

The Will to Power

The greatest test for any political party lies in its will to power. A curious obscurity has been allowed to grow around this will in our country as if it were sinful or at least ugly to want power. The new party must end this state of enfeebling hypocrisy. It must be shot through and through with the will to power. After all, a political party exists because of policies and programmes which it believes essential for the nation and the world and which it must equip with the force of the government.

India is shivering with hunger and the world is cowering under the shadow of war and the Praja Socialist Party of India will miss its destiny, if it does not wish to become the government of the land as soon as possible. To want to become the opposition when the substance of the people and of all mankind is being eaten away is ugly if not sinful. When the merger of the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party is completed, the party will become the largest socialist party of the world. It will be able to

claim a total vote exceeding seventeen millions and will surpass the British Labour Party, which is now the largest, by a round four million votes. The new party will soon enough be confronted with national and international responsibilities that may overwhelm it, if it does not move forward to meet them. The people have indeed chosen their parliament and it has still four and a half years to go. But a democracy is always dynamic, unless it pales into a lifeless ceremony. When the temper of a people undergoes a radical change, the time-honored practice of genuine democracy is to dissolve the parliament and to register the people's will in a fresh election. To warm up the temper of the people so that they become the makers of their destiny rather than suffer to be its tools is a high duty of democratic action. Only when democrats confess to the misery of inaction is the field left open to the mumbo jumbo votaries of violence and insurrection. The will to power must indeed be a chaste and vigorous will, as far away from perversity as it should be from weakness.

Basic Ideas of Lohia : Selected Writings

A healthy will does not make use of lies, deceit and violence. Only a frustrated will indulges in perverse conduct and is consumed by its own despair. At the same time, a will, whose vitality is at a low ebb, loses the power to move and stands still in the stream of events or is tossed about if it is not drowned. The will to power of the new party will be faced with the danger alike of perversity as of weakness. To strive cleanly to capture power on the morrow is a high trust but an equally sacred obligation is not to give up to weakness or give in to perversity, should power not come for a decade or more. The will to power of a person or a party is best measured by the will to react to situations, old and new. The world abounds in men with delayed reactions or none at all. Challenges come to them, often even unnoticed. India is full of such challenges, old and new, but where are the men and women to react to them and respond to them? The two parties that are coming together were not sufficiently alive in their will to power and in their sensitivity to situations and a primary test for the new party will lie in its ability of swift reaction to old and new challenges. A few illustrative situations may be indicated. Unemployment and underfeeding are dreadfully increasing particularly among artisans, landless labourers, middle-classes and educated youth out of schools and colleges. These are precisely the sections which have no voice nor organisation and no political party has yet tried to reach them or to bring them to the stage of day by day history. The village youth, partly also the city youth, has neither educative recreations nor healthful sports. The corrupting system of weddings through arrangements and dowries is permitted lest some awkward situation of a freer relationship may transitorily develop. Education neither builds the mind nor trains for a living and text books are annually and deterioratingly changed in order to earn profits for corrupt authors and publishers. Governments and Municipalities do not build houses for the poor, and District Boards allow landless labourers to be thrown out of their cottages, and the people and their political parties stand still. The vast manpower of the country wrings its hands at drought and flood and does not dig, for no political party is able to combine voluntary labour and land-redistribution in a mighty sweep.

The Government is permitted to break its

solemn vows and to beg for and import food, while unemployment increases and cultivable areas abound. New taxes are imposed on the poor while princes and millionaires are assured of their pensions and profits. Cities like Kanpur permit the sewage of tanneries and other factories to mix up in the stream of Ganga within furlongs of where lakhs of people bathe and even drink the polluted water. The people are dulled and no political party is alive enough to awaken them. Even to the challenge of starvation, the response is slender for, when a political party does not intervene at the stage of chronic underfeeding, it and the people are too dulled to revolt at the stage of famine and deaths. The Praja Socialist Party will have to react to all such situations, old and new. To react is primarily to be aware and then to think out solutions and finally to act in construction or combat. Parties which are alive react and kick in all directions. It is a false notion to imagine that one line or accustomed lines of work economise energy. A live party expands energy by expending it. The Praja Socialist Party will be called upon to construct, to put into national practice, what is today largely the ceremonial programme of digging for irrigation, ditches and the like. It will be called upon to assist in the community projects wherever they are undertaken.

