.

In 1960, he was the chairman of Nanded Committee of all India postal workers' union and represented Marathwada in its Delhi session. In 1965 he edited and published a workers' journal titled "Shramik Ekjut" (workers' unity, in Marathi). Till recently, he has been active in Marathwada textile workers, particularly regarding their wage rates and structure, as also among ST and power-loom workers.

Some of the Posts held:

Anant Nagapurkar had been member of the general council of AITUC, vice-president of the Maharashtra state TUC, office-bearer of Usmanshahi Mills workers union, Industrial workers union, president state Industrial workers' organisation, etc.

Nagapurkar was felicitated on 7 September 1998 by the chief minister of Maharashtra Manohar Joshi on the occasion of Golden Jubilee celebrations of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle. He was honoured on 30 January 1999 by Bank of Maharashtra Employees Union (affiliated to AIBEA) and received Shripad Amrit Dange Centenary Award, Usmanabad.