

## **Step up the struggle for a society free from exploitation and oppression!**

May Day statement of Mazdoor Ekta Committee, April 20, 2023

On May Day, May 1, 2023, workers all over the world will draw inspiration from the memory of all their comrades who have sacrificed their lives in the struggle for our rights. Workers will raise their demands in militant protest demonstrations. Through protest rallies, they will reaffirm their determination to take forward the struggle for liberation from capitalist exploitation and oppression. Alongside this, workers will also reaffirm their resolve to find an alternative to the present system of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Today, workers in every country are boldly marching ahead on the path of struggle. They are out on the streets, fighting for wages that would ensure a dignified human existence, for a secure livelihood, against sky-rocketing prices and soaring unemployment. They are raising their voices against capitalist exploitation, price rise and unemployment, against the oppression of nations, communal violence, racism and imperialist war. Workers are fighting for their rights and for a system in which workers and peasants can enjoy the fruits of their labour.

The privatisation agenda of the capitalist rulers is being boldly challenged by workers in the railways, road transport, petroleum and defence sectors, electricity generation and distribution, banking and insurance, etc. Public services such as education, health, housing, electricity and water supply, public transport and telecom, are all being turned into a source of profit for the capitalists. Workers are opposing this and demanding that access to these services should be the right of all people in the society. Mazdoor Ekta Committee salutes all the workers who are challenging the privatisation agenda of the capitalists.

In the name of simplifying 44 labour laws, the government has introduced four labour codes. The actual aim of these is to make it easier for the capitalists to intensify the exploitation of the workers. All the rights that workers in various sectors had won through long years of struggle will now be taken away. A working day of 12-16 hours will be the new norm. Women will be compelled to work in night shift, without any guarantee for their security.

Organising themselves in trade unions to fight for their rights will become extremely difficult for a vast majority of the workers.

Peasants are in struggle, for guaranteed public procurement of their produce at remunerative prices. Workers are demanding a universal public distribution system that will provide all the working people with their daily requirements, in adequate quantities and good quality, at affordable prices. These are long-standing demands of the workers and peasants.

In spite of all these struggles, why are the demands of workers and peasants not being met? Why does the wealth of the biggest corporate houses – Tata, Birla, Ambani, Adani – continue to increase? Why is the condition of workers and peasants going from bad to worse? It is the greed of the monopoly capitalists for maximum profits that is preventing these demands of the workers and peasants from being fulfilled. The monopoly capitalists want to become richer at the fastest possible pace, by greatly increasing the exploitation of the workers in every sector and by intensifying the loot of the peasants. The capitalist class is the real ruler of India. It is headed by the biggest monopoly capitalist houses. The Indian state serves the interests of the capitalist class. The state ensures that the agenda of the capitalist class is always implemented, regardless of which political party forms the government.

The capitalist system is the source of all the problems of our people. All the institutions of the Indian state – the political party that forms the government and its cabinet of ministers, the parliamentary opposition, the police, army, judiciary and the news media – are instruments to impose the dictatorship of the capitalist class on the workers and peasants.

The political system and process of this “world’s largest democracy” ensures that the workers, peasants and all working people are always kept out of power. The party that secures a majority in parliament forms the government and the cabinet of ministers. The power to take every decision that affects our lives is concentrated in the hands of the cabinet. People have no mechanisms to select the candidates for election, to hold the elected representatives to account or to recall them. We the toilers have no power to propose legislation or to amend the anti-worker, anti-peasant, anti-people laws.

The illusion is spread that by voting in elections, people bring in the government of their choice. This is the biggest lie. The truth is that the capitalists pour in crores of rupees to ensure the electoral victory of whichever one of their trusted political parties that can best implement the agenda of the capitalists. The government is formed of that political party which can most cunningly present the capitalist agenda as being in the “public interest”.

State organised communal violence and state terror is the preferred weapon of the rulers. Using this weapon, they smash the unity of the workers and peasants again and again. They weaken our struggles. We have to be cautious against every attempt of the rulers to break our unity.

Today, a major obstacle in the path of our struggles are those forces who are spreading the illusion that our democracy and Constitution are just fine, that the problem is merely that of some corrupt and bad leaders. They say that if the present BJP government is removed from power, then the problems of the workers and peasants will be solved. They are trying to mobilise the struggling people to elect an alternative to the BJP in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

We have 76 years of experience behind us. We have seen different political parties forming the government. But the agenda of the capitalists has continued unhindered. The gap between the rich and poor has continued to grow. Do we want to continue in the same vicious cycle? We have to replace the rule of the capitalist class with the rule of the workers and peasants.

In place of the present system of parliamentary democracy, we must establish a system in which we, the people, are the collective decision-makers and masters of society. It will be a system in which the executive is accountable to the elected legislative body and those elected are accountable to the electorate. The political process will affirm the right of every adult to elect and be elected, including the right to select candidates before any election. Election campaigns will be publicly funded and no private financing will be allowed.

We workers and peasants make up the majority of the society. We produce the wealth of the country, but the ruling capitalist class deprives us of the fruits of our labour. The wealth of the capitalists keeps growing while our conditions keep going from bad to worse. We have to change this situation. Those who produce the wealth of the country must be her masters. Only then can we establish the new society in which the economy will be oriented towards fulfilling the growing needs of the people and people will be empowered to take decisions that affect our future.

Comrade workers,

133 years ago, on May 1, 1890, workers of all the countries of Europe came on to the streets demanding an 8-hour working day. At the call of the Socialist International established in 1889, May 1 was declared as May Day, the day marking the struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation. Since then, May Day has been celebrated all over the world, as the day when workers come forward with renewed resolve to strengthen the struggle for liberation from capitalist exploitation.

The working class has to liberate society from the capitalist system. As long as the capitalist system continues, the exploitation and oppression of workers, peasants and all toilers cannot be ended.

Let us strengthen our united struggle in defence of the rights of the workers, peasants and all the oppressed. Let us mobilise all the exploited and oppressed masses, with the aim of replacing the rule of the capitalist class led by the monopoly capitalist houses, with the rule of the workers and peasants.

**Workers, peasants, women and youth, India belongs to us!**

**We are her masters!**

**Long live May Day!**

**Inquilab Zindabad!**

