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General Secretary of Communist Ghadar Party of India

by Comrade Chandra Bhan,

Editor of Mazdoor Ekta Lehar

Chandra Bhan: Who do you think will win the coming Delhi Assembly elections and form the government?

Lal Singh: In my opinion, which party wins these elections makes no difference to the working class and other oppressed people. These elections are not going to solve any of their problems. No matter which party wins and forms the government, it is going to implement the capitalist agenda of globalisation through liberalisation and privatisation. It will escalate the attacks on the livelihood and rights of working people so as to make this city a paradise for capitalist billionaires. Multi-thousand crore projects are going to be handed out to Indian and foreign corporations in the name of making Delhi a *world class city*.

At the other pole, millions of workers, peasants, small shopkeepers, students, professionals, women and youth are going to face ever-increasing taxes and unaffordable prices of all essentials of life, including food, water, electricity, education, health care and inner-city transport. Women will continue to be harassed and raped. Lakhs of working people will continue to be without secure housing.

Facts show that Congress Party and BJP are jointly responsible for the unbearable and extremely insecure conditions of life in this city. They have both played with the fate of lakhs of *jhuggi* dwellers, keeping them in “*unauthorised colonies*” and cultivating vote banks among them. Both these parties have cultivated their respective goondas and are jointly responsible for the extremely high crime rate in Delhi.

Both Congress and BJP are guilty of the most monstrous crimes against the people, including the incitement of communal tension and organising of massacres, starting with the 1984 genocide and including the mass killings in 1992-93 and in Gujarat in 2002.

BJP claims that it is committed to provide prosperity for all, “*sab ke saath, sab ka vikaas!*”. However, in the class divided society in which we live, a political party can be either committed to serve the capitalist class to maximise its profits, or be committed to serve the working class to overthrow capitalism and open the path to progress. Historical experience shows that both BJP and Congress Party are committed to serve the capitalist class, headed by the monopoly houses.

Congress Party is campaigning in Delhi promising to bring down the price of electricity if voted to power. It is the Congress Party government of Sheila Dixit that implemented the privatisation of electricity distribution in Delhi, paving the way for the companies of the Tatas and Ambanis to impose monopoly prices on the public. At that time, the Congress Chief Minister declared that poor workers need only one fan in their house and hence the price hike will not affect them. Now when it is out of power, Congress Party is singing the opposite tune, that electricity prices must be brought down for the benefit of the poor.

Both BJP and Congress Party are promising secure homes to all *jhuggi* dwellers! They are promising to regularise all the contract employees of the state government, after having deprived them of rights for 15 years!

Election campaigns in the existing system are dominated by false promises. Rival parties promise whatever the toiling majority of people are demanding. Once in power, they strictly implement what the big capitalists want.

In the run up to the Delhi elections, many former MLAs have jumped from one party to another, hoping to increase their chance of winning. This is something we see again and again before every round of elections. What does it show? It shows that these rival parties actually represent the same class interest, which is why individual leaders are able to jump from one such party to another.

The existing parliamentary system and its political process of representative democracy are designed to serve the bourgeois class. Different trusted parties of the bourgeoisie compete with one another for the people's votes. These parties are all committed to implement the program that has already been set by the bourgeoisie. Whichever of these parties proves itself best capable of fooling the people at a particular time is chosen by the bourgeoisie to become its manager for the next five years.

Chandra Bhan: How does the bourgeois class determine the outcome of elections?

Lal Singh: Election campaigns are carefully orchestrated by the bourgeoisie to ensure the result it wants. A year-long propaganda campaign was unleashed prior to the parliamentary elections in 2014, through the big media owned and controlled by the monopolies, to project Narendra Modi as the new messiah at the head of BJP, who will allegedly bring about good times for all sections of our society.

In the current election campaign in Delhi, the major TV channels are promoting a small set of parties as the main contestants, among whom the people are being asked to choose. All other parties have been declared to be "*irrelevant*". One has to search the Election Commission's website to find

out who are the other parties and candidates contesting the elections from a particular constituency, other than the few who are promoted in the big media.

