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THE
DECEPTION
OF THE
PEOPLE

*by the Slogans of Equality
and Freedom*

BY
V. I. LENIN

SIXPENCE NET

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PREFACE

THE question which I examined in my speech of the 19th May at the Congress for extra-Tutorial Education, that is the question of equality in general and of the equality of the workers and peasants in particular, is undoubtedly one of the sharpest and most burning questions of to-day which affects the most deep-rooted prejudices of the petty-bourgeois, of the small proprietor, of the small-commodity owner, of every kind of philistine and nine-tenths of the intelligentsia (including the Menshevik and S.R. intelligentsia).

Denial of the equality of the worker with the peasant! Only think what an awful thing! Of course all the friends of the capitalists, all their hangers-on, and the Mensheviks and S.R.'s in the first place, try to seize upon this in order to 'tease' the peasant, to 'inflammé' him, to set him against the workers, the Communists. Such efforts are inevitable, but since they are founded on lies their shameful collapse is certain.

The peasants are sober, businesslike people, people of practical life. Things have to be explained to them practically, by simple, everyday examples. Is it just that the peasant who has a surplus of grain should hide that surplus whilst waiting for prices to rise to a speculative, mad height and without considering the hungry workers? Or is it just that the State power which the workers hold in their hands should take all surplus grain, not according to a speculative, commercial, robber price, but at a firm price fixed by the State?

That is precisely how the question stands. That is its whole nature. All kinds of frauds who, like the Mensheviks and S.R.'s, are working for the capitalists, for the return of the supreme power to the capitalists, try to 'talk away' this essence of the matter with all kinds of phrases about 'equality' and 'the unity of labour democracy'.

The peasant must choose:

For free trade in grain—that means, for speculation in grain, that means, for the freedom of the rich to make profit, for the freedom of

the poor to be ruined and starved, that means, for the return of the supreme power of the landlords and capitalists, for the breaking of the alliance of the peasants and the workers;

Or for the delivery of grain surpluses to the State at a fixed price, that is for a united working-class power—that means, for the alliance of the peasants and the workers in order completely to destroy the bourgeoisie, to set aside any possibility of the restoration of their power.

This is how the choice stands.

Rich peasants, kulaks, choose the first, are desirous of trying their luck in alliance with the capitalists and landlords against the workers, against the village poor, but such peasants will form a minority in Russia. For the majority of the peasants will go for the alliance with the workers against the restoration of the power of the capitalists, against 'freedom for the poor to starve', against fraudulently concealing this accursed capitalist 'freedom' (the freedom of death from starvation) behind high-sounding words about 'equality' (about the equality of the well-fed who has a surplus of grain with the hungry).

Our task is to fight against cunning capitalist deception which the Mensheviks and S.R.'s are dragging in by means of high-sounding and empty words about 'freedom' and 'equality'.

Peasants! Tear off the mask from these wolves in sheep's clothing who sing sweet songs about 'freedom', 'equality', 'the unity of labour democracy', and in practice are defending by means of them the 'freedom' of the landlords to oppress the peasants, the 'equality' of the wealthy capitalist with the workers and half-starved peasants, the 'equality' of the well-fed person who hides his surplus of grain with the workers tormented by hunger and unemployment owing to the ruin of the country through the war. Such wolves in sheep's clothing are the worst enemies of the toilers, they are in practice, even though they call themselves Mensheviks, S.R.'s or non-party people, the friends of the capitalists.

'The worker and the peasant are equal as toilers, but the well-fed speculator in grain is not equal to the hungry toiler.' 'We are fighting

only by insisting on the interests of labour, by taking grain away from the speculator but not from the toiler.' 'We are seeking for agreement with the middle-class peasant, with the toiling peasant'—this is what I said in my speech, this is the *essence* of the matter, this is that real truth which has been confused by high-sounding phrases about 'equality' and the immense majority of the peasants know that this is the truth, that the *workers' State* is fighting against speculators and the rich, helping the toilers and the poor in every way, whilst both the *landlords' State* (under the Tsar) and the *capitalist State* (under the freest and most democratic republics) have always and everywhere in all countries *helped the rich to rob the toilers, helped the speculators and the rich to get profit at the expense of the ruined poor peasants.*

Every peasant knows this truth. And therefore the majority of the peasants, the more conscious they are, the quicker and more firmly will make their choice: for an alliance with the workers, for an agreement with the workers' government, against the landlords and capitalist State; for Soviet power against 'the Constituent Assembly' or 'the democratic republic'; for agreement with the Bolshevik Communists, against support for the capitalists, the Mensheviks and S.R.'s!

And to those 'educated' gentlemen, the Democrats, the Socialists, the Social-Democrats, the Socialist revolutionaries, etc., we say: In words you all recognize the 'class struggle', in practice you forget about it just at the moment when it becomes particularly sharp. To forget it means to pass over to the side of Capital, to the side of the bourgeoisie, against the toilers. Whoever recognizes the class struggle should recognize that in the bourgeois republic, even though it is the freest and most democratic one, 'freedom' and 'equality' cannot be, and never have been, anything but the expression of the equality and freedom of the *commodity owners*, of the equality and freedom of *Capital*. Marx, a thousand times in all his works and particularly in *Capital* (which you all acknowledge in *words*), explained this and

laughed at abstract explanations of 'freedom and equality', at vulgarizers like Bentham, who did not see this and concealed the material roots of these abstractions.

'Freedom and equality' in the bourgeois system (that is so long as private property in the land and means of production is maintained) and in bourgeois democracy will merely remain formal, meaning, in fact, *wage slavery* for the workers (who are formally free, formally enjoy equal rights) and *supreme power for capital*, the oppression of labour by capital. This is the ABC of Socialism, 'educated' gentlemen, and you have forgotten this ABC.

It follows from this ABC that during the proletarian revolution when the class struggle has sharpened to the point of civil war, only fools and traitors can work off phrases about 'freedom', 'equality', 'the unity of labour democracy'. In practice the issue of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie decides everything, while the intermediate, middle classes (including the whole petty-bourgeoisie, which also means the whole 'peasantry') inevitably hesitates between the one camp and the other.

It is a question of joining up these intermediate sections to one of the chief forces, either to the proletariat or to the bourgeoisie. *There cannot be anything else*. He who has not understood this when reading Marx's *Capital* has understood nothing in Marx, has understood nothing in Socialism, is in practice a philistine and a vulgarizer, blindly following after the bourgeoisie. But he who has understood this will not let himself be deceived by phrases about 'freedom' and 'equality', he will think and speak *about facts*, that is about the concrete conditions for bringing the peasant *near* to the workers, for their *alliance* against the capitalist, for their *agreement* against the exploiters, the rich and the speculators.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat which has been victorious and taken political power into its hands against the defeated, but not destroyed bourgeoisie, which has not disappeared,

has not ceased to offer resistance against this growing resistance of the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a particular form of class alliance between the proletariat, the advance guard of the toilers, and the numerous non-proletarian sections of toilers (the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors, peasantry, intelligentsia, etc.), or their majority, an alliance against Capital, an alliance aimed at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and all efforts at restoration on its side, an alliance aiming at the final creation and stabilization of Socialism. This is an alliance of a particular kind, which is formed in special circumstances, that is in circumstances of furious civil war, this is an alliance of the firm supporters of Socialism with its hesitating allies, sometimes with 'neutrals' (then, from being an agreement for struggle the alliance becomes an agreement for neutrality), an alliance between classes which are not similar economically, politically, socially or psychologically. To renounce the study of the concrete forms, conditions, tasks of this alliance by means of general phrases about 'freedom', 'equality', 'unity of labour democracy', that is by means of scraps of the ideological baggage of the epoch of commodity economy, can only be undertaken by the rotten heroes of the rotten 'Berne' or Yellow International, such as Kautsky, Martov and Co.