It must discipline the village youth for voluntary labour as well as such sports as swimming. It must strive to change the people's habits of food, marriage and reproduction. It must take control over Municipalities, District Boards and Village Panchayats so as to make compost out of night soil, to build houses and to provide free machine. Let it not be forgotten that the will to construct and to cooperate is the other side of the will to agitate and combat and the two together make the will to power. Those who do not know how to construct can never know how to combat cleanly. Half-truths and half-measures are a special disease of Indian politics. A half-measure of the phase of agitation is followed by a similar half-measure of the phase of construction and politics oscillates between the two extremes without achieving anything worthwhile. No political party can ever do without agitation and combat. If it stands still in the midst of growing unemployment and underfeeding, of increasing taxes on the poor, it has already succumbed to paralysis in the event

Basic Ideas of Lohia : Selected Writings

of famine. Even an adolescent ought to know that a famine may overtake the people in two or three years. To prevent that famine and to compel the government to register a fresh verdict of the people's will it is necessary to combat the government now whenever evils of unemployment and underfeeding are manifest. The joint conference of the Socialist and the K.M.P. Parties may or may not deal with these problems in detail, but it must be aware of them as the background of its talks. On 20th September, five days before this conference, there will be an opportunity to mobilize the people on the simple issues of unemployment and underfeeding. The success of this day will depend on the preparation that precedes it, on the extent to which the socialists frequent the areas where artisans, middle classes and the educated youths live and those of employment exchanges, ultimately on the will to power and the sensibility to situations. The agitation may centre on such simple demands as the recruitment of a half million food army for the purpose of cultivating new lands, the institution of township projects and the appointment of government ministers or special officers to secure raw materials, marketing and standard quality for artisans. The underfed must march and demonstrate so that the government is never permitted to transfer or deny its responsibility to feed the people, nor do the people resign themselves to the inevitability of famine. No more propitious beginning could have been expected for the launching of a new party. It will be for the Praja Socialist Party to continue and deepen the mobilization of the people and to warm up their temper. A perverse exercise of the will to power must however be prohibited. The stage now is set for national agitations and local satyagrahas and let no one try to dissipate energy by prematurely pushing on to national civil disobedience. Ideological issues, which have the power to make or mar, will also face the new party. One's view of life and the meaning one attaches to the purpose of living is ultimately the mainspring of the will to power and the ability to be aware. Such debates on ultimates will undoubtedly take place or will at least be in the background of one's talk. In this connection, the testimony of a brother socialist who spent many years in Hitler's concentration camps and was ultimately executed by him is invaluable. Such testimonies, literally written in blood, deepen the insight, even

when agreement with individual findings may not be general. Julius Leber has laid bare the reasons for the failure of social democracy in Germany. Already sapped in its will to power by continued existence as the opposition for two generations, the Social Democratic Party of Germany could never rise above formalistic levels of debate. Basing itself on Marxism, it appealed continuously to that philosophy for all its mistakes and misinterpretations and its thinking lost all freshness and degenerated into quotations. Social democracy in Germany was oppositional and Marxist and it ended up with a divided soul and half-measures. One cannot part with this moving document of our times, the testimony of Leber, no matter how deep the night and one lays it aside with the approaching dawn, wheeled with a great pain but an equally great determination never to let it happen again. A section of the Praja Socialist Party will seek to deaden its thinking by its unintelligent appeals to Marxism. Another section may make equally unintelligent appeals to Gandhism. Marx and Gandhi will have thus lived in vain, for their mistakes and distortions will live while the truth in them will perish. All human thinking is to day markedly beset by the dangers of choruses of accusation and defence and there is very little attempt to understand. In the debris of accusation and defense are littered about various meanings of life and interpretations of history, relationships between spiritualism and materialism, economic analysis of capitalism and the forms of class-struggle and hypotheses raised into laws of human civilization.

The Praja Socialist Party must seek to make a new house for the human mind, for all existing structures are broken. It must want to build the theory of socialism as much as it should express the will to power. The task no longer is one of repairing or reforming the existing civilisation. Humanity is yearning for a new civilisation and a new meaning to life. To the extent that the new party will express this inchoate yearning in the theories of principles will it be able to discharge its international obligations. To the extent that it expresses and fortifies the will to power will it execute national responsibilities. The evolution of theory and the will to power are interdependent exercises and thrive on one another.

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