The electoral process and the accompanying propaganda create the impression that our fate depends on the policies and actions of the party in power. All problems are blamed on the party or coalition in charge of the political executive, hiding the role of the class in power and of the other institutions of the State. In this way, the working class and other oppressed people are depoliticized; that is, they are prevented from recognising that the struggle is of one class versus another. By targeting a particular party or coalition, voting for some other party in the next election is promoted as the solution. This illusion is kept alive even though life experience repeatedly shows that a change of party in charge of executive power does not change the class nature of the State. It remains a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Our fate is not determined by which party runs the government or which individual heads it. Our fate is decided by which class wields state power. Changing the party in charge is like changing the horses that are pulling the cart, while the driver remains the same. The bourgeois class, headed by the monopoly capitalists, hold political power. Elections are used to legitimise the rule of this exploiting minority, by giving it the appearance of having the stamp of approval from the people.

Chandra Bhan: Who is really making the decisions that affect the fate of our society? Is it the elected representatives, or someone else?

Lal Singh: It is almost a year since Delhi had an elected government. Who was taking the decisions and managing the administration of the city? It was the bureaucracy, formally headed by the unelected Lt Governor.

When elections take place and one party replaces another, the bureaucracy, police and the armed forces remain the same. From the pool of senior officials, a new minister might prefer one over the other as his or her secretary. But the huge state apparatus of administration and repression remains unchanged.

The role of parliament and state assemblies is mainly that of being talk-shops. A lot of noise is created by opposition parties, creating the impression that big debates are taking place. The real business of government goes on behind the scenes. Decisions are taken in the corridors of power, where the biggest capitalists and foreign imperialists set the agenda for the government machinery to implement.

On August 15, 2014, during his speech to the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi admitted the truth that MP's and MLA's had very little work to do. He asked each of them to take up a village in their constituency and do some work there.

The Constitution of India has empowered the Executive to bypass parliament on all policy matters. The privatisation of Modern Foods, BALCO, the biggest airports in the country and the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking were all done without seeking the approval of parliament or the state assemblies. Opening up Indian Railways and defence production sectors for foreign investors has also been done recently without going to the parliament.

When the bourgeoisie wants a law passed quickly, it gets the Cabinet to issue an Ordinance, to be approved later by the Parliament. The Modi government has issued 8 ordinances in the past 7 months, including those dealing with Land Acquisition, privatisation of coal mining, and FDI in insurance.

The fact that the executive function is carried out even when there is no ruling party in place, as in Delhi during the past 11

months, shows that the party which wins elections is not really the ultimate decision-making power. The ultimate power lies in the bourgeois class.

Chandra Bhan: Who constitutes the bourgeois class and how big is this class in our country?

Lal Singh: It is indeed very important to understand the class division that exists in our society. The bourgeoisie is all the time trying to hide this and create confusion with terms such as “*middle class*” and “*aam aadmi*”. As in all class-divided societies, the class which controls the means of production is the politically dominant class in power.

The bourgeois class consists of those who own the means of social production – the mines and factories, real estate, banking, trade and agro-business corporations. They employ wage labour and pocket profit, interest or rent income every month. The owners of capital make up less than 5% of the population, while they pocket the entire surplus value created by the toiling majority.

The workers and peasants whose toil creates the wealth of society make up the majority. The working class, or proletariat, consists of those who sell their labour power and live by earning wage or salary income. They make up roughly 50% of the population.

The peasants toil on their own plots of land, getting cheated and robbed in the capitalist market which is increasingly being dominated by Indian and foreign monopoly companies. Similar is the fate of artisans and small shopkeepers, street vendors, electricians, plumbers, self-employed doctors and other small propertied sections. They together make up roughly 45% of the population.

There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the exploiting minority and the exploited majority. The capitalists

want to pocket maximum possible profits while workers, peasants and other toiling masses want to preserve and improve their living standards.

The bureaucracy, army, paramilitary and police, courts and jails, all work to defend the rule of the bourgeois class and enable maximum profits to be squeezed out of the toiling masses of people.

At the top of the bureaucracy are the Indian Administrative Services, who are recruited centrally and trained to run the entire system, both at the centre and in the states. Every central ministry and state government department has a secretary in charge from this IAS cadre. There are cadres who are in charge of specific functions such as forest officers and tax officers. Officers of the Indian Police Service run the police force and intelligence agencies.

