

A P P E N D I X - I

THE GROWTH AND DECLINE OF THE P.W.P.

The P.W.P. decided to take part in elections as it believed that though through elections we would not be in a position to bring about revolution, but it is a means to mobilise the people and to awaken their political consciousness. Therefore in all the elections that were held after 1952 the P.W.P. took part in the elections. It wanted to bring together all the leftist groups.

In 1952 elections the P.W.P. tried to forge alliance with other parties for establishing a democratic front against the congress. But it was successful at few places. In this election, the P.W.P. recieved backing of the scheduled caste federation, in districts like Pune, Solapur and Kulaba. In the Pune L.S. constituency, Jedhe contested election as a PWP candidate against N.V. Gadgil and S.M. Joshi of the socialist party. In three cornered contest, N.V. Gadgil was elected by a big margine and Keshavrao Jedhe was defeated. Solapur di strict was considered a strong hold of the PWP. Due to work of the PWP leader Tulshidas Jadhav, the party struck roots in the area. In the parliamentary elections Tulshidas Jadhav forged an alliance with Dr. Ambedkar's She Ca Fe to defeat the congress. At that time one voter had the right to give two votes as it was a double member constituency. One for the general seat and other for the reserved seat. In

the Solapur district Shankarrao More was a PWP candidate and P.N. Rajbhoj was a scheafe candidate. Both of them were elected with the help of Tulshidas Jadhav. On the other hand in Kulaba, Bhausahab Raut had to face defeat. From Marathwada region N. Waghmare of the PWP was elected. As well as in the Vidhan Sabha election of 1952. The PWP got a good support in Solapur and Kolhapur districts.

The PWP won two seats in North Satara, two seats in West Khandesh and one seat in Belgaum. In Bombay state legislative assembly, 13 candidates of the PWP were elected. In Hyderabad State the party conested 19 seats, and out of them, it secured 10 seats. From the Marathi speaking areas in Madyhapradesh, only two candidates out of 32 won the election. Thus in the first general election, the party had won two seats in the Loaksabha and 25 seats, in Vidhansabha. Bhaushabe Raut, R.K. Khadilkar, Smt. Shantabai More, Ram Nalwade, Ghorpade, N. Deshmuk and maby other PWP candidates were defeated. In the assemblies of three states the party secured 25 seats. Thus its performance was not that bad.⁽¹⁾

Due to the defeat of the prominent PWP leaders, they got narvous and keeping this background in view the PWP called a meeting at Sangli in June 1953. In the meeting, the general secratery Shankarrao More moved a resolution that the PWP

should be dissolved as the people had not supported it. But the resolution was defeated and in the same meeting, Shankarrao More was deprived of the post of General Secretary and R. K. Khadilkar was elected in his place. After the elections there were clashes between the two prominent leaders of the PWP Keshavrao Jedhe and Shankarrao More. After the Sangli conference Shankarrao More expressed his opinion that the PWP should be merged with the communist party. But another stalwart of the PWP Madhavrao Bagal had raised a banner of revolt against the party and argued that the PWP should be merged with the Congress. The result was that there emerged three groups in the PWP, one was favouring merging the C.P.I., the second wanted merge with the Congress and the third wanted to keep its independent existence. This group constituted of the young leaders.

After becoming the general secretary of the P.W.P. R. K. Khadilkar opposed the ideas expounded in the Dhabadi thesis. Khadilkar sought to forge the unity among the non-communist parties. He called a meeting of the secretariat of the party in January 1955 in Bombay and put forward his idea of forming All India Mazdoor Party. The committee of secretaries opposed this idea. As the committee of the secretaries was of different opinion he resigned from his post. Then Khadilkar, Tulshidas Jadhav and Yashavantrao Mohite resigned, came together and founded Mazdoor Kisan party. After the founding of this

new party, there were conflicts at many places between the supporters of Khadilkar groups and the PWP group and the Khadilkar kept the Jansatta Press under his ownership, as the press was set up for the daily Jansatta to function as a news paper of the P.W.P. (2)

Due to Shankarrao More's eccentric behaviour and the peculiar nature, there were many groups in the party and it could not undertake any program to improve the lot of poor people. Digsusted with this situation, Keshavrao Jedhe resigned the P.W.P. in April 1954 and entered the congress party. After Jedhe Tulshidas Jadhav the PWP leader in Legislative assembly also resigned the PWP and entered the congress in September 1955. (3)

In 1955 Russia's Primeminister Bulganin came to India. Nehru showed him many projects in India and Bulganin was impressed by this progress and expressed his opinion that within a short time India had made a great progress in various fields. Shankarrao More was impressed by the remarks of the Russian leader. Thus Shankarrao More resigned from the PWP in September 1955 and entered the congress. (4)

After this great shock the second rank leadership of the P.W.P. like Dajiba Desai, Bhausahab Raut, Uddhavrao Patil decided to maintain independent existence of the party. When the PWP was breaking up, the movement of the establishment of unilingual state for Marathi speaking people was gathering

momentum as Morarji government let lose the reign of terror over the city of Bombay and Nehru government obstnately refused to grant unilingual state to Marathi speaking people though other languages had their own states. The congress leadership of Maharashtra was not powerful enough to exercise pressure on the decision making process at the centre.