N. LENIN

June 23rd, 1919.

SPEECH OF THE 19TH MAY, ON THE DECEPTION
OF THE PEOPLE BY THE SLOGANS OF FREEDOM
AND EQUALITY

ALLOW me, comrades, instead of summing up the present situation, as it seems that some of you expected to-day, to answer some of the more vital political questions, not only theoretically, of course, but also practically, the questions which are standing before us to-day, which are characteristic of the whole stage of the Soviet revolution and which are the cause of most of the disputes, of most of the attacks by people who consider themselves Socialists, of most of the misunderstandings from people who consider themselves Democrats and with particular willingness and particularly widely are spreading accusations against us of violating Democracy. It seems to me that these general political questions are too often, even constantly, encountered in all present-day propaganda and agitation, in all literature hostile to Bolshevism, that is to say, of course, if this literature in the slightest degree rises above the level of simple lies, slanders and abuse, which character it assumes in all the organs of the bourgeoisie. If we take the literature which even rises ever so little above this level, then I think that the chief questions of the relation of Democracy to Dictatorship, of the tasks of the revolutionary working class in a revolutionary period, of the tasks of the transition to Socialism in general, of the relations of the working class and peasantry, it seems to me that these questions are the most vital basis of all present political debates, and to explain them, although, maybe, sometimes it appears to you to be going away from the immediate burning questions of the day, to explain them, I think, must nevertheless form our chief general task. Of course, in a short report I cannot in any way pretend to embrace all these questions. I have chosen some of them and should like to talk about some of these questions.

I

The first of the questions noticed by me is the question of the difficulties of every revolution, of every transition to a new system. If you

examine those attacks which have been poured upon the Bolsheviks by people who consider themselves Socialists and Democrats—as an example of such people I can take the literary groups *Ever Forward!* and the *People's Cause*, newspapers closed down, in my opinion, very justly and in the interests of the revolution, newspapers whose representatives most often in their attacks, which bore a too natural character, coming from organs which our power recognizes to be counter-revolutionary, whose representatives most often of all undertook theoretical criticism—if you examine these attacks which are made upon Bolshevism from this camp, then you will see that among the accusations here, there and everywhere there figure such as: 'The Bolsheviks promised to you, the toilers, bread, peace and freedom: they have given neither bread, nor peace, nor freedom, they have deceived you, and they have deceived you because they have departed from Democracy.' With regard to the departure from Democracy I shall later speak particularly. I will now take the other side of these accusations: 'The Bolsheviks promised bread, peace and freedom, the Bolsheviks, in fact, have given continuation of the war, have given a particularly stern, a particularly obstinate struggle, a war of all the imperialists and capitalists, of all the countries of the Entente, that is to say, of all the most civilized and advanced countries against tormented, exhausted, backward, tired Russia.' These accusations, I repeat, you will see in every one of the newspapers named, you will hear them in every conversation with a bourgeois intellectual, who, of course, does not consider himself to be bourgeois—you will hear this constantly in every philistine speech. And here am I inviting you to consider accusations of this kind.

Yes, the Bolsheviks undertook a revolution against the bourgeoisie, the violent overthrow of the bourgeois government, a break with all the traditional habits, promises, heritages of bourgeois Democracy, they undertook the most desperate, violent struggle and war to suppress the property-owning classes, undertook it in order to pull Russia and then the whole of humanity out of the imperialist slaughter and in order to put an end to all wars. Yes, the Bolsheviks undertook a revolution for this and, of course, never thought of renouncing this main, chief task of theirs. And it is just as undoubted that the attempts to get out of this imperialist slaughter and to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie drew upon Russia an offensive of all the civilized states. For this is the political programme of France,

England and America, however much they declare that they renounce intervention. However much Lloyd George, Wilson and Clemenceau declare this, however much they declare that they renounce intervention, we all know that this is a lie. We know that the warships of the Allies, which have left Odessa and Sebastopol and were compelled to leave, are now blockading the shores of the Black Sea and are even bombarding around Kerch that part of the Crimean Peninsula where the volunteers have landed. They say: 'We can't give this up to you. If the volunteers can't cope with you, all the same we cannot give up this part of the Crimean Peninsula, because then you will be masters of the Sea of Azov, and cut off our communications with Denikin, prevent us from supplying our friends.' Or else the offensive on Petrograd develops. Yesterday one of our destroyers had a fight with four enemy destroyers. Surely it is clear that this is intervention, surely the British Fleet is participating here? Surely the same thing is taking place in Archangel, in Siberia? It is a fact that the whole civilized world is now marching against Russia.

It will be asked, Have we fallen into a contradiction with ourselves when we summon the toilers to revolution, promising them peace, and have brought on a campaign of the whole civilized world against weak, tired, backward, defeated Russia, or have those fallen into a contradiction with the elementary conceptions of Democracy and Socialism who have the impudence to throw such a reproach at us? That is the question. In order to place this question before you in a theoretical, general form, I will make a comparison. We talk about a revolutionary class, about a revolutionary policy of the people. I propose to you to take a single revolutionary. Let us take, say, Chernyshevsky, let us judge his activity. How can a person judge him who is completely ignorant and backward? He, no doubt, would say: 'Well, there you are, that chap has ruined his life, he has landed in Siberia, he has achieved nothing.' That's an example for you. If we were to hear such a judgment from some unknown person then we would say: 'At best it proceeds from a person hopelessly backward, innocent, maybe, in so far as he is so downtrodden that he cannot understand the significance of the work of a single revolutionary in connection with the general chain of revolutionary events; or else this judgment proceeds from a scoundrel, a supporter of reaction, who consciously wants to frighten the toilers away from 'revolution'. I have taken the example of Chernyshevsky because whatever

tendencies people who call themselves Socialists may belong to, here, in the judgment of this individual revolutionary, there can be no essential disagreement. All are agreed that if we judge a single revolutionary from the point of view of those sacrifices, outwardly useless, often fruitless, which he has suffered, putting on one side the content of his activity and the connection of his activity with his predecessors or with the revolutionaries who followed him, if we judge the significance of his activity in this way—then it is either backwardness and hopeless ignorance, or malicious, hypocritical defence of the interests of reaction, of oppression, of exploitation and of the class yoke. There can be no disagreements about this.

I will now ask you to pass from a single revolutionary to the revolution of a whole people, of a whole country. Now surely has any of the Bolsheviks ever denied that the revolution in its final form can only be victorious when it embraces all or, at least, some of the most important of the advanced countries? We have always said this. Surely we do not declare that it was possible to get out of the imperialist war simply by sticking our bayonets into the ground! I am purposely taking just that expression which we in the epoch of Kerensky—both I personally and all our comrades—constantly made use of in resolutions, in speeches and in newspapers. We said: It is impossible to end the war by sticking our bayonets into the earth; if there are Tolstoyians who think in this way, then we must pity them as people who are a bit cracked—well, you can't do anything with them.

We said that coming out of this war may mean a revolutionary war. We said this from 1915 and afterwards in Kerensky's time. And, of course, a revolutionary war is also a war, also a burdensome, bloody, and painful thing. And when it becomes a revolution on a world scale, it inevitably calls forth a reaction on the same world scale. And, therefore, when we to-day are in the position that all the civilized countries of the world are going to war against Russia, we cannot be surprised if the most backward peasants accuse us of breaking our promises. We answer, We can't do anything with them. Complete backwardness, extreme ignorance on their side prevents us from blaming them. How, in fact, are you going to demand of a completely backward peasant that he should understand that there is war and war, that there are just wars and unjust wars, progressive wars and reactionary wars, wars of advanced classes and wars of backward

classes, wars which serve to make firmer class oppression, and wars which serve to overthrow it? In order to do so you have to be acquainted with the class struggle, with the foundations of Socialism, even with a little bit of the history of revolutions. We cannot demand this from a backward peasant.

