
ON THE TASKS OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

When hypocritical flirting with both the working class and the "legal" opposition goes hand in hand with action on the part of a horde of infuriated scoundrels of the type of Val or Obolensky, it means that the government wants to corrupt and split up those masses and sections of the people which it is powerless to break, and in order to facilitate its task it wants to divert the revolutionary forces, small as their number is, to hunt down each of these scoundrels. It does not matter whether one representative or another of the government is aware of this in general, or how well he is aware of it. What matters is that the tactics to which the government is impelled by all its immense political experience and police instinct, *really* has this significance. When the revolutionary movement permeates the truly revolutionary classes of the people, moreover, when it grows in depth and extent, holding out the promise of developing soon into an invincible force, then the government finds it advantageous to provoke the best revolutionary forces to hunt after mediocre leaders of most outrageous violence. But we must not allow ourselves to be provoked. We must not lose our heads at the very first peals of really revolutionary thunder coming from the people, cast all caution to the winds, and, to ease mind and conscience, eschew all the experience of Europe and the experience of Russia, all more or less definite socialist convictions, all claims of fundamentally consistent, and not adventurist, tactics. In short, we must not allow realisation of an attempt to restore the Narodnaya Volya movement and to repeat all its theoretical and practical mistakes that the Socialist-Revolutionaries⁵ have under-

taken and persist in furthering more and more. Our answer to efforts made to corrupt the masses and provoke the revolutionaries must not be given in a "programme" which would open the door wide to the most harmful old mistakes and to new ideological waverings, or in tactics that would tend to deepen the isolation of the revolutionaries from the masses, which is the main source of our weakness and of our incapacity to start a determined struggle at once. We must answer by strengthening the contact between the revolutionaries and the people, and this contact can be established in our time only by developing and strengthening the Social-Democratic labour movement. Only the working-class movement rouses that truly revolutionary and advanced class which has nothing to lose from the collapse of the existing political and social order, the class which is the final and inevitable product of that order, the class which alone is the unquestionable and uncompromising enemy of that order. Only by relying upon the theory of revolutionary Marxism, upon the experience of international Social-Democracy, can we bring about the fusion of our revolutionary movement with the labour movement and create an invincible Social-Democratic movement. Only in the name of a real workers' party can we, without losing faith in our convictions, call on all the progressive elements in the country to join in revolutionary work, call on all working, all suffering and oppressed people to support socialism.

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