The IAS officers come mainly from the strata of intellectuals who have been imbued with the colonial mind set. They are trained in Mussoorie, in the same institutions that trained the colonial administrators. They are taught how to eat with forks and knives on a dinner table, and how to drink like the former white sahibs. Most of them speak and think in the English language, and believe that they are god's gift to India. They think they are superior to the workers, peasants and tribal peoples of our country. They are slavish in front of the big bourgeoisie and the Anglo American imperialists. They love the existing system, which gives them power, privileges and perks and enables them to lord it over the people. These senior bureaucrats imbue the same anti-people outlook amongst their subordinates.

None of the institutions of State are neutral in the class conflict. That includes the Election Commission as well. It is not possible for any institution to be neutral in the conflict between the exploiters and the exploited. These institutions in our country were created by the British colonialists to maximise

the loot and plunder of our land and labour. After political independence these institutions have been preserved and further perfected to serve the rule of the Indian bourgeoisie, headed by the monopoly houses.

The concentration of wealth has reached such a high level that within the bourgeois class, there are just around 150 monopoly houses that together control the lion's share of the total capital in the country. With such a high degree of concentrated wealth under their control, the monopoly houses finance the principal parties and dominate the political process. They set the agenda which BJP, Congress Party and others implement when they get their turn. The big bourgeoisie uses its control over state power to guarantee maximum profits for itself and its imperialist allies, and to crush any opposition to intensified exploitation and plunder.

Coming back to your original question about the Delhi elections, our party's view is that the working people must not fall for any of the illusions that are being spread through these elections. These elections are not going to take the toiling people any closer to getting what they deserve as a matter of right.

The biggest myth that is continuously propagated by the bourgeoisie and all its politicians is that the people as a whole decide their own fate by electing the government of their choice. In reality, the bourgeoisie uses the ballot to legitimize its rule, and make it appear that it is the people who have given the winning party the mandate to rule.

As far as the working class is concerned, these elections are neither free nor fair. They are completely rigged to serve the interest of the bourgeois class in power.

Chandra Bhan: Can you explain why you say these elections are rigged?

Lal Singh: Rigging covers not only the illegal and violent methods used in elections. It covers all forms of bias in the electoral process. I say these elections are rigged because the question as to which class is to lead society has already been settled. These elections cannot dislodge the bourgeoisie from power.

In all capitalist countries, the bourgeoisie manufactures votes for the party of its choice and deprives rival parties of votes through various means. Such rigging of elections goes on all the time, both in the so called “advanced democracies” like United States and Britain, and in countries like ours.

In our country the rigging begins from the preparation of the electoral rolls. Workers, particularly migrant workers, are denied the right to vote, because, to get onto the voters’ list, the voter needs proof of residence. The bourgeois parties at the same time ensure a large number of bogus voters are put onto the electoral rolls.

There is no limit on what the bourgeoisie spends on its favourite party or parties. There is no limit to the time for electioneering enjoyed by the main bourgeois parties. The bourgeoisie launches its election campaign months or even years in advance, to mould public opinion in favour of this or that party. It then carries out a blitzkrieg during the last two weeks before polling, to ensure that the party it chooses to run the government for the next five years gets elected.

The electoral process ensures that parties of the working class and candidates who are selected by the people are effectively debarred from putting across their views to the electorate. They are completely marginalized. There is nothing free or fair about these elections as far as the working class is concerned.

During voting time, further large-scale rigging frequently takes place. The methods vary, from booth capturing, preventing people of this or that community from voting, casting of bogus votes, and manipulation of the final results. Organising bomb blasts outside polling booths has been a favourite method of rigging by rival parties in some regions. There are numerous instances of officials representing the Election Commission rigging the vote count in favour of one or another party, by manipulating the electronic voting machines. In our country, the manufacture of bogus Voter ID Cards and the method of removing the ink on the finger have become a kind of industry.

After every election, various parties, particularly those likely to lose, complain of rigging by rival parties. Nevertheless, the Election Commission routinely declares that “*free and fair elections*” have been conducted.