But if a man who calls himself a Democrat, a Socialist, who goes on to the platform to speak in public, then independently of what he calls himself—Menshevik, Social-Democrat, S.R., a true Socialist, a supporter of the Berne International, there are all kinds of names, names are cheap—if such a creature throws the accusation at us: 'You have promised peace and you have caused war!'—then what are we to reply to him? Can we suppose that he has reached such a stage of backwardness that, like the ignorant peasant, he cannot distinguish war from war? Can we assume that he does not understand the difference between an imperialist war, which was a plundering war and has been exposed completely—now, after the Versailles peace, only those who are quite unable to read and think or else completely blind are unable to see that it was a blundering war on both sides—can we assume that there is even one literate person who does not understand the difference between that war, a robber war, and our war, which has assumed a world scale because the world bourgeoisie has understood that a decisive fight is being waged against it? We cannot assume all that. And therefore we say: Anyone who pretends to the title of Democrat or Socialist of whatever shade, and who in one way or another, directly or indirectly, lets loose the accusation among the people that the Bolsheviks are dragging out the civil war, a serious war, a frightful war, when they have promised peace, is simply a supporter of the bourgeoisie, and we shall answer him in that way, and we shall be opposed one against the other just as we are with Kolchak—that is our answer. That is what we mean.

The gentlemen from *The People's Cause* are astonished: 'But we are against Kolchak; what disgusting injustice that they are persecuting us.'

I am very sorry, gentlemen, that you do not wish to see things straight and do not wish to understand this simple political ABC from which definite conclusions are drawn. You declare that you are against Kolchak. I take the newspapers *Ever Forward!* and *The People's Cause*. I take all the philistine arguments of this kind, the moods, of

which there are a whole heap among the intelligentsia, they predominate among the intelligentsia. I say: Every one of you, who lets loose an accusation of this kind among the people, is a Kolchakian, because he does not understand this elementary, fundamental difference which is clear to every literate person, between an imperialist war, which we have smashed, and a civil war which we have brought upon ourselves. We have never concealed from the people that we are taking this risk. We are straining all our forces to defeat the bourgeoisie in this civil war and to smash at the root the possibility of class oppression. No, there never has been and there never can be a revolution which is guaranteed against a long, heavy struggle, and one, maybe, full of the most desperate sacrifices. He who does not know how to distinguish sacrifices which are suffered in the course of the revolutionary struggle for the sake of its victory, when all the property-owning, all the counter-revolutionary classes are fighting against the revolution, he who does not know how to distinguish these sacrifices from the sacrifices of a plundering, exploiting war—is a representative of the most extreme backwardness and we must say of him: We must set him to study the ABC and before we give him extra-tutorial education we should give him elementary school education, or else this man is a representative of the most vicious, Kolchakian hypocrisy, whatever he calls himself, under whatever name he hides himself. But such accusations against the Bolsheviks are the most suitable and 'marketable' accusations. These accusations are really connected with the wide masses of toilers, for it is hard for the backward peasant to understand this, he suffers from war in the same way no matter for what the war is being waged. I am not astonished if I hear such remarks amongst the backward peasantry: 'We fought for the Tsar, we fought for the Mensheviks, and now again we are fighting for the Bolsheviks.' This doesn't astonish me. In fact, war is war, it brings with it endless heavy sacrifices. 'The Tsar said that this was for freedom and emancipation from oppression, the Mensheviks said that this is for freedom and emancipation from oppression, now the Bolsheviks say the same. All say the same, how are we to know where we are?'

In fact, how is the backward peasant to find out the truth? We have still to teach such a person elementary political grammar. But what can we say about a person who makes use of the words 'revolution', 'Democracy', 'Socialism', who pretends to use these words and to

understand them? He cannot juggle with such conceptions unless he wants to be turned into a political fraud, for the difference between a war of two groups of robbers and a war which an oppressed class is waging in revolt against every kind of robbery—this is an elementary, deep and fundamental difference. It is not a question of this or that party, this or that class, this or that government, justifying war, but it is a question of the content of this war, of what is its class content, of what class is waging the war, of what policy is embodied in the war.

II

From the question of the estimation of this heavy and difficult period through which we are now living and which is inevitably connected with the revolution, I will pass to another political question, which is also here, there and everywhere, made part of all disputes and all misunderstandings, this is the question of a *bloc* with the imperialists, of an alliance, of an agreement with the imperialists.

No doubt you have encountered in the newspapers the names of the Socialist revolutionaries Volsky and, it seems, Svyatitsky, who were writing recently in *Isvestia*, who came forward with their manifesto and who consider themselves, as a matter of fact, the kind of Socialist revolutionaries who cannot be accused of Kolchakism. They have left Kolchak, they have suffered at the hands of Kolchak, in coming to us they have helped us against Kolchak. This is true. But examine the arguments of these citizens, examine how they judge the question of a *bloc* with the imperialists, of an alliance or agreement with the imperialists. I have had to acquaint myself with their arguments at a time when their writings were confiscated by our government, which was fighting against the counter-revolution and when it was necessary to acquaint oneself with their documents in order to judge properly their participation in Kolchakism. Undoubtedly they are the best of the S.R. crowd. And in their writing I came across arguments of this kind: 'If you please, they expect repentance from us: they expect that we shall repent. No, never! We have nothing to repent! They accuse us of having been in a *bloc*, in an agreement with the Entente, with the imperialists. But did not you, the Bolsheviks, enter into an agreement with the German imperialists?'

What was Brest? Surely Brest was an agreement with imperialism? You made an agreement with German imperialism at Brest, we made an agreement with French imperialism—we are quits, we have nothing to repent!

This argument, which I found in the writing of the people I have named and of their fellow thinkers, I meet when I recall the newspapers I have mentioned, when I try to sum up my impressions from the talk of philistines. You are constantly meeting this argument. This is one of the chief political arguments with which we have to deal. So I ask you to examine, analyse and consider theoretically this argument. What is its meaning? Are those right who say: 'We, the Democrats, and Socialists, were in a *bloc* with the Entente, you were in a *bloc* with Wilhelm, you made the Brest peace—what have we got to reproach each other with, we are quits?' Or are we right when we say that those who have exposed themselves, not in words but in deeds, in their agreement with the Entente against the Bolshevik revolution, are Kolchakians? Although they deny this a hundred thousand times, although they have personally deserted Kolchak and declared to the whole people that they are against Kolchak, they are Kolchakians in their very roots, by the whole content and meaning of their arguments and their deeds. Who is right? This is the main question of the revolution and we must think about it.

In order to explain this question I will allow myself to make a comparison, this time not with an individual revolutionary, but with an individual philistine. Imagine that bandits are surrounding your automobile and holding you up with a revolver. Imagine that after this you give up your money and arms to the bandits, allowing them to go off in this automobile. What has happened? You have given the bandits arms and money. This is a fact. Let yourself imagine that another citizen has given the bandits arms and money so as to have a share in the attacks of these bandits against peaceful citizens.

