

Mandate of the St. Petersburg Workers to their Labour Deputy ¹

October 1912

Source : *Works*, Vol. 2, 1907 - 1913

Publisher : Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954

Transcription/Markup : Salil Sen for MIA, 2008

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The demands of the Russian people that were advanced by the movement of 1905 have remained unfulfilled.

The development of the reaction and of the "renovated system" did not merely leave these demands unsatisfied; it made them still more imperative.

The workers often lack the possibility not only of going on strike—because there is no guarantee that they will not be shot down for doing so; not only of organising unions and holding meetings—because there is no guarantee that they will not be arrested for doing so; but even of taking part in the Duma elections, because if they do so they will be "interpreted" ² or deported all the same. Were not the workers at the Putilov Works and at the Neva Shipbuilding Yard "interpreted" the other day?

That is apart from the tens of millions of starving peasants who have been put at the mercy of the landlords and the Zemstvo officials. . . .

All this points to the necessity of satisfying the demands of 1905.

And the state of economic life in Russia, the already visible signs of a coming industrial crisis, and the steadily growing pauperisation of broad strata of the peasantry are making the fulfilment of the tasks of 1905 imperative.

Hence, we think that Russia is on the eve of impending mass movements, which will, perhaps, be more profound than in 1905. That is proved by the Lena actions, by the protest strikes against "interpretations," etc.

As in 1905, in the van of these movements will be the most advanced class in Russian society, the Russian proletariat.

Its only ally can be the much-suffering peasantry, which is vitally interested in the emancipation of Russia.

A fight on two fronts—against the feudal-bureaucratic order of things and against the liberal bourgeoisie, who are seeking an alliance with the old regime—that is the form the coming actions of the people must assume.

And that struggle will be victorious only to the extent that the working class comes out at the head of the popular movement.

But in order that the working class may honourably fulfil its role as leader of the popular movement, it must be equipped with consciousness of its interests and a high degree of organisation.

Under the present conditions the floor of the Duma is one of the best means of enlightening and organising the broad masses of the proletariat.

It is precisely for this reason that we are sending our deputy to the Duma and instructing him, and the entire Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma, widely to proclaim our demands from the floor of the Duma and not to indulge in the futile game of legislating in the Duma of the gentry.

We would like the Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma, and our deputy in particular, to hold high the banner of the working class in the hostile camp of the Black Duma.

We would like to hear from the floor of the Duma the voices of the members of the Social-Democratic group loudly proclaiming the ultimate aim of the proletariat, the full and uncurtailed demands of 1905, proclaiming the Russian working class as the leader of the popular movement, the peasantry as the most reliable ally of the working class and the liberal bourgeoisie as the betrayer of "popular freedom."

We would like the Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma to be united and solid in its activities on the basis of the above-mentioned slogans.

We would like it to obtain its strength from permanent contact with the broad masses.

We would like it to march in step with the political organisation of the working class of Russia.

Notes

1. "Mandate of the St . Petersburg Workers to Their Labour Deputy" was written at the beginning of October 1912. It was unanimously adopted at meetings of workers in the largest plants in St. Petersburg and at the assembly of the workers' voters' delegates held on October 17, 1912. J. V. Stalin directed the discussion of the "Mandate" at impromptu meetings in the factories. V. I. Lenin attached exceptional importance to the "Mandate." On sending it to the printers for publication in *Sotsial-Demokrat* he wrote on the margin: "Return without fail!! Keep clean. *Highly important* to preserve this document." The "Mandate" was published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 28-29, November 5 (18), 1912. In a letter to the editorial board of *Pravda* Lenin wrote: "You must publish this 'Mandate' to the St. Petersburg Deputy without fail in a prominent place in large type" (see V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 35, p. 38).

2. The term "interpretation" appeared in connection with the "ruling" Senate's interpretation of the electoral laws in a sense favourable for the government. In "interpreting" the laws the authorities arbitrarily annulled elections.