

**Two articles  
regarding elections:**

**Stalin**

**Muddle...**

*1907*

**Lenin**

**The Results and Significance of  
the U.S. Presidential Elections**

*1912*

**J.V. Stalin**

## **Muddle...**

*April 10, 1907*

The “publicists” of *Lakhvari*<sup>1</sup> are still unable to define their tactics. In their first issue they wrote: We are supporting only the “progressive steps” of the Cadets, but not the Cadets themselves. Commenting on this we said that it was amusing sophistry, since the Mensheviks voted for the Cadet candidates to the Duma and not only for their “steps”; they helped to get into the Duma Cadets as such and not only their “steps,” and they helped to elect a Cadet as such as President of the Duma and not only his “steps” – and this clearly confirms the fact that the Mensheviks supported the Cadets. This is so obvious and the Mensheviks have talked so much about supporting the Cadets, that denial of the fact has only raised a laugh....

Now, having “pondered” over the matter a little, they are talking differently: true, “during the elections we supported the Cadets” (see *Lakhvari*, No. 3), but this was only during the elections; in the Duma we are supporting not the Cadets but only their “steps”; you, they say, “do not distinguish between tactics in the Duma and tactics during elections.” In the first place, “tactics” which safeguard you from doing stupid things only in the Duma but prompt you to do stupid things during elections are very funny tactics. Secondly, is it not true that the Mensheviks helped to elect a Cadet as President of the Duma? Under what category of tactics should we place helping to elect a Cadet as President – “tactics in the Duma” or tactics outside the Duma? We think that Golovin was elected President of the Duma in the Duma, and not president of the street in the street.

Clearly, the Mensheviks pursued the same tactics in the Duma as they pursued outside the Duma. These are the tactics of supporting the Cadets. If they deny it now, it is because they have fallen victims to muddle.

Supporting the Cadets does not mean creating a reputation for the Cadets; if it does, then you are creating a reputation for the Socialist-Revolutionaries by supporting them – says *Lakhvari*. What

comical fellows those “Lakhvarists” are! Apparently it does not occur to them that any support that Social-Democracy lends a party creates a reputation for that party! That is why they have been so lavish in their promises of every kind of “support.”... Yes, dear comrades, by supporting the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democracy creates a reputation for them in the eyes of the people, and this is exactly why such support is permissible *only in exceptional cases, and as a means of defeating the Cadets*. Supporting the Socialist-Revolutionaries is by no means ideal, it is an inevitable evil, resorted to in order to curb the Cadets. You, however, supported the very Cadets who are betraying the workers and peasants; the Socialist-Revolutionaries are superior to them because they side with the revolution....

“The Cadets, for example, demanded universal suffrage. It turns out that this demand is a great evil, because it is a Cadet demand” (*ibid.*).

Well, aren’t they comical? You see, it turns out that universal suffrage is a “Cadet demand”! The Tiflis Mensheviks, it turns out, do not know that universal suffrage is not a Cadet demand, but the demand of revolutionary democracy, which Social-Democracy advocates more consistently than anyone else! No, comrades, if you cannot even understand that the Cadets are not revolutionary democrats; if you cannot even understand that the fight against them in order to strengthen the hegemony of the proletariat is the question of the day for us; if you cannot even distinguish between what you said yesterday and what you are saying today – then you had better put your pens aside, get yourselves out of the muddle you are in, and only after that launch into “criticism.”...

By the holy Duma, that would be better!

*Dro (Time)*, No. 26, April 10, 1907

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## Notes

1. *Lakhvari (The Spear)* – a Georgian daily Menshevik newspaper published in Tiflis from April to June 1907.

V. I. Lenin

# The Results and Significance of the U.S. Presidential Elections

November 9, 1912

Wilson, a “Democrat”, has been elected President of the United States of America. He has polled over six million votes, Roosevelt (the new National Progressive Party) over four million, Taft (Republican Party) over three million, and the Socialist Eugene Debs 800,000 votes.