In both cases there is an agreement. Whether it is written or not, whether it is spoken or not, that is not important. You may imagine that a person gives up in silence his revolver, his arms and his money. The meaning of the agreement is clear: 'I am giving you my revolver, arms and money, you are allowing me to remove myself from your pleasant proximity' (laughter): clearly an agreement. In exactly the same way it is possible for a silent agreement to be concluded by a person who gives up arms and money to the bandits in order to allow

them to rob others, and who then receives part of the spoils. This is also a silent agreement.*

I am asking you: Is it possible to find a literate person who is unable to distinguish between the two agreements? You will say: If really a man can be found who is incapable of distinguishing between the one and the other kind of agreement and who says: 'You gave your arms and money to the bandits, therefore never again accuse anyone of banditry, what right do you have to accuse anyone of banditry after that?' You will say that such a person must really be a cretin. If you meet such a person who is literate then you will have to acknowledge, or at least 999 out of every thousand will acknowledge, that he is not in his right mind and it is impossible to argue with such a person, not merely on political, but even on criminal subjects.

I will now ask you to pass from this example to a comparison of the Brest peace and the agreement with the Entente. What was the Brest peace? Surely it was the violence of bandits who attacked us at a time when we were honestly proposing peace in proposing to all the peoples to overthrow *their own* bourgeoisie? It would have been comic if we had begun with the overthrow of the German bourgeoisie! We have exposed this Treaty before the whole world as being a plundering and robber Treaty, we have condemned it and even at once refused to sign this Treaty, counting on the support of the German workers. When these violators held us up with a revolver we said: Take our arms, our money, we'll settle with you afterwards by other means. We know another enemy of German imperialism which blind people have not noticed—the German workers. Can this agreement with imperialism be compared with the kind of agreement in which the Democrats, Socialists, Socialist revolutionaries—don't joke, the stronger the title, the more high-sounding it is—in which they make an agreement with the Entente to march against the workers of their own country? But this is how matters stood and how they stand at this moment. For the most influential section of the Mensheviks, who are famous in Europe, and of the S.R.'s, who are at present abroad, are now making an agreement with the Entente. Whether it is a written agreement or not, I don't know—certainly it is not written, for wise

* Lenin was actually the object of such an attack by bandits in the winter of 1918. They held up his car, took away his portfolio and the chauffeur's revolver and made off with the car. He uses this example also in Left Wing Communism against George Lansbury and the Leaders of the British Labour Party.

people do things like that in silence. But it is clear that such an agreement exists. Since they take these people in their arms, give them passports, by means of wireless telegraph inform the whole world of the fact that Axelrod has spoken to-day, to-morrow Savinkov or Avksentiev, and the day after to-morrow Breshkovskaya will speak. Surely this is an agreement, even though an unspoken one? And is that the same kind of agreement with the imperialists as ours? Outwardly it is similar to ours as outwardly the act of the man who gives up arms and money to the bandits is similar to every act of the same kind, independently of its aim and character—in any case independently of the reason for which they give money and arms to the bandits. Do I give them in order to be rid of them, when they attack me and when I am placed in the position in which they will kill me unless I give them my revolver? Or do I give money and arms to the bandits who are going to commit a robbery about which I know and in the profits of which I share?

‘Of course, I call this the emancipation of Russia from the dictatorship of her violators and I am, of course, a Democrat, since I am supporting the Siberian or Archangel Democracy, about which everybody knows, and I am, of course, fighting for the Constituent Assembly. Do not dare to suspect me of anything low, and if I am of service to bandits, to English, French, American imperialists, then I am doing this for the sake of the interests of Democracy, of the Constituent Assembly, of the power of the people, of the unity of the labouring classes of the population and of the overthrow of the violators, the usurpers, the Bolsheviks!’

The aims, of course, are very noble. But has not everybody who takes part in politics heard that policies are judged not according to declarations, but according to their real class content? Which class are you serving? If you are in an agreement with the imperialists, then are you participating in imperialist banditry or not?

In my ‘Letter to the American Workers’ I showed, by the way, that the revolutionary American people when it emancipated itself in the eighteenth century from England, when it waged one of the first and greatest wars in the history of humanity which was really emancipatory, and one of the few wars in the history of humanity which was really revolutionary, the great revolutionary American people in freeing itself made an agreement with the bandits of Spanish and French imperialism, who at that time held colonies in America itself

as the neighbours of this people. In alliance with these bandits it defeated the English and freed itself from them. Are there any literate people in the world, have you seen any kind of Socialists, Socialist revolutionaries, representatives of Democracy, or whatever else they may call themselves, including Mensheviks—have you ever seen that they have decided for that reason publicly to accuse the American people, to say that they have violated the principles of Democracy, of freedom, etc.? Such a fool has not yet been born. But to-day we actually have with us people of that kind who call themselves by such titles and who even have pretensions to join with us in one International, and it is only Bolshevik insolence—it is well known that the Bolsheviks are insolent—when they form their own Communist International and do not want to go into the Berne, the good, the old, the general, the only International!

And there are actually such people who say: We have nothing to repent—you have made an agreement with Wilhelm, we have made an agreement with the Entente—we are quits!

I declare that these people, if they possess elementary political literacy, are Kolchakians, however much they may deny this personally, however much Kolchakism may personally repel them, however much they may have suffered personally from Kolchak, and even though they have come over to our side. They are Kolchakians, since it is impossible to believe that they do not understand the difference between a compulsory agreement in the struggle against the exploiters which the exploited classes have been forced to conclude here, there and everywhere throughout the whole history of revolution, and between what the most influential of the representatives of our pseudo-Democrats have done and are doing, the representatives of the pseudo ‘Socialist’ intelligentsia, who partly entered yesterday and are partly entering to-day into an agreement with the bandits and highway robbers of international imperialism against *a part*, they talk in this way, against a part of the toiling classes of their own country. These people are Kolchakians and there can be no other attitude towards them save that which conscious revolutionaries must have towards Kolchakians.

III

I will now pass to the next question. This is the question of the attitude towards Democracy in general.

I have already had to point out that the most profitable justification, the most profitable defence of those political positions which the Democrats and Socialists are holding against us is the reference to Democracy. As you know, of course, Kautsky, the ideological leader of the Second International and up to now a member of the Berne International, has stood out in European literature as the most decisive representative of this point of view. 'The Bolsheviks have chosen a method which violates Democracy, the Bolsheviks have chosen the method of dictatorship, and therefore their cause is unjust' is how he argues. This conclusion has figured a thousand and a million times in every place and constantly throughout the whole of the press and in the newspapers mentioned by me. The whole intelligentsia is constantly repeating it, and sometimes the philistines half-consciously repeat it in their argumentation. 'Democracy is freedom, is equality, is the decision of the majority; what can be higher than freedom, than equality, than the decision of the majority! If you, the Bolsheviks, have retreated from this and, moreover, have even had the impudence to declare openly that you are higher than freedom, and equality, and the decision of the majority, then don't be surprised and don't complain if we call you usurpers, violators!'

We are not at all astonished at this because we desire clarity above all and we only count upon the advanced section of the toilers really and truly being conscious of their position. Yes, we have said and we say all the time in our programme, in the party programme, that we are not fraudulently issuing such fine sounding slogans as freedom, equality and the will of the majority, and that we regard those who call themselves Democrats, supporters of pure Democracy, supporters of consistent Democracy, directly or indirectly preferring these to the dictatorship of the proletariat—we regard them as allies of Kolchak.

Get clear, for it is necessary to get clear. Are the pure Democrats really to blame for teaching pure Democracy, for defending it against usurpers, or are they to blame because they have appeared on the side of the property-owning classes, on the side of Kolchak? Let us begin to get clear about freedom. Freedom, there is no need to emphasize, is a very, very important slogan in any revolution, whether Socialist or Democratic. But our programme declares: Freedom is a fraud if it is in opposition to the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital. And anyone of you who has

read Marx—I think that even anyone of you who has even read a popular explanation of Marx—knows that Marx devoted the greater part of his life, of his literary works and the greater part of his scientific investigations, precisely to ridiculing freedom, equality, the will of the majority and all the kinds of Bentham's who described it, and to proving that behind these phrases lie the interests of the freedom of the commodity owner, of the freedom of Capital, which he makes use of in order to oppress the toiling masses.

