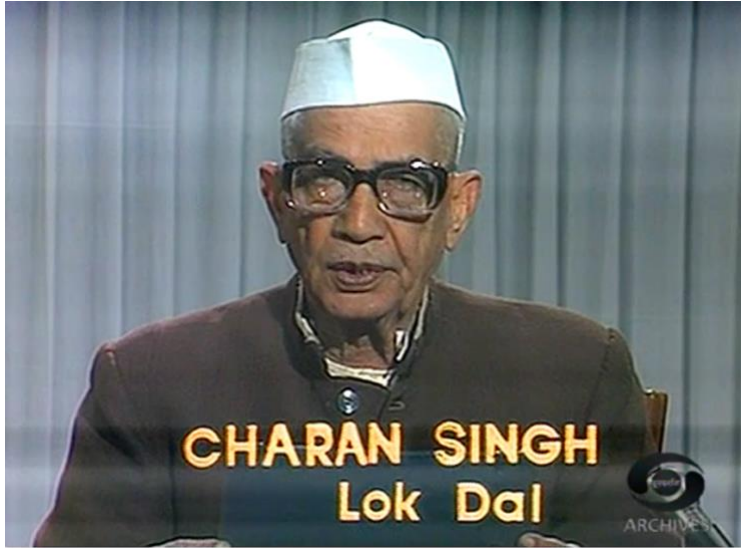




**Chaudhary Charan Singh
President, Lok Dal.**

Broadcast to the nation on Doordarshan 30 November 1984 before the Parliamentary Elections

<https://youtu.be/5vrzkKooDuU?si=WJVaiUvCDcMhiLnB>



I speak today to appeal to you to vote for the Lok Dal, also known as DMKP. The question that should arise is - why? My answer is that while other parties have so far been saying that they want to banish poverty, our party alone has said how it will banish it. It is the only party which has refused to make any promise that cannot be fulfilled. In simple terms, the party, unlike other parties, has refused to be, or even appear to be, all things to all men.

Our party has made it clear that there are no soft options for this country. That is, if the poor are to be helped, somewhere somebody has to accept sacrifices. Somebody must pay, and perhaps very dearly, if poverty is to be eliminated quickly. Thus, we expect the more affluent sections of the people to accept sacrifices voluntarily. And if they do not do so, we will use the power of our organization as well as of the government in which we hope to participate, not only to rouse the people and mobilize them, but also make the rich forego their riches or otherwise accept the burdens which are necessary for ending mass poverty and mass unemployment.

We mean to tell the people that the stark truth show that many illusions which continue to be fostered by the other parties are shed. I appeal to you to read our manifesto. In specific terms we have made it clear that conspicuous consumption is going to be taxed, and taxed heavily. The national resources will be spent not on television sets, air conditioners, and cars for the rich, but on providing clean latrines for the village people, particularly our women folk. Not on five star hotels, but on projects for clean drinking water to more than one lakh villages which do not have this facility. Not on unnecessary international conferences or Asian Games, costing more than a thousand crores of rupees every second or third year, but on irrigation, better seeds, better fertilizers. Not only skyscrapers, but on cheap houses for the homeless. Not on costly fabrics made of artificial yarn for the rich, but on providing cotton yarn to our handloom weavers so that cloth may be produced for the millions and job also be



provided for the millions. I want to repeat that we cannot pamper the affluent and also banish poverty at the same time. The rich in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras do not even bother to know where their food comes from. How many of them have an idea of the destitution caused by floods and drought to crores of farmers and other villagers in one part of the country or another almost every third year.

Our rich think nothing of spending even the thousand rupees or more for a meal and for a night's stay in a luxury hotel when nearly half the people in this country do not have half that amount to spend in a whole year. They think nothing of lavish expenditure on a single marriage when millions of our young men and women are without jobs. Do the rich care to bestow a thought on those living in the shadows of their mansions? The hundreds of thousands of the poor in the towns who have little food, less clothing and no shelter, whose children are born on pavements, many of them to die of malnutrition and starvation? Has any party other than ours before or now had the courage to say that it is prepared to risk the ire of the rich in order that the poor may no longer remain poor? Has any party had the courage to say that it will stop the growth of big factories where they are unnecessary in order that tens of thousands of cottage and small industries may come up and crores of people who are now thrown on these streets to die of starvation will get worthwhile and remunerative jobs?

Now you can understand why the metropolitan press, which is owned and run by the big business, why the super class of intelligentsia is up in arms against our party. These people say that our conception of India's economy is a retrograde one. But how many of them have care to consider why in the last 37 years the country is becoming poorer and poorer? Or why at the end of every five year plan more and more people are without jobs, more and more people go without food, shelter, clothing and even education? In the first span of eleven years of the late Mrs Gandhi's regime, 1966 till 1977, the country slipped from the 85th position to the 111th position in the world. Today, there is no country left in the world with a population of more than 10 million which is poorer than India. A World Bank Survey said some years ago that India had been pushed into the fourth world, and a majority of the destitute people of the whole world lived in our subcontinent, most of them in our own country. Their survey said that India has already been pushed a hundred years back.

Our party is determined to change this sorrowful scene of our country. Ours is the only party which has a coherent social and economic philosophy that will force sacrifices on the rich and release resources for the quick ending of mass poverty, mass unemployment and vulgar inequalities of wealth and income. We wish to end the tragic situation whereby those who produce food go without food, those who build houses are homeless, those who produce or help produce cloth are going naked, while people who do not produce anything live in luxury. It is only natural that the rich whose interests are threatened by our party or their media to spread calumnies about our party.

The media call me a casteist, knowing not or conveniently forgetting that I have crusaded against the caste system all my life and that I wrote to the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on this subject more than 30 years ago, making a positive suggestion in this regard. But we take no step to abolish our social system based on birth, which is the main cause of the undoing of our unfortunate country. Nor was he prepared to enact a law banning organizations whose membership was confined to a particular creed or caste from operating in the political sphere, despite the fact that that he himself seconded a resolution passed in this behalf by the Constituent Assembly on May 30, 1948, soon after Mahatma



Gandhi's assassination. And the irony or joke of the situation is that his heir of the third generation, the present Prime Minister is accusing the opposition parties of encouraging divisive forces in our country to gain political power and thus deprive him of his rightful heritage.

The media call me a Kulak leader, not knowing or again forgetting that I was the only person in the whole of India among all Ministers and Chief Ministers who abolished landlordism in lock, stock and barrel. This was in Uttar Pradesh, where as its Revenue Minister, I conferred ownership rights on all the tenants, irrespective of their nomenclature. Not only that, even those whose names were recorded as trespassers, or were not recorded in any capacity whatsoever, were declared owners of the pieces of land actually under their plough. Nearly 30% of the latter class who were thus benefited were Harijans. Yet the media goes on calling me anti-Harijan. The media say I am against the towns in order to conceal the fact that I am only against those who have a vested interest in poverty and exploit the poor, both rural and urban. These are the traditional ways of the heartless exploiters, whether in the social or economic field, of confusing the people. We are fighting on two fronts - a class war as well as a caste war.

Fortunately, however, the poor of this land are already awakened and they can no longer be deceived. Our manifesto is perhaps the most lyrical document ever produced in this country. We have said that we will rouse the people to a realization that the world is not an illusion, that man is not governed by an inexorable fate, and that the circumstances of birth and life can be overcome. Our manifesto has said that it will foster the spirit of Satyagraha if ever civil liberties are threatened by any government thus giving meaning to Gandhiji's sterling words that real Swaraj would come not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused.

We are not in the race for populism. Our party gives the middle class a choice of either being with the forces of the status quo or joining the revolutionary struggle of the people. To express our party's resolve in one sentence - it will work for the transfer of power to the rural and urban poor, the small and medium peasants, the artisans and the landless workers, the destitute and the suppressed men and women whom Gandhiji described as the dumb millions of India. People have asked me whether state power can be captured by the peasantry. My answer is that it will certainly be captured by the common people as a whole. And the movement launched by us is not going to end with the election.

Now you have my answer to the question why you should vote for our party whose candidates are contesting on the Lok Dal symbol of a farmer with a plough and two bullocks.

Jai Hind!