The most important method of rigging of elections by the monopolies these days is through the TV and other news media under their control. Lies are spread on a daily basis, to prevent people from recognising the truth that they have no say in this existing democracy, which is in fact the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the vast masses of workers, peasants and other working people.

The bourgeoisie rules through the ballot and the bullet. The ballot is to allow the workers, peasants and other intermediate strata to choose who amongst the parties of the exploiters and oppressors should rule over them for the next five years. The bullet is always kept in readiness to crush workers and peasants if they rise up in revolt against the system.

Chandra Bhan: There is a prevailing notion that BJP represents fascism and is the main danger. What do you think of this notion?

Lal Singh: It is a wrong and extremely harmful notion. The big bourgeoisie is the source of fascism. Both Congress and

BJP are champions of the same anti-democratic program of big capital. To identify only the BJP as the symbol of fascism implies uniting with every other party, including Congress Party, in the name of fighting against fascism.

What is fascism? It is the rule of the most chauvinist, parasitic, imperialist and warmongering section of the bourgeois class. It means the dictate of finance capital, imposed by brute force on the whole of society.

It was the German imperialist bourgeoisie that brought Hitler to power and embraced fascism as the means to achieve its expansionist aims and crush the working class and all progressive forces. After the Second World War, US imperialism took over the mantle of Hitlerite fascism. This so-called oldest democracy has hanged communists and progressive people. It used to brand anyone who is opposed to its policies as being “communist agents”. Now, in the name of “war against terrorism”, it has launched fascist attacks on the rights of its own citizens. In the name of “homeland security”, it has targeted all those who question its imperialist warmongering drive. The US is the country with the maximum number of people incarcerated in jails.

What does the experience of our country show? It shows that the Indian Republic has continued to brutally attack the Manipuris, Nagas, Kashmiris and others, even as it presents itself as the world’s largest democracy. All kinds of fascist laws have been used to target different sections of the people. These include the Preventive Detention Act against communists in the fifties, the TADA directed against people of the Sikh faith, ESMA against workers, POTA against Muslims, AFSPA against the people of Kashmir and the North East, and the UAPA. Thousands of innocent youth have been tortured and jailed under the fascist laws. Thousands of innocent people have been murdered in fake encounters. All this has been going on side by side with periodic elections.

History shows that both when Congress Party is in charge and when BJP is in charge, the people and their struggles have been attacked with brute force after portraying them as secessionist, extremist, fundamentalist, and anti-national, and against national unity and territorial integrity. State terrorism has been escalated in the name of fighting terrorism. These are all signs of fascism.

To combat the growing fascism means to fight against the big bourgeoisie and its program of so-called economic reforms, anti-corruption and good governance. If a party starts drawing a line between Congress Party and BJP, claiming that one is fascist and the other is not, it would be playing a harmful role. It is harmful because such a line creates dangerous illusions, splits the unity of the working class and diverts it from the struggle against the big bourgeoisie.

Chandra Bhan: What then should the working class and other oppressed people do? How can the situation be changed?

Lal Singh: We need a revolution to change the situation.

What is needed today is to seriously prepare the conditions for a revolution that would change not merely the ruling party but the nature of the state and the ruling class. We need a revolution that would eliminate capitalism, sweep away all remnants of feudalism and the colonial legacy, end imperialist domination and plunder and pave the way for ensuring prosperity and protection for all, on the road of socialism and communism. We need a revolution that would replace the existing State of bourgeois rule by a new State of workers' and peasants' rule. The first task of the workers' and peasants' State would be to take control of the principal means of large-scale production, to convert them from being the private property of capitalists into the social property of the entire people.

Workers and peasants together make up the majority of people in our country, and in each state of the Indian Union. They must become an organised united political force capable of carrying out the revolution. As a communist party, we focus our main attention on preparing the working class to play its rightful role as the leader of the revolution.

To prepare the working class, peasants, women and youth for revolution, we need to raise the level of their political consciousness and organisational strength. This can be achieved only if we mobilise and enable them to participate actively in politics, to take collective action based on sound analysis of the situation.