We say to anyone who, at the moment when things have gone as far as the overthrow of the power of Capital throughout the world, or even in one country, that at such an historical moment when the struggle of the oppressed toiling classes for the complete overthrow of Capital, for the complete destruction of commodity production is coming to the front, we say that everybody who at such a political moment makes use of the words 'Freedom in general', who in the name of this freedom acts against the dictatorship of the proletariat, is helping the exploiters and nothing else, he is their ally because freedom, unless it is subordinated to the interests of the emancipation of Labour from the yoke of Capital, is a fraud, as we have declared outright in our party programme. Perhaps this is superfluous from the point of view of the external formulation of the programme, but it is very fundamental from the point of view of the whole of our propaganda and education, from the point of view of the foundation of proletarian struggle and of proletarian power. We know perfectly well that we must fight against world Capital, we know perfectly well that world Capital in its time had before it the task of creating freedom, that it overthrew feudal slavery, that it created bourgeois freedom, we know perfectly well that this was a world historical progress. And we declare that we are going against Capitalism in general, against republican Capitalism, against Democratic Capitalism, against free Capitalism—and, of course, we know that it will raise the banner of freedom against us. And we are answering it. We have considered it essential to give this answer in our programme. Every kind of freedom is a fraud if it is contradictory to the interests of the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital.

But perhaps this is impossible? Perhaps it is impossible for freedom to be in contradiction to the emancipation of Labour from the yoke of Capital? Look at all the Western European countries, at whichever ones you have been in, or in any one case about which you have

read. In each book their system is described as the freest system, and now these Western European, civilized countries—France, England, America—have raised this banner, they are marching against the Bolsheviks 'In the name of Freedom'. Only a few days ago—we now get French newspapers rarely because we are surrounded by a ring, but information comes to us over the wireless, since it is still impossible to seize the air and we pick up foreign wireless—a few days ago I was able to read in the wireless bulletins sent out by the French robber government that in going against the Bolsheviks and supporting their adversaries France is holding high as ever its own 'high ideal of Freedom'. We are meeting with this at every step, this is the main thing in the tone of their polemics against us.

And what do they call freedom? These civilized Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, would call freedom even freedom of meeting. In the constitution there must be written: 'Freedom of meeting for all citizens'. 'That', they say, 'is the meaning, that is the chief manifestation of freedom. And you Bolsheviks have violated the freedom of meeting.'

Yes, we answer, your freedom, English, French, American gentlemen, is a fraud, if it contradicts the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital. You have forgotten one trifle, civilized gentlemen. You have forgotten that your freedom is written in a constitution which *legalizes private property*. That is the essence of the matter.

Along with freedom—property, thus is it written in your constitution. That you recognize freedom of meeting, is, of course, an immense progress in comparison with feudal order, with medieval serf law. All Socialists have recognized this in making use of this freedom of bourgeois society in order to teach the proletariat how to throw off the oppression of Capitalism.

But your freedom is of such a kind that it is a freedom on paper and not in practice. This means that if there are large halls in the big cities such as this we are in, then they belong to the Capitalist and landlords and are called, for example, 'The Nobles' Hall'.*

You may meet freely, citizens of the Russian Democratic Republic, but that is private property, excuse me, please, you must respect private property otherwise you will be Bolsheviks, criminals, robbers,

* The Congress at which Lenin was speaking was taking place in the Moscow 'Nobles' Hall', to-day the 'House of the Trade Unions'.

thieves, insolent people. But we say: 'We are turning this upside down. This building of "The Nobles' Hall" we are first going to make into a building of the workers' organizations and then we shall talk about freedom of meeting.' You accuse us of violating freedom. We acknowledge that any kind of freedom which is not subordinated to the interests of the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital is a fraud. Freedom of meeting which is written down in the constitutions of all the bourgeois republics is a fraud because, in order to meet in a civilized country, which has, nevertheless, not managed to destroy the winter nor to remake the weather, there have to be enclosed premises for meetings, and the best buildings are private property. First of all let us take away the best buildings and then we will talk about freedom.

We say that the freedom of meeting for the Capitalists is the greatest crime against the toilers, that it is freedom of meeting for counter-revolutionaries. We say to the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen, to the gentlemen who are supporters of Democracy, you are lying when you throw in our faces the accusation of destroying freedom! When your great bourgeois revolutionaries in England in 1649, in France in 1792–1793, carried out a revolution, they did not allow freedom of meeting for the Monarchists. The French Revolution is called Great because it was not distinguished by the flabbiness and half-heartedness, by the phrase-mongering of many of the revolutions of 1848, and because it was a businesslike revolution which in overthrowing the Monarchists suppressed them altogether. In the same way we know how to deal with the Capitalist gentlemen, for we know that in order to emancipate the toilers from the yoke of Capital it is necessary to take away freedom of meeting from the Capitalists, it is necessary to remove or cut off their 'freedom'. This helps the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital, this helps that real freedom in which there will be no buildings in which one family will live and which will belong to a single individual—to the landlords, Capitalists or some limited company. When that takes place then people will forget that it is possible for there to be public buildings which are somebody's property and then we shall be for complete 'freedom'. When only workers remain in the world and people forget to think about how it was possible to be a member of society and not a worker—this will not be so very soon yet, the bourgeois gentlemen are to blame for the delay, and the

bourgeois intellectual gentlemen—then we shall stand for freedom of meeting for everybody, but to-day freedom of meeting means freedom of meeting for the Capitalists, for the counter-revolutionaries. We are fighting against them, we are repelling them and declare that we shall abolish this freedom.

We are going into battle—this is the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The days of naïve, utopian, fantastic, mechanical, intellectual Socialism have passed, when people imagined that it is only necessary to convince the majority of persons, to paint a beautiful picture of Socialist society, and the majority will adopt the point of view of Socialism. The days have passed when it was possible to deceive oneself and others with these childish fairy tales. Marxism which recognizes the inevitability of the class struggle says: Humanity cannot attain Socialism otherwise than through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dictatorship—that is a stern, serious, bloody, terrible word, and such words are not thrown idly on to the wind. If the Socialists have come forward with such a slogan then it is because they know that except as a result of a desperate, merciless struggle, the class of exploiters will not yield and it will try to conceal its rule by all kinds of pleasant words.

Freedom of meeting—what can sound higher and better than this word? Is it possible to imagine the development of the toilers in class consciousness without freedom of meeting? Are the foundations of humanity imaginable without freedom of meeting? But we say that the freedom of meeting in the constitutions of England and the United States of North America is a fraud, because it ties the hands of the toiling masses throughout the period of the transition to Socialism—it is a fraud, because we know perfectly well that the bourgeoisie will do everything in order to overthrow this power, which is so unusual, so 'monstrous' at the beginning. It cannot be any other way in the eyes of anyone who has thought over the class struggle, who has thought at all concretely and clearly about the relation of the workers in revolt towards the bourgeoisie which has been overthrown in one country and is not yet overthrown in all, and which, therefore, precisely because it is not completely overthrown, dashes into the struggle with the greater hatred.

Precisely after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie the class struggle assumes its sharpest forms and those Democrats and Socialists are good for nothing who deceive themselves and then deceive others by

saying that since the bourgeoisie has been overthrown the job is done. It is only begun and not finished, because the bourgeoisie does not yet believe in the thought that it is overthrown, and on the eve of the November Revolution it joked very pleasantly and very amiably. Milyukov joked and Chernov and the followers of the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*. They joked because they didn't take things seriously, but now they have seen that things have gone seriously and the English, French and Swiss bourgeois gentlemen who considered that their 'democratic republic' was an armour which was defending them have also seen and recognized that things have taken a serious turn and now they are all arming themselves. If you could see what is happening in free Switzerland, how there literally every bourgeois is being armed, how a White Guard is being created because they know that things have reached a point where it is a question of whether they will keep their privileges which allow them to hold millions in wage slavery. To-day the struggle has taken on a world sweep, therefore to-day anyone who attacks us with the words 'Democracy', 'Freedom', stands on the side of the property-owning classes, deceives the people, for he does not understand that freedom and Democracy until now were freedom and Democracy for the property owners and just crumbs from the table for those without property.

