
ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS TO THE FOURTH DUMA

On the eve of the elections the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party has come forward, despite cruel persecution, despite wholesale arrests, with a clearer, more distinct and more precise programme, tactics and platform than any other party.

In January 1912 the All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. summed up the results of the ideological and political work carried out by the Party in the grim years of the counter-revolution. The Conference decisions gave answers to all the pressing questions of the movement. Thanks to those decisions, the election platform was simply a final statement. The platform was published by the Central Committee in Russia and was then reprinted by a whole series of local organisations. The whole bourgeois press reported the Conference and published some of its decisions.

In the six months since the Conference, work has been going on through the Party press and dozens of reports, in hundreds of speeches in factory groups and at the meetings held in April and May, to explain the Conference decisions and to put them into effect. The Party's slogans—a republic, an eight-hour working day, confiscation of the landed estates—have spread throughout Russia and have been accepted by the foremost proletarians. The revolutionary upsurge of the masses, its expression ranging from strikes and meetings to revolts in the armed forces, has proved these slogans to be correct and vital.

Our Party has already made use of the elections, and very extensively too. No amount of "interpretation" by

the police, no amount of falsification of the Fourth Duma (by the priesthood or otherwise) can nullify *this* result. Propaganda, organised strictly on Party lines, has already been carried out everywhere and has *set the tone* for the entire election campaign of the Social-Democrats.

The bourgeois parties in a hasty, slapdash manner are writing "platforms for the elections", for promises, for hoodwinking the voters. The liquidators, too, who are trailing behind the liberals, are now devising a *legal* "platform for the elections". The liquidators are making a fuss about platforms in the legal, censored press as they prepare to cover up their utter confusion, disorganisation, and lack of ideological principle, with a respectable, law-abiding "platform for the elections".

Not a platform "for the elections", but elections to implement the *revolutionary Social-Democratic* platform!—that is how the Party of the working class sees it. We have already used the elections to this end, and will use them to the hilt. We will use even the most reactionary tsarist Duma to advocate the revolutionary platform, tactics and programme of the Russian S.D. Labour Party. Truly valuable are only those platforms that complete the long work of *revolutionary* agitation, which has already given *full* answers to *all* the questions of the movement, and not those platforms (particularly the legal ones!) that are composed in all haste as a stop-gap and as a noisy advertisement, as in the case of the liquidators.

Six months have passed since the Party re-established itself. Overcoming incredible difficulties, suffering from fierce persecution and experiencing breaks in the work of this or that local centre or of the common centre—the Central Committee—the Party is definitely going forward, extending its work and its influence among the masses. This extension of the work is taking place in a *new form*: in addition to the illegal nuclei, which are secret and narrow, and better disguised than before, there is broader legal Marxist propaganda. It is just this distinctive character of the new preparations for revolution in the new conditions that has long been noted and acknowledged by the Party.

And we can now give a full answer to the noisy utterances of the liquidators, who threaten us with "duplicate candidates". Empty threats that scare no one! The liquidators are so badly beaten and impotent that *no amount of help* can revive them. They cannot so much as think of putting up "duplicate candidates"; if they did so, they would win a pitiful, ludicrously insignificant number of votes. They know this and will not try the experiment. They are making a noise merely to divert attention and conceal the truth.

We said "no amount of help". The liquidators are counting on help from abroad. Their friends—particularly the Letts, the Bund,³⁴ and Trotsky—have announced the convocation of *ten* "centres, organisations and factions"! Don't laugh! The world abroad is rich, great and bountiful. As many as "ten centres"! The methods used in this case are the same as with the government in the Fourth Duma: preparations for setting up a representative body, and the conversion of a number of ciphers into the semblance of "big numbers". First of all, Trotsky (in Russia he is a cipher, he is only a contributor to *Zhivoye Dyelo*, and his agents are only defenders of the liquidators' "initiating groups"³⁵). Secondly, *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata*, i.e., the selfsame impotent liquidators. Thirdly, the "Caucasian Regional Committee", also a cipher, in a third garb. Fourthly, the "Organising Committee"³⁶—a fourth garb of the *very same* liquidators. Fifthly and sixthly, the Letts and the Bund, which is wholly liquidationist today. But enough!