In Nov. 1956, New Bombay state was established by merging Vidarbha and Marathwada regions in the Bombay state. New Bombay state was bilingual and Y.B. Chavan became its first Chief Minister defeating Bhausahab Hire the old and respected leader of the Congress.

The dilly dallying attitude of the congress and duplicate policy of Shankarrao Dev emboledened the opposition parties to establish Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti under the leadership of Mr. S. M. Joshi a PSP leader and the prominent P.W.P. leader Mr. Uddhavrao Patil became its secritery. The Samiti stole the thunder as three important opposition parties the C.P.I. the P.S.P. and the P.W.P. came together to fight
(5)
1957 elections.

The congress lost heavily in 1957 elections especially in Western Maharashtra though it won the most seats in Vidarbha and Gujarat. It won the majority and formed the government under the leadership of Y.B. Chavan.

In 1957 elections the P.W.P. won two seats in Loksabha as its candidates were successful in K. J. Laba and Kolhapur constituencies. The party won 37 seats in Bombay legislative assembly 12 more than it secured in 1952. The Samiti continued to consolidate its gains in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions and as the only rural grass root party, the P.W.P. was its mainstay. But on 1st May 1960 Maharashtra state was established and three powerful parties of the Samiti were bent on dissolving the body. Consequently a large number of the opposition ML's majority of them belonged to the PWP joined the congress. Y.B. Chavan had emerged as a symbol of new aspirations of the people.⁽⁶⁾

After the establishment of Samyukta Maharashtra the congress government decided to implement some radical programs including establishment of Panchayati Raj with powerful Zilla Parishads expansion of rural credit societies and Sugar Co-operative and decertralisation of power attracted a large number of rural youth in the congress.⁽⁷⁾ The party won massive majority in 1962 elections as it secured 215 out of 265 seats. The PWP secured only 15 seats losing many of its earlier strongholds, and it got no representation in L.S.

After 1962 the congress faced many problems as India lost a battle against China followed by Indo. Pakistani War of 1965 and death of Shastri in 1966. In 1966 the S.S.P. the

the P.W.P. the C.P.I. The C.P.I. (M) and R.P.I. decided to form Sampurna Maharashtra Samiti under the Chairmanship of the P.W.P. stalwart Bhai Uddhavrao Patil to demand the solution to border dispute and to defeat the congress. In 1967 the congress was in a bad position as drought, famine and price rise with weak primeminister compounded the problem. But the Samiti could not defeat the congress as its position was considerably consolidated. In the election P.W.P. won two Loksabha seats from Kulaba and Hatkanangle of Kolhapur district and 22 seats in the house.

The electoral prospects of the party nosedived as Indira Gandhi divided the congress and followed left of centre policies that made Left parties change their attitude. In the 1971 parliamentary elections the congress swept the poll demolishing all the strong holds of the opposition. The PWP lost its both the parliamentary seats. After Bangla Desh war of 1971, assembly elections were held in 1972 and the PWP could secure only 8 seats and most of its stalwarts like Annasaheb Gavane, Uddhavrao Patil and Krishnrao Dhulup lost their seats and the decline of the party set in as most of the important leaders either left the party or became inactive. So called strong holds in Kolhapur, Satara and Solapur got destroyed though the party secured victory in Z.P. election to Osmanabad and Parbhani Zill Parishads.

By 1975 Indira Gandhi government was facing popular movements and as a result of the difficult decision given by Allahabad High Court, she imposed internal emergency and held the parliamentary elections in 1977. In the elections the PWP forged alliance with the Janata party and secured 6 seats, highest ever for the party as its candidates captured Nasik, Kolhapur, Nanded, Parbhani, Latur and Kulaba Lok Sabha seats with huge margins. Though the party won 6 seats it was evident that it was a result of the Janata party's support. In 1978 assembly elections the PWP demanded 75 seats and the Janata was willing to give 55 seats. The PWP decided to go it alone and miserably failed as it secured only 13 seats. This can be called decline of the PWP as the party.

The PWP's glorious period was during Samyukta Maharashtra movement, but it failed to live up to the expectations and its decline set in by 1960, though there was an appreciable boost to its fortunes but on an average the party declined.⁽⁸⁾

The party took part in several non-electoral political movements as it was in forefront in several anti-price rise movements. It took part in struggle of Marathi speaking people in Karnataka along with its glorious role in Samyukta Maharashtra movement. It always tried to show that the PWP is a Leftist party.

The Dabhadi thesis was not properly studied by the party because its emphasis shifted on immediate practical problems. The party held 7 conferences at Shegaon, Nasik, Mominabad, Pandarpur, Poynad, Sangli, Kolhapur in 1955, 1959, 1961, 1965, 1974, 1977 respectively and passed political resolutions. (9)

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