What is freedom of meeting when the toilers are trodden down by the slavery of Capital and by work for Capital? It is a fraud, and in order to get freedom for the toilers it is first of all necessary to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, but if I am enduring the resistance of a whole class, then it is clear that I cannot promise either freedom or equality, or majority decision to that class.

IV

I will now pass from freedom to equality. Here the matter is still deeper. Here we are touching on a question which is still more serious, which calls for greater and more burning disagreements.

The revolution in its course overthrows one exploiting class after another. First of all it has overthrown the monarchy, and understood by freedom simply that there should be electoral power, that there should be a republic. Going further, it has overthrown the landlords, and you know that the whole struggle against medieval order,

against feudalism, went on under the slogan of 'Equality'. All are equals, no matter what their estate; all are equals, including the millionaire and the tramp—in this way the greatest revolutionaries of the period which has gone down to history as the period of the Great French Revolution used to think, speak, and sincerely consider. The revolution went against the landlords on the slogan of equality, and equality was called that condition under which the millionaire and the worker should have equal rights. The revolution has gone further. It says that 'equality'—we did not say this specially in our programme, but it is impossible to go on repeating it without end, since it is as clear as what we have said concerning freedom—it says that equality is a fraud if it is in contradiction to the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital. We say this and it is perfectly true. We say that a Democratic republic with contemporary equality is a lie, a fraud, that equality is not observed in it and cannot be, and that what prevents this equality being observed is property in the means of production, in money, in Capital. It is possible to take away at once property and wealthy buildings, it is possible to take away relatively quickly Capital and instruments of production, but take property in money!

Money—that is the cream of social wealth, the cream of social labour, money is evidence of the receipt of tribute from all the toilers, money is the relic of former exploitation. That is what money is. Can it anyhow be destroyed at once? No. Before the Socialist revolution the Socialists wrote that it is impossible to abolish money at once, and we can confirm this by our experience. A great many technical, and what is much more difficult and more important, organizational gains, are necessary in order to abolish money, and until then it is necessary to retain an equality in words, in the constitution, and to keep such conditions in which everyone who has money has, in fact, the right to exploit. And we have not been able to abolish money outright; we say that money will still remain, and will remain for a pretty long time during the transition period from the old Capitalist society to the new Socialist one. Equality is a fraud if it is in opposition to the interests of the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital.

Engels is a thousand times right when he wrote that the conception of equality is a stupid and nonsensical prejudice *apart from* the abolition of classes. Bourgeois professors have attempted to convict

us of a conception of equality by which we would make one man the equal of another. They have tried to accuse the Socialists of this nonsense which they have invented themselves. But in their ignorance they did not know that the Socialists, and particularly the founders of modern scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, have said: Equality is an empty phrase unless by equality we mean the abolition of classes. We wish to destroy classes, and in this respect we stand for equality. But to pretend that we are making all people the equals of one another is a completely empty phrase and stupid invention of the intellectual who sometimes conscientiously poses and distorts words, but it has no meaning, even though he call himself a writer and sometimes a learned man or even anything else he likes.

And this is what we say. We put equality as our aim in the shape of the abolition of classes. Then it is necessary also to destroy the class difference between workers and peasants. This is precisely our aim. A society in which a class difference between workers and peasants remains is neither Communist nor Socialist society. Of course, interpreting the word Socialism in a certain sense it can be called Socialist, but that would be casuistry, a dispute over words. Socialism is the first stage of Communism, but it is not worth while to quarrel about words. One thing is clear, so long as the class difference between worker and peasant remains we cannot talk of equality without taking care not to fall into the position of giving grist to the mill of the bourgeoisie. The peasants are a class from the patriarchal epoch, a class brought up in generations and centuries of slavery, and in the course of all those generations the peasant has existed as a *small proprietor*, at first subordinated to other classes and afterwards formally free and equal, but a *property holder and owner of the necessaries of food*.

Here we approach the question which brings the greatest number of reproaches from our enemies, which gives birth to the greatest number of doubts among inexperienced and unthinking people, and which most of all divides us from those who desire to be considered as Democrats or as Socialists and who are offended with us because we consider them neither Democrats nor Socialists, but call them supporters of the Capitalists, maybe through ignorance, but, nevertheless, supporters of the Capitalists.

The condition of the peasant, from his life, from his conditions of production, from his conditions of life and living, from the conditions

of his economy, is such that the peasant is half a toiler and half a speculator.

This is a fact. You cannot jump away from this fact until you destroy money, until you destroy exchange. And in order to do this years and years of firm rule of the proletariat are necessary, because only the proletariat is capable of defeating the bourgeoisie. When they say to us: 'You are violators of equality, you have not only violated equality with the exploiters—I am quite ready to agree with that, declares some Socialist revolutionary or Menshevik without understanding what he is saying, but you have violated the equality of the workers with the peasants, you have violated the equality of "Labour Democracy", you are criminals!' We answer: 'Yes, we have violated the equality of the workers with the peasants and we declare that you who stand for that equality are supporters of Kolchak.' Not long ago I read a splendid article by Comrade Herminog in *Pravda*, in which were the theses of citizen Sher, one of the most 'Socialist' of the Menshevik Social Democrats. These theses were put forward in one of our co-operative institutions. These theses are of such a kind that they should have been engraved on a board and hung up in every district Soviet executive committee with the inscription: 'Here you have a Kolchakian.'

I know perfectly well that this citizen Sher and his fellow thinkers will call me a slanderer and even worse than this. Nevertheless, I am asking people who have learned the ABC of political economy and of political grammar to distinguish carefully who is right and who is wrong. Citizen Sher says that the food policy and in general the economic policy of the Soviet power is good for nothing and that it is necessary to pass, at first gradually and then on a wider scale, to free trade in food products and to the guaranteeing of private property.

I say that this is the economic programme and the economic basis of Kolchak. I declare that anybody who has read Marx, particularly the first chapter of *Capital*, anyone who has read even Kautsky's popularization of Marx, *The Economic Teachings of Karl Marx*, will have to come to the conclusion that, particularly at the moment when the revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is taking place, when landlord and Capitalist property is being overthrown, when the country is starving, ruined by four years of imperialist war, free trade in grain is freedom for the Capitalist, freedom for the

restoration of the power of Capital. This is the Kolchakian economic programme, for a Kolchak is not fed on air.

It is not very clever to blame Kolchak because he has used violence upon the workers and even flogged women school teachers because they sympathise with the Bolsheviks. That is a vulgar defence of Democracy, a stupid way of accusing Kolchak. Kolchak acts by the means which he finds at hand. But how does he maintain himself economically? He maintains himself by free trade, he stands for that, and all the Capitalists are supporting him *because of that*. But you say, 'I have left Kolchak. I am not a Kolchakian.' That, of course, is to your honour, but that still does not prove that you have got a head on your shoulders capable of thinking. That is how we reply to these people, without in any way encroaching on the honour of the S.R.'s and Mensheviks who have left Kolchak when they saw that he was a violator. But if in the country there are such people who engage in a desperate struggle with Kolchak while continuing to fight for the 'equality of Labour Democracy', for free trade in grain, then they are Kolchakians, they simply do not understand things, do not know how to put two and two together.