Preparing the conditions for revolution is a full-time constant work for our party. We strive to use every available avenue to politicize the working class and other oppressed people. It is from this perspective that we look at any particular election campaign. It is one of the avenues and occasions to be used for making people aware of what is actually happening to our society and what the real way is to ensure prosperity and protection for all.

We call on and assist workers, peasants, women and youth to build and strengthen their organisations of struggle, at the workplace and in their place of residence. We carry out practical political mobilizing work to enable people's committees to be established in urban and rural areas, wherever working people live and face common problems. Both in such people's committees and among workers' unions and peasants' unions, our Party strives to build the political unity of all the oppressed, rising above all petty rivalries and divisions.

We mobilise and organise the working people to actively oppose the anti-national and anti-social program of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. We are building unity around the alternative program of vesting sovereignty in the people and reorienting the economy to provide for all. We agitate for immediate economic measures to fulfil the basic needs of all,

including the creation of a modern universal public distribution and public procurement system, through the nationalisation of large-scale trade and banking. We agitate for radical reforms in the system of democracy and its political process, to create space for workers and peasants to have a say in setting the agenda for society.

We mobilise and organise people to fight for their rights, including their right to determine their own destiny. It is only through active participation in the class struggle that the working class and its allies can get prepared for the revolution, which is the only route for them to actually become the master of India.

Chandra Bhan: A debate has been generated about removing the words “secular” and “socialist” from the preamble to the Constitution of India. What is your view?

Lal Singh: The preamble to the Constitution is full of lies. It does not matter to the working class whether two of these lies are removed or kept intact.

The biggest lie is that “*we, the people*” gave to ourselves this Constitution. Facts show that this Constitution was formulated and adopted by a set of Anglicised individuals in 1950, who had been elected by a propertied minority of the population, in communally divided Hindu majority and Muslim minority constituencies, under the British Raj.

The recorded debates in the Constituent Assembly show that the majority of its members considered the toiling masses of our people, who do not think or speak in English, as being unfit to have any role in governance. They decided that the people at large need not approve this Constitution, this fundamental law for independent India. It is therefore a deception to call this State a *Republic*, which is defined as an organ of rule *by* the people, *of* the people and *for* the people. The constitution of this State was not even formally approved by the people.

The Constitution of India has two parts. There is one small part called the *Directive Principles of State Policy*, which is full of noble policy objectives. This part says whatever the people want and expect of the State, but without any legal teeth. The directive principles are not justiciable.

The Directive Principles give the impression of a State that is committed to provide prosperity and protection for all, and in which we, the people, are the master. This is used by all parties and politicians of the bourgeois class to hail this Constitution as being very democratic and even socialist. The debates in the Constituent Assembly show that the chapter on Directive Principles was included deliberately for the express purpose of deceiving the people.

The theory underlying the operative part of the Constitution of India is that the people are not fit to govern themselves and therefore decision-making power must be held strictly in the hands of an elite body of so-called people's representatives. It is an adaptation of the theory of "*white man's burden*", on the basis of which the British colonial State was built from 1858 onwards. As the anti-colonial struggle developed, the British rulers developed their State further, with measures to strengthen the suppression of dissent as well as measures to accommodate Indian elite within the provincial legislative bodies. This same process has been taken further in post-colonial India, with the big bourgeoisie accommodating propertied elite from various regions, communities and castes, while excluding the toiling majority from power.

Subhash C. Kashyap, a well-known expert on the Indian Constitution, has noted that the Constituent Assembly "*took a conscious decision not to make a complete departure from the past*". He wrote, "*In fact, the sources of some of the provisions of the Constitution can be traced back to the beginnings of the East India Company and British rule in India. ... nearly 75% of the Constitution can be said to be a reproduction of*

Government of India Act, 1935". The late Justice Krishna Iyer also expressed a similar opinion, commenting that it is the river Thames in London that feeds the Yamuna in Delhi.

The preamble of the Constitution was amended during the Emergency period in the seventies to proclaim that India is a "secular" and "socialist" state. This was the period when the government forcibly destroyed the homes of lakhs of working people in Delhi. It was a time when in cities and countryside, poor working people were taken to camps and forcibly sterilized.

