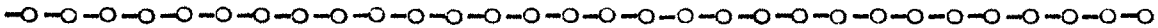


CHAPTER - IV

THE DABHADI THESIS : A CRITICAL STUDY



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### THE DABHADI THESIS A CRITICAL STUDY

In the preceding chapters, we have discussed origin of the PWP in the light of the social and political development of the state. In the third chapter, we have elaborately discussed the content of the PWP as well as its political philosophy. In the present chapter we shall make a critical study of the Dabhadi thesis as it is the main ideological document of the party.

The Leftist movement that was committed to the revolutionary philosophy of Marx Engels and Lenin was growing in the country after 1920-21. Some groups were growing outside the Indian National Congress and some of them were growing within the party. The groups that grew outside the congress suffered prosecution at the hands of the British government in Merath conspiracy case and in Kanpur conspiracy case. A group under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was growing within the congress as Nehru made it clear in 1929 that establishment of complete independent state was the goal of the congress and subsequently he declared that establishment of socialist society was the goal of the congress. Along with Nehru leaders such as Netaji Subhashchandra Bose, Jay Prakash Narain, Acharya Narendra Deo and several peasant leaders like

Sahajanand were committed to socialist ideology. One can say that the P.W.P. was born out of the congress as it was a leftist faction within the congress. It is interesting to note that the PWP group in the congress was more radical than the congress socialists who later on established the socialist party. It can be said that peasantry in entire South India was considerably radicalised during this period.<sup>(1)</sup>

Keeping in view the philosophy of Satyashodhak movement the PWP was established though no specific reference to it was made in the thesis the Satyashodhak movement was launched to oppose the exploitation of poor peasants and non-Brahmine at the hands of money lenders and Brahmin. In this movement, some Brahmin and Non-Brahmins and all others were involved. At the time of ' Mahad Satyagrah ' the Non-Brahmin leaders Jedhe and Javalkar wanted to support Dr. Ambedkar. Their committment to social reform was beyond doubt. It is also doubtless that the PWP was a result of such a movement though one can say that not much importance is give to their ideology in the thesis. Name of Phuley is once or twice mantioned. But names of these reformers are not mentioned. The party refers to revolutionary background of Maharashtraian peasants and gives example of parellel government of Satara established during the Quith India movement. But it is interesting to note that the Dabhadi thesis does not display any direct influence

of Satyashodhak ideology though the party as a result of its indirect influence stood for all forms of social reforms.<sup>(2)</sup>

The party framed its policies and programs according to Marxist-Leninist philosophy in which they opposed human exploitation and argued that the working class would provide leadership to peasants, workers etc. and also decided to unite all the workers and peasants under the banner of Red Flag. In the Dabhadi thesis, the PWP accepted the leadership of workers. Accepting the principle of one union of opposition to oppose the government and I.N.T.U.C. It is rightly felt that the PWP was dogmatic in its acceptance of Marxism-Leninism as it did not take into account mistakes of the communist **I**nternational and the Cominform due to this. The PWP did not understand the Indian situation.<sup>(3)</sup>

In the Dabhadi thesis at first the party analysed the international situation, in which it pointed out the development of two power blocks in the world. First the capitalist and second the communist. It discussed causes of cold war. It can be said that at times the PWP blindly supported the communist group under the leadership of U.S.S.R. because Russia sometimes used international communist movement to subserve its foreign policy interests and possibility of Russia becoming some sort of superpower was not taken into account.

After the end of Second World War a large number of Afro-Asian countries became independent and started playing an important role but the PWP did not go beyond the traditional interpretation of their importance.<sup>(4)</sup> It did not completely understand the role of third world countries as Mao-Tse-Tung in way back 1946 discussed the emergence of two intermediate Zones. Thus while discussing the international situation no creative application of the theory was made and the old formulations were repeated.<sup>(5)</sup>

Though the PWP claimed that it was a Marxist party but there was a conflict between the C.P.I. and the P.W.P. In the Dabhadi thesis the PWP claimed that the communist leadership did not understand the political situation in India, and being the middle class people they did not understand revolutionary potential of Indian people. Therefore, the leadership of National Freedom Movement went in the capitalists' hands. The communists made compromises with the capitalists in the congress and made many mistakes including their non-participation in 1942.<sup>(6)</sup>