Kolchak maintains himself because when he takes a rich grain district (he may be called Kolchak or Denikin, the uniforms are different but the meanings are the same) he permits free trade in grain there and *freedom for the restoration of Capitalism*. That's how it has been in every revolution, and that is how it will be with us if we pass from a dictatorship of the proletariat to this 'freedom' and to this 'equality' of the gentlemen who call themselves Democrats, S.R.'s, 'left' Mensheviks, etc., even sometimes anarchists—they have many names. In the Ukraine at present every band gives itself a name, each one freer than the next, each one more democratic than the next, and there is a band in every parish.

It is the 'defenders of the interests of the labouring peasantry', for the most part S.R.'s, who propose to us equality between the workers and the peasants. Others, like citizen Sher, have learned Marxism and still do not understand that there can be no equality between the worker and the peasant in the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism, that those who promise it must be recognized as developing Kolchak's programme even though they have not understood this. I declare that anybody who considers the concrete conditions of the

country, particularly of our completely ruined country, will understand this.

Our 'Socialists' who declare that we are now in the period of the bourgeois revolution are constantly accusing us of consumers' Communism. Some of them add, military Communism, and imagine that they stand above this, imagine that they have got above this 'low' form of Communism. These are just people who are playing with words. They have seen books, they have studied books, they have repeated books and have understood absolutely nothing in books. You find such learned people, and even very learned people. They have read in books that Socialism is the highest development of production. Kautsky even does nothing else but repeat this. I have recently seen a German newspaper which unexpectedly came into our hands, and in it I read about the last Congress of Soviets in Germany. Kautsky made the chief report and in his report emphasized—not he personally, but his wife, since he was ill and she read his report—in this report he emphasized that Socialism is the highest form of production and that neither Capitalism nor Socialism can be maintained without production and that the German workers do not understand this.

Poor German workers! They are fighting against Scheidemann and Noske, fighting against their executioners, trying to overthrow the executioners' power, the Noskes and Scheidemanns who still consider themselves Social Democrats, they imagine that civil war is going on. Liebknecht is murdered, Rosa Luxemburg is murdered, all the Russian bourgeois are saying, this was printed in an Ekaterinodar newspaper, 'that's how we should deal with our Bolsheviks!' That is what was printed. He who understands things knows perfectly well that the whole international bourgeoisie adopts this point of view. One must defend oneself. Scheidemann and Noske are waging civil war against the proletariat. War is war. The German workers think that they are in the midst of civil war and that all other questions have a secondary importance. The worker must first of all be fed. Kautsky considers this military or consumers' Communism. Production must be developed!

O wise gentlemen! But how can you develop production in a country which has been plundered and ruined by the imperialists, in which there is no coal, no raw materials, no food? 'Develop production!' But we never have a session of the Council of Peoples'

Commissars or of the Council of Defence at which we do not divide up the last million poods of coal or oil while experiencing a terrible feeling when all the commissars take their last remnants and none of them has enough and it is necessary to decide whether to close factories here or there, whether to leave the workers without work in this place or that—a terrible question, but it has to be done, since there is no coal. Coal is in the Don Basin, coal has been destroyed by the German invasion. Take Belgium, Poland, this phenomenon is typical. Everywhere as a consequence of the imperialist war the same thing is taking place. This means that there will be unemployment and hunger for many years to come, for there are mines which when once flooded cannot be restored for many years. And here these people are saying to us, 'Socialism is the raising of productivity'. You have read books, dear gentlemen, you have written books and you have understood nothing in books. (Applause.)

Of course from the point of view of a Capitalist society which passed over to Socialism peacefully in times of peace there would be no more urgent task than the raising of productivity. It is only necessary to add one little word, 'if'. If Socialism were born peacefully in this way as the Capitalist gentlemen are unwilling to allow it to be born. There is a slight inconsequence here. Even if there had been no war the Capitalist gentlemen would have done everything to prevent such a peaceful development. Great revolutions, even when they have begun peacefully like the Great French Revolution, have ended in furious wars which the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie has declared. It cannot be otherwise if we look at this question from the point of view of the class struggle and not from that of philistine phrase-mongering about freedom, equality, Labour Democracy and the will of the majority, or that stupid philistine phrase-mongering to which the Mensheviks, S.R.'s, and all those 'Democrats' are treating us. There can be no peaceful development to Socialism. And at the present period after the imperialist war it would be ridiculous to say that the development would go on peacefully, particularly in a ruined country. Take France. France is a victorious country and there grain production has been cut down by half. In England, as I have seen in the English bourgeois newspapers, they are saying that 'we are now beggars'. And in a ruined country they reproach the Communists because production is at a standstill! Whoever says this is either a complete idiot, even though he calls

himself three times over the leader of the Berne International, or else he is a traitor to the workers.

In a country which is laid waste the first task is to save the toilers. The first productive force of all humanity is the worker, the toiler. If he survives we will save and restore everything.

We are putting up with many years of poverty, of going back to barbarism. The imperialist war has thrown us back to barbarism, and if we save the toiler, if we save the chief productive force of humanity, the worker, we restore everything, but we shall perish unless we succeed in saving him, and therefore whoever at such a moment cries out about consumers' and military Communism, looking down upon others, imagining he has lifted himself above them, above these Bolshevik Communists, this man, I repeat, understands absolutely nothing in political economy and grabs quotations from books like a professor who has, so to speak, got a box of quotations in his head and squeezes them out, but on hearing a new combination which is not written down in the book he gets panic-stricken and grabs out of the box the wrong quotation.

At a time when the country is laid waste our chief task is to maintain the life of the worker, *to save the worker*, for the workers are perishing because the factories are idle, and the factories are idle because there is no fuel and because our production is all artificial, because industry is cut off from its sources of raw materials. This is the same throughout the world. Raw material has to be transported for the Russian cotton factory from Egypt, from America, at the nearest from Turkestan, and try to transport it when there are counter-revolutionary bands there, when the English troops have seized Askhabad and Krasnovodsk: transport it from Egypt, from America, when the railroads are not carrying goods, when they are ruined, when they are standing idle and there is no coal. The worker must be saved even though he cannot work. If we save him for these few years we are saving the country, society and Socialism. If we do not save him, then we are going back to wage slavery. That is how the question of Socialism stands, for it is not born out of the imagination of a peaceful fool who calls himself a Social Democrat, but out of reality, out of furious, desperately stern class struggle. That is a fact. Everything must be sacrificed in order to save the existence of the worker. And from this point of view when they come to us and say that 'We are for the equality of Labour Democracy, while you

Communists do not allow equality even between the workers and peasants', then we reply that worker and peasant are equal as toilers, but that the well-fed speculator in grain is not equal to the hungry toiler. It is only for this reason that it is written in our constitution that worker and peasant are unequal.

Do you say that they should be equal? Let us weigh them, count them. Take sixty peasants and ten workers. The sixty peasants have a surplus of grain. They are going about in rags, but they do have grain. Let us take ten workers. After the imperialist war they are in rags, in pain, without bread, fuel or raw materials. The factories are idle. Are they equal in your opinion? The sixty peasants have the right to decide and the ten workers must obey? The great principle of equality, of unity of Labour Democracy and of the decision of the majority!

That is what they say to us. We answer 'you are bad jokers, for you talk in splendid words and hide the question of hunger.'

We ask you. Do hungry workers in a ruined country, in which the factories are idle, have the right to obey the decision of the majority of peasants if the latter do not give up their grain surpluses? Do they have the right to take these grain surpluses, even by force if it is impossible in any other way? Answer directly! Here they begin to twist and turn when it is a question of the real meaning of things.

