

Program of Land and Liberty

Final Revision

Land and Liberty

May 1878

Land and Liberty (Russian: Земля и воля) was the first all-Russian revolutionary organization that replaced the scattered circles of the time. Its creation marked the transition of revolutionaries from disorganization to political struggle, from theoretical rebellion to terrorism.

Our ultimate political and economic ideal is anarchy and collectivism.

But, recognizing, on the one hand, that the party can only be influential and strong when it relies on popular demands and does not force the economic and political popular ideal developed by history, and on the other — that the crown traits of the character of the Russian people are so socialist, that if the desires and aspirations of the people were fulfilled at this time, then this would form a solid foundation for the further successful course of social affairs in Russia, we are narrowing our requirements down to those that are realistically feasible in the near future, i.e. to what the popular demands are at the moment. In our opinion, they boil down to four main points.

1. Legal popular views recognize the current order, in which the land is held in the possession of those who do not cultivate it, as unjust. According to the popular concept, “the land of God” and every farmer has the right to land in the amount that they can cultivate with their own labor. Therefore, we must demand the transfer of all the land into the hands of the rural working class and its equal distribution. (We are convinced that two-thirds of Russia will own the land on a communal basis).
2. With regard to the political ideal, we recognize that the Russian people have a desire for a complete secular self-government, although there are hardly the same definitive views among the people regarding inter-communal and external relations. In our opinion, each union of communities will determine for itself what share of social functions it will give to the government that each of them forms for itself. Our duty is only to try to reduce this share as much as possible.

3. In the field of religion, the Russian people are noted for their religious tolerance and, in general, a striving for religious freedom; therefore we must strive for complete freedom of confession.
4. The composition of the current Russian Empire includes such localities and even nationalities that are ready to secede at the earliest opportunity, such as, for example, Ukraine, Poland, the Caucasus, etc. Therefore, it is our duty to promote the division of the present Russian empire into parts according to local desires.

Thus, “land and liberty”, which served as the motto of so many popular movements, which served as the principle of organization when settling the frontiers, where the influence of modern Russian government has not yet penetrated, – this formula, in our opinion, now serves as the best expression of popular views on the ownership of land and the organization of their communities. Recognizing that it is impossible to instill in the people under the present conditions other (maybe even better) ideals, from an abstract point of view, we dare write on our banner the historically developed formula: “land and liberty”.

It goes without saying that this formula can only be implemented through a violent revolution, and moreover, as soon as possible, since the development of capitalism and the even greater penetration of various plagues of bourgeois civilization into the people’s life (thanks to the protectorate and efforts of the Russian government) which threatens the destruction of the community and the distortion of the people’s worldview on the above issues.

This contradiction between the popular ideal and the requirements of the government has created and is creating in Russia that mass of large and small popular movements, sects of religious-revolutionary character, and sometimes even bandits, which express the active protest of the Russian people against the existing order. But this struggle with the organized power of the state, in whose hands lay about a million troops, turns out to be too unequal, especially since the people in a significant majority are disunited and so surrounded by different authorities, mainly from the economic side, that it is very difficult for them to prepare and oppose a government organization with a broad popular organization.

From this, two main general tasks follow, to which all the attention of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party should be directed:

1. to help the elements of discontent among the people to organize themselves and merge with the existing revolutionary people’s organizations, to increase the intensity of this discontent through agitation, and
2. to weaken, loosen, i.e. disorganize the power of the state, without which, in our opinion, the success of any, even the broadest and most well-conceived, plan of uprising will not be ensured.

Hence, these are our immediate practical tasks.

A. Organizational part

- a. Establishing a close and harmonious organization of ready-made revolutionaries, willing to act in the spirit of our program, both from among intelligentsia and from among those workers who were in direct contact with it.

- b. Rapprochement and even merging with sects of a religious-revolutionary character that are hostile to the government, such as, for example, runners, defaulters, shtundists, etc.
- c. Establishing the broadest and most lasting ties in areas where discontent is most acute, and the establishment of strong settlements and dens among the peasant population of these areas.
- d. Attracting to our side, from time to time, those appearing in different places of robber bands such as low-level freelancers.
- e. Establishing relations and connections in the centers of accumulation of industrial workers — workshop and factory. The activities of people who have undertaken the implementation of these points, should consist in the types of sharpening and generalization of popular aspirations, in agitation in the broadest sense of the word, starting with a legal protest against local authorities and ending with armed uprising, i.e. riot. In personal acquaintances as with workers and peasants (especially with schismatics), agitators, of course, cannot deny the importance of exchanging ideas and propaganda.
- f. Propaganda and agitation in university centers among the intelligentsia, which has been the main contingent for replenishing the ranks of our organization and partly a source of funds.
- g. Establishing contacts with liberals with the aim of exploiting them for our benefit.
- h. Propagation of our ideas and agitation by literature: publication of our own organ and the distribution of incendiary leaflets in the greatest possible amount.

B. Disorganizing part

- a. Establishing contacts and their own organization among the troops, mainly among the officers.
- b. Involvement of persons serving in those or other government agencies.
- c. Systematic extermination of the most harmful or prominent individuals from the government and, in general, people who maintain this or that hateful order.

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