The world significance of the U.S. elections lies not so much in the great increase in the number of Socialist votes as in the far-reaching *crisis* of the *bourgeois* parties, in the amazing force with which their decay has been revealed. Lastly, the significance of the elections lies in the unusually clear and striking revelation of *bourgeois reformism* as a means of combating socialism.

In *all* bourgeois countries, the parties which stand for capitalism, i.e., the bourgeois parties, came into being a long time ago, and the greater the extent of political liberty, the more solid they are.

Freedom in the U.S.A. is most complete. And for a whole *half-century* – since the Civil War over slavery in 1860–65 – *two* bourgeois parties have been distinguished there by remarkable solidity and strength. The party of the former slave-owners is the so-called Democratic Party. The capitalist party, which favoured the emancipation of the Negroes, has developed into the Republican Party.

Since the emancipation of the Negroes, the distinction between the two parties has been diminishing. The fight between these two parties has been mainly over the height of customs duties. Their fight *has not had* any *serious* importance for the mass of the people. The people have been deceived and diverted from their vital interests by means of spectacular and meaningless *duels* between the two bourgeois parties.

This so-called bipartisan system prevailing in America and Britain has been one of the most powerful means of preventing the rise of an independent working-class, i.e., genuinely socialist, party.

And now the bipartisan system has suffered a fiasco in America, the country boasting the most advanced capitalism! What caused this fiasco?

The strength of the working-class movement, the growth of socialism.

The old bourgeois parties (the “Democratic” and the “Republican” parties) have been facing towards the past, the period of the emancipation of the Negroes. The new bourgeois party, the National Progressive Party, is facing to wards the *future*. Its programme turns entirely on the question whether capitalism is to be or not to be, on the issues, to be specific, of protection for the workers and of “trusts”, as the capitalist associations are called in the U.S.A.

The old parties are products of an epoch whose task was to develop capitalism as speedily as possible. The struggle between the parties was over the question how best to expedite and facilitate this development.

The new party is a product of the present epoch, which raises the issue of the very existence of capitalism. In the U.S.A., the freest and most advanced country, this issue is coming to the fore more clearly and broadly than anywhere else.

The entire programme and entire agitation of Roosevelt and the Progressives turn on how to *save capitalism* by means of *bourgeois reforms*.

The bourgeois reformism which in old Europe manifests itself in the chatter of liberal professors has all at once come forward in the free American republic as a party four million strong. This is American style.

We shall save capitalism by reforms, says that party. We shall grant the most progressive factory legislation. We shall establish state control over *all* the trusts (in the U.S.A. that means over *all* industries!). We shall establish state control over them to eliminate poverty and enable everybody to earn a “decent” wage. We shall establish “social and industrial justice”. We revere *all* reforms – *the only “reform”* we don’t want is *expropriation of the capitalists!*

The national wealth of the U.S.A. is now reckoned to be 120 billion (thousand million) dollars, i.e., about 240 billion rubles. Approximately *one-third* of it, or about 80 billion rubles, belongs to *two* trusts, those of Rockefeller and Morgan, or is subordinated to these trusts! Not more than. 40,000 families making up these two trusts are the masters of 80 million wage slaves.

Obviously, so long as these modern slave-owners are there, all “reforms” will be nothing but a deception. Roosevelt has been *deliberately* hired by the astute multimillionaires to preach this deception. The “state control” they promise will become – if the capitalists keep their capital – a means of combating and crushing strikes.

But the American proletarian has already awakened and has taken up his post. He greets Roosevelt’s success with cheerful irony, as if to say: You lured four million people with your promises of reform, dear impostor Roosevelt. Very well! Tomorrow those four million will see that your promises were a fraud, and don’t forget that they are following you *only* because they feel that it is *impossible* to go on living in the old way.

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*Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, [1975], Moscow, Volume 18, pages 402-404.