The entire Constitution is based on the colonial communal outlook that our society is made up of a Hindu majority, a Muslim minority and other religious minorities. The State continues to be used for unleashing violence against particular religious communities, while spouting sermons about secularism, tolerance and communal harmony.

Not once, not twice, but repeatedly and with increased frequency since 1984, this State has organised the killing of its own citizens, who it is supposed to protect. From the people of Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir during the communal Partition in 1947-48, to the Nagas, Manipuris, Mizos and Kashmiris for decades on end, the list of the victims of state terror has expanded to include the Sikhs in Punjab, Delhi and elsewhere, Muslims in Gujarat, UP, Assam and elsewhere, Christians and *adivasis* in various regions. All this shows that the existing State is based on a foundation of violence against citizens, instead of being duty bound to protect them.

The Constitution does not even recognise the existence, let alone the right of self-determination, of the different nations, nationalities and peoples who make up our society. The continuing struggles in Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland and other places show that the Indian Union is an instrument of colonial suppression of national rights within its territory, so as to impose the dictate of the big bourgeoisie over the whole

society, in the name of defending “*national unity and territorial integrity of India*”.

The caste identity is perpetuated and manipulated by the political parties which dominate the electoral arena. They cultivate rival vote banks on the basis of caste. The polity itself has been divided by the institution of caste-based reservation of electoral constituencies, which violates the principle that every adult citizen in every constituency must have equal right to be elected. While it is supposed to benefit the victims of the caste system, caste-based reservation in elected legislative bodies and in the bureaucracy has only created a privileged stratum of persons with a stake in preserving caste divisions.

In sum, what exists today is a state that facilitates capitalist development and the domination of the monopolies, while preserving the legacy of colonialism and remnants of feudalism and other old outdated relations including oppression on the basis of caste. It continues to be an organ of communal division and of suppression and plunder of all the nations, nationalities and peoples who inhabit this land. In class terms, it is an instrument of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, headed by the monopoly houses.

The central question is this: Should we, the Indian working class and people, not get rid of this power which the British imperialists transferred to their counterparts in our country in 1947? Should we not establish a new power, with a new constitution based on the theory of vesting sovereignty in the people?

Chandra Bhan: What does it mean to vest sovereignty in the people?

Lal Singh: The struggle to make the people the *malik* of India is a continuation of the centuries-long struggle for national and social liberation in our country.

The central question concerning the political system is where *sovereignty*, the supreme decision-making power, resides. Old forms of power, such as parliamentary democracy, facilitate the old content, the dictatorship of a minority of exploiters. The new content – the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of the toiling majority led by the modern working class – requires a new form of representation. Sovereignty must be in the hands of the people and not in the hands of Parliament or the Cabinet or the President of India.

Workers and peasants, who make up the majority, must be able to select and elect their best representatives to the highest decision-making bodies and participate in setting the agenda for society. They must be able to hold those elected to account and to recall the one they elected at any time. People must have the right to make and change laws, to approve major decisions through referendums, and the right to re-write the constitution.

A new Constitution needs to be formulated in consultation with the people and approved by them, based on the principle of vesting sovereignty in the people. It will define the inviolable rights of workers, of peasants, women and youth, as well as the rights of all human beings including the right to conscience, and equal political rights of all adult citizens. It will declare it to be the duty of the State to ensure that these rights are protected and all violators are punished. It will define and guarantee the rights of the numerous nations, nationalities and peoples who make up India. The constitutional guarantees will be made effective by enabling laws and mechanisms for strict enforcement.

All the languages of the numerous peoples of the country will be recognised and become the languages for transacting official matters. The predominant role of the English language in state affairs will end.

Public administration will cease to be in the hands of a privileged stratum which stands above the masses of people and looks down on them. All civil servants will receive workers' wages and benefits, according to their skill level, and be held accountable for serving the people. There will be no palatial bungalows and retinues of servants for officers in either the administration or in defence.