In every country, industry is ruined, and will be ruined for some years, because the factories are burned or the mines are flooded—it is an easy thing to blow up wagons, to smash locomotives—it is an easy thing of which any fool, whether he be called a German or a French officer, is quite capable, particularly if he has a good machine for explosions, bombardment, etc., but to restore things is a very difficult matter calling for years.

The peasants are a special class. As toilers they are the enemies of Capitalist exploitation, but at the same time they are property owners. For centuries the peasant has been brought up on the idea that the grain is his and he is free to sell it. This is my right, the peasant thinks, for this is my labour, my blood and sweat. To reform his psychology quickly is impossible. It is a long and difficult process of struggle. Whoever imagines that the transition to Socialism will be a question of one person convincing another, and another a third, is only a child at best, or a political hypocrite, but of those people who

talk from the political platform the majority, of course, belong to the latter category.

The fact is that the peasant is accustomed to free trade in grain. When we overthrew Capitalist institutions it appeared that there was still one force by which Capitalism is maintained, the force of habit. The more decisively we threw off all the institutions which maintained Capitalism the clearer the other force stood out which Capitalism has maintained—the force of habit. With luck the institutions can be smashed at once, but habit can never be smashed at once whatever your luck. When we gave all the land to the peasantry and freed him from the landlords' ownership of the land, when we threw off all that was hampering him, he continued to consider 'freedom' to be the free sale of grain, and lack of freedom the obligation to give up his surplus of grain at a fixed price. What's the meaning of this and how is it to be 'given up', the peasant fumes, particularly when the apparatus is, moreover, bad, and bad because the whole of the bourgeois intelligentsia is on the side of the Sukharevka.* Clearly this apparatus must be based on people who are learning and who, at the best, if they are conscientious and devoted to the cause, will be learning for some years, while the apparatus will remain bad until then and will sometimes cover up all kinds of rogues who call themselves Communists. This danger threatens every ruling party, every victorious proletariat, for it is impossible at once to smash the resistance of the bourgeoisie or to set up a perfected apparatus. We know very well that the apparatus of Komprod† is still bad. Recently scientific statistical investigations were carried out into how the worker in non-agricultural provinces is being fed. It appears that he gets half of all his products from Komprod and the other half from speculators. For the first part he pays a tenth of his income on food, for the second nine-tenths.

A half of the food supplies is collected and furnished by Komprod, collected badly, of course, but collected in the Socialist way and not in a Capitalist way. It is collected by a victory over the speculators and not by a deal with them. It is collected by making a sacrifice of all the interests in existence, including the interests of formal 'equality', which the Menshevik gentlemen, the S.R.'s and Co., make a parade of, on behalf of the interests of the starving workers. Stick with your

* The chief market in Moscow and centre of speculation.

† The apparatus of food collection and rationing.

'equality', gentlemen, and we will stick with the hungry workers whom we have saved from famine. However much the Mensheviks may reproach us for breaking 'equality', the fact is that we have solved half of the task of supplies in unheard of, incalculable, conditions of difficulty. And we say that if sixty peasants have surpluses of grain while ten workers are starving, then it is unnecessary to talk about 'equality' in general or of 'the equality of labouring people', but only of the undoubted obligation of the sixty peasants to submit to the decision of the ten workers and give them, even though it only be as a loan, the surpluses of their grain.

The whole of political economy, if anybody has learned anything from it, the whole history of revolution, the whole history of political development throughout the nineteenth century, teaches us that the peasant follows the worker or the bourgeois. He cannot act in any other way. Of course, this seems wrong to one kind of Democrat, perhaps—another thinks that I am libelling the peasant out of Marxist maliciousness. The peasants are the majority, they are toilers and yet they cannot choose their own way! Why?

If you do not know why, I would say to such citizens, read the elements of political economy of Marx, Kautsky's explanations of Marx, consider the development of any of the great revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the political history of any country in the nineteenth century. It will tell you why. The economic structure of Capitalist society is such that the ruling forces in it can only be Capital or the proletariat which overthrows it.

There are no other forces in the economic structure of that society.

The peasant is half a toiler, half a speculator. The peasant is a toiler because he wins his bread in sweat and blood, because he is exploited by landlords, Capitalists and others. The peasant is a speculator because he sells grain, an article of necessity, an article which if it is not there is worth while giving up all one's property for. Hunger is no joke: for bread people will pay thousands of roubles and give anything you please, even all they possess.

The peasant is not to blame for that, but his economic conditions are of such a kind that he lives in commodity economy, has lived so for scores and hundreds of years and is accustomed to exchange his grain for money. You cannot reform a habit, you cannot destroy money at once. In order to destroy it, it is necessary to arrange the organization of the distribution of products for hundreds of millions

of people, an affair of many years. But so long as commodity economy remains, so long as there are hungry workers alongside well-fed peasants who hide their surpluses of grain, so long there will remain a certain opposition of interests between the workers and the peasants, and whoever gets away from this real opposition created by life with phrases about 'freedom', 'equality', and 'Labour Democracy', is simply at best an empty phrase-monger and at worst a hypocritical defender of Capitalism. If Capitalism defeats the revolution, then, it will defeat it by making use of the darkest of the peasants, by buying them over, by luring them with the return to free trade. The Mensheviks and S.R.'s, in fact, are standing on the side of Capitalism against Socialism.

The economic programme of Kolchak, Denikin, and of all the Russian White Guards is Free Trade. They understand this and they are not to blame that citizen Sher does not understand it. The economic facts of life are not changed because a certain party does not understand them. The slogan of the bourgeoisie is Free Trade. They try to deceive the peasants by saying: 'Would it not be better to live in the old way? Surely it would be better to live by the free, voluntary sale of agricultural labour? What can be juster?' That is how conscious Kolchakians talk, and from the point of view of the interests of Capital they are right. In order to restore the power of Capital in Russia it is necessary to work on traditions, upon the prejudices of the peasant as opposed to his reason, on the old habit of free trade, and it is necessary to crush the resistance of the workers by force. There is no other solution. The Kolchakians are right from the point of view of Capital, in their economic and political programme they know how to put two and two together, they understand where is the beginning and where is the end, they understand the connection between peasant free trade and the violent shooting down of the workers. There is a connection, although citizen Sher does not understand it. Free trade in grain is the economic programme of the Kolchakians, the shooting down of tens of thousands of workers, as in Finland, is a necessary means of carrying out this programme because the worker will not give up for nothing the victories which he has won. The connection is unbreakable, but people who have understood absolutely nothing in economic science and politics, people who have forgotten the foundations of Socialism

in their philistine fright, that is the Mensheviks and 'social revolutionaries', these people are trying to make us forget this connection of the phrases about 'equality', 'freedom', by shrieking that we are destroying the principle of equality within 'Labour Democracy', that our constitution is 'unjust'.

The voice of several peasants has exactly the same importance as the voice of a single worker. Is this not unjust?

No, this is just in the epoch in which it is necessary to overthrow Capital. I know whence you take your conceptions of justice. You have taken them from yesterday's Capitalistic epoch. The commodity owner, his equality, his freedom, these are your conceptions of justice. These petty bourgeois remnants of petty bourgeois prejudices are your justice, your equality, your Labour Democracy. But with us justice is subordinated to the interests of the overthrow of Capital. It is impossible to overthrow Capital in any other way than through the united efforts of the proletariat.

It is possible immediately and firmly to unite tens of millions of peasants against Capital, against free trade? You cannot do this owing to the force of economic conditions, although the peasants may be completely free and much more civilized. It is impossible to do this because in order to do it other economic conditions are necessary, because for this long years of preparation are needed. And who will carry it out, this preparation? Either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie.

The peasant, by his economic position in bourgeois society, is inevitably so placed that he follows either the worker or the bourgeoisie