Needless to say our Party is laughing at this game of non-entities abroad. They cannot resuscitate a corpse, for the liquidators in Russia are a corpse.

Here are the facts.

For six months the liquidators and *all* their friends have been waging a desperate struggle against the Party. There exists a legal *Marxist* press. It is fearfully handicapped, and does not dare utter a word about a republic, our Party, uprising, or the tsar's gang. It would be simply ridiculous to think of advocating the slogans of the R.S.D.L.P. through that press.

But the worker in Russia is no longer what he used to be. He has become a force. He has paved a way for himself. He has *his own* press, which is handicapped but belongs to him and defends Marxism *theoretically*.

In this open arena, everyone can see the "successes" of the liquidators' struggle against the anti-liquidators. S. V. of *Vperyod*³⁷ has already pointed out those successes in Trotsky's Vienna, liquidationist, *Pravda*.³⁸ The fact is, he wrote, that the workers' *collections* go almost entirely to the anti-liquidators. But he sought to comfort himself, saying that it is not because the workers sympathise with the "Leninists".

Why, naturally "not because", dear friend of the liquidators!

But still, look at the facts.

Six months of open struggle for a *workers' daily newspaper*.³⁹

The liquidators have been shouting about it since 1910. What about their success? In six months—from January 1 to July 1, 1912—their papers, *Zhivoye Dyelo* and *Nevsky Golos*, carried the accounts of 15 (*fifteen*) collections made by groups of workers for a workers' daily newspaper! Fifteen groups of workers in six months!

Take the newspapers of the anti-liquidators. See their accounts of the collections made for a workers' daily during the same six-month period. Add up the number of collections by groups of workers. You will find that there were *504 contributions by workers' groups*!

Here are exact monthly data for the various parts of Russia (see p. 77).

The liquidators have been thoroughly beaten in the eyes of the workers' groups in Russia. The liquidators are a corpse, and no number of terrible (oh, how terrible!) "associations of groups, centres, factions, trends and tendencies" abroad can revive this corpse.

No shrill manifestos abroad and no fake conferences between "initiating groups" and the liquidators can undo or alleviate this complete defeat of the liquidators in the eyes of the *hundreds of workers' groups in Russia*.

Number of workers' group contributions for a workers' daily newspaper during the first half of 1912

| | In anti-liquidationist newspapers | In liquidationist newspapers |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| January | 14 | 0 |
| February | 18 | 0 |
| March | 76 | 7 |
| April | 227 | 8 |
| May | 135 | 0 |
| June | 34 | 0 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Total</i> | 504 | 15 |
| St. Petersburg and vicinity | 415 | 10 |
| South | 51 | 1 |
| The rest of Russia | 38 | 4 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Total</i> | 504 | 15 |

The unity of the election campaign of the worker Social-Democrats in Russia is *assured*. It is assured not through "agreements" with the liquidators, but through the complete victory over the liquidators, who have already been reduced to their true role, the role of liberal intellectuals. See how well Savin, the Socialist-Revolutionary liquidator, fits into *Nasha Zarya*.⁴⁰ See how warmly L. M. praises, in *Listok Golosa Sotsial-Demokrata*, "the initiative" of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who repeatedly stray (because of an otzovist hangover!) into liquidationism. Ponder on the significance of the fact that the same sheet holds up the well-known Socialist-Revolutionary "leader", Avksentyev, as an example for Plekhanov. Remember how *all* liquidators kiss the non-Social-Democratic Left wing of the Polish Socialist Party. Liquidators of all parties, unite!

Everyone finds his niche in the end. Groups of intellectual liquidators from among former Marxists and former liberals with a bomb⁴¹ are being welded together by the course of events.

As for the Party of the working class, the R.S.D.L.P., it has, in the six months since it regained its freedom from the bondage of those who had liquidated it, made a huge stride forward, as can be seen from the facts cited.

Rabochaya Gazeta No. 9,
July 30 (August 12), 1912

Collected Works,
Vol. 18, pp. 237-41

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