One can say that ideologically there is little difference between the C.P.I. and the P.W.P. as both of them are Marxist-Leninist parties. There is some confusion in the PWP about democratic revolution and peoples' democratic revolution and the CPI stood for democratic revolution. The PWP's criticism of Ranadive line of 1948 is interesting as the party calls it left -adventerism. Despite some minor difference, one can not understand the intensity the strident criticism made by the PWP that is directed against the CPI.<sup>(7)</sup>

It is wrongly believed that the PWP gave more importance to peasants. The Dabhadi thesis makes it clear that the revolution would be led by working class.

The PWP understood the importance the peasant class in the revolutionary activities of colonial countries. In Chinese revolution the peasants played an important role. The revolution in China greatly influenced thinking of the PWP. Hence they considered the peasantry as the vital class to bring about revolution. But the peasants could not unite as the workers and the party realised that peasantry was divided in many groups and in stages some classes will support the cause of revolution. Thus the peasants were divided between farm labour, poor peasant, middle class peasant and High class Rich peasants. It was very difficult to unite them. The interests of these groups were different hence it was the opinion of the PWP that farm labour was the real ally of the working class, though help of other groups can be taken.<sup>(8)</sup>

At first the PWP leaders criticised the congress party as the capitalist party and also blamed the congress for not working in the benefit peasants and worker. It is true that the congress party was a pro-capitalist party when the PWP was formed but the PWP forgot that the congress party was widely supported by the masses and the masses were confident that the congress would gradually implement the progressive policies and programmes of democratic revolution. The congress victory of 1952 proved this fact.<sup>(9)</sup>

The real mistake of the PWP was in the characterisation of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was making efforts to build new India. It is true that Nehru was taking the help of the capitalist dominated Congress but he was the tallest leader of patriotic masses. He introduced several new socio-political reforms and laid down the industrial base for industrial development. Nehru during his life-time enjoyed the support of the people and he was mainly opposed by feudal lords and the communal and right wing groups of the Indian society. Nehru followed progressive foreign policy by consistently opposing forces of imperialism and by consistently supporting national liberation movements of the colonial countries. Nehru represented rising aspirations of the people and newly liberated independent countries. The PWP's understanding of Nehru was inadequate and one can say that it was blind to fact.<sup>(10)</sup>

Despite all these theoretical shortcomings of the PWP, one can say that it was the only party, apart from the communist parties to develop its own theoretical line on the basis of Marxist philosophy. The party may be accused of imperfect understanding of Marxism but it cannot be denied that it seriously tried to make a theoretical understanding of the Indian situation. Secondly, the party took into consideration international situation and strove hard for developing international proletarian consciousness. Thus, it shared the dream of establishment of world state with other Marxist parties.<sup>(11)</sup>

The PWP was the first party that correctly understood the role of different groups in the peasant community and it laid stress on importance of the support of peasantry in the colonial society in the cause of revolution. Also the PWP was one of the first parties to support the cause of unilingual state of Marathi speaking people of India. The PWP consistently advocated anti-imperialist anti-feudal and anti-capitalist policies and programs in its Dabhadi thesis and it was an enemy of communalism in Indian politics. (12)

Thus the Dabhadi thesis is a remarkable document which sought to understand the Indian reality with the help of philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. The Dabhadi thesis is a good example of a fact that in the 1949-50, the peasant communities in South India were considerably radicalised. Though on the ideological ground the PWP still claims that it is a Marxist party its practice tells otherwise. But that is not the subject of our thesis. (13)

It is necessary to mention that the PWP's influence remained confined to Maharashtra. The party could not spread its influence outside the state. But despite of this fact the party never adopted regional attitude and it never encouraged regional aspirations of the Marathi speaking people when they were provoked by the centre at the time of Samyukta Maharashtra movement in the late fifties. It is remarkable that the PWP resisted this temptation and maintained all India perspective. (14)



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