Defending the country will not remain the sole responsibility of the regular armed forces of the Union. It will become the responsibility of the entire people. All youth will receive mandatory training in defending the country and its borders. The communal organisation of regiments, inherited from colonial times, will be replaced by a modern organisation based on the constituent republics of the Union. Every constituent of the Union will have its armed troops. The division of the armed forces into a privileged officer caste and "*lower ranks*" will come to an end. The regular armed forces will not remain a parasite on the economy. Aside from those in active combat or full-time training, soldiers will be engaged in useful social labour, shoulder to shoulder with the toiling masses.

The unelected judiciary of today, which is trained in English jurisprudence and treats the people of our country as uncivilised brutes and suspected criminals, will be replaced by an elected judiciary. All colonial laws will be repealed and replaced with new laws based on modernising the age-old Indian theory of justice and incorporating the lessons learnt from the international experience of socialism in the 20th century. English will cease to be the language used in courts. It will be replaced by the languages of the numerous nations, nationalities and peoples of India.

The bourgeois class has paid lip service to the principle of government being *of* the people, *by* the people and *for* the people. The proletariat has the interest and the capacity to realise this in practice. The Indian proletariat must fight for a new State and Constitution based on the following political

theory: (i) sovereignty belongs to the people; (ii) the duty of a political party is to enable the people to govern themselves; and (iii) the duty of the State is to ensure prosperity and protection for all. In class terms, it will be a dictatorship of the proletariat, an alliance of the toiling majority of people against all forms of exploitation, led by the modern working class. It will be an instrument for advancing the struggle to eliminate class exploitation and end all class and caste divisions in society.

Chandra Bhan: What should be the approach of communists towards elections at this time?

Lal Singh: Elections are an important arena of struggle, but not the only arena or even the main arena of struggle. Elections are an occasion when the widest sections of people are drawn into discussing politics. The bourgeoisie tries to keep the discussion at the lowest level. We communists must strive to raise the level of discussion and the political consciousness of the working class and people.

We must use the occasion of election campaigns to carry out the widest possible exposure of the political and economic system. Our aim is to dispel illusions about bourgeois democracy, and win over the working class and peasantry to the program of replacing it with proletarian democracy.

A communist party cannot and must not participate in elections in the same way that bourgeois parties do. A communist party must not promise workers and peasants that their problems can be solved simply by voting them to power. We must tell people the truth that no solution is possible until and unless we carry out a revolution to change the entire political and economic system. We must put forward a fighting program around which the working class can unite and rally all the oppressed, and get prepared for the revolution.

The aim of the Communist Party is to bring the working class to power. It does not seek power for itself, in the manner in

which parties of the bourgeoisie do in the present system. If a communist party seeks to retain power in its own hands, it will lose its class character of being the vanguard of the proletariat.

We communists are fighting to establish a new system in place of the present system. Our aim is to seize the means of social production from the hands of the bourgeoisie and bring them under social control. We aim to take over the banks and other financial institutions, as well as foreign trade, internal wholesale trade and large-scale retail trade. We must immediately begin to implement measures to reorient the economy to provide for all. Can we accomplish all this through the existing anti-people bureaucracy, police, laws, judges and courts? No, we will be foolish to expect this.

The working class cannot use the present bureaucracy, the present police and armed forces, the present judiciary for implementing its program. We communists must not promote illusions on this score amongst the workers.

It is also important to recognize that revolution is not an act of a few armed individuals or groups. It is the conscious act of millions of workers and peasants. Revolution will succeed only when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to deceive the people that the existing state and system can bring them prosperity and progress. The role of a communist party is to make this happen by acting as the vanguard of the working class.

Today, there are many communists belonging to numerous parties who recognize the need to restore the unity of the communist movement. A large number of communist parties united in the mass action that was organised on January 24, 2015, to oppose the US imperialist chieftain Obama's visit as Chief Guest on Republic Day. This event showed that it is possible for all communists to unite in action, and such unity is urgently required.

No matter who forms the government in Delhi, the working class and other oppressed sections of the people have to get organised and prepared to fight tit for tat against all attacks on our livelihood and rights. All communist parties must unite to lead this effort. Unity in action by all communists is an important step towards a politically united working class, with one single re-united Communist Party at its head. This is the vision with which our Party is carrying out its work of preparing the subjective conditions for revolution.

Chandra Bhan: Thank you, comrade, for this interesting and enlightening interview.

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