
ONCE MORE ON PARTYISM AND NON-PARTYISM

The question of Party and non-Party, necessary and "unnecessary", candidatures is undoubtedly one of the most important—if not the most important—in the present Duma election. First of all and above all, the electors and the broad masses who are watching the election must realise *why* the election is necessary, *what* is the task that faces a Duma deputy, *what* the tactics of a St. Petersburg deputy in the Third Duma should be. But a really full and accurate idea of all this is possible only if the whole election campaign is of a Party character.

For those who desire in the election to uphold the interests of the really broad and broadest masses the first and foremost task is to develop the political consciousness of the masses. The more this consciousness is developed, and in inseparable connection with its development, the more clearly defined is the grouping of the masses according to the real interests of the various classes of the population. All non-partyism, even under exceptionally favourable conditions, invariably indicates that clarity and maturity are lacking in the political consciousness of the candidate, the groups or parties supporting him and the mass of people who take part in his election.

In the case of all the parties devoid of proper organisation and a clear-cut and principled programme,³³ whose aim in the election is to cater for the interests of particular small groups of the propertied classes, the development of the political consciousness of the masses is always thrust into the background, while a clear class grouping of the masses is practically always regarded as undesirable and

dangerous. For those who have no desire to come to the defence of the bourgeois parties clarity of political consciousness and of class alignment comes before everything. This, of course, does not exclude temporary joint actions by different parties in certain special cases, but it does absolutely exclude all non-partyism and all weakening or obscuring of party character.

But for the very reason that we uphold the party principle, in the interests of the broad masses, for the sake of freeing them from any kind of bourgeois influence, for the sake of the fullest clarity of class alignments, we must exert to the maximum our strength and vigilance to see that the Party principle is observed not in *words merely*, but in *fact*.

The non-party candidate Kuzmin-Karavayev, who has already been labelled an "unnecessary candidate", lays down that, strictly speaking, there are no party candidates at the elections in St. Petersburg. This opinion is so false that it is not worth pausing to refute it. It is impossible to doubt that Kutler and N. D. Sokolov are party candidates. Kuzmin-Karavayev is led astray partly by the fact that neither of the parties which have nominated them are existing quite openly as such. But if this makes it difficult to run the elections on a party basis it does not do away with the necessity of it. To give in to *such* difficulties, to fold one's arms in face of them, is absolutely identical with acceding to Mr. Stolypin's desire to hear confirmation of his "constitutionalism" from the lips of the "opposition" (the so-called opposition).

For the masses who are taking part in the St. Petersburg election it is particularly important now to find out *which* parties have *given up* in face of these difficulties and which of them have preserved in their entirety both their programme and their slogans; which have tried to "adapt themselves" to the reactionary regime by curtailing and restricting their Duma activity, their press and their organisation to the framework of this regime and which of them have adapted themselves to it by changing certain forms of activity, but not by any means by clipping their slogans in the Duma, or by strait-jacketing their press, organisa-

tion, etc. Such a comprehensive inquiry, based on the history of the parties, based on the facts of their activity inside and outside the Duma, should be the main content of the election campaign. The masses should, in this new and, for democrats, more difficult situation, re-acquaint themselves with the *parties* which claim the title of democratic. The masses should familiarise themselves again and again with the features that distinguish the bourgeois democrats from the democrats who have nominated N. D. Sokolov on this occasion, the differences in their general outlook, ultimate aims, their attitude to the task of the great international movement for emancipation, their ability to uphold the ideals and methods of the movement for emancipation in Russia. The masses must come out of this election campaign more party-conscious, more clearly aware of the interests, aims, slogans, points of view and methods of action of the different classes—that is the permanent result which the political trend represented by N. D. Sokolov values above everything and which it will be able to achieve by the most strenuous, unwavering, persistent and comprehensive work.

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Signed: *Vl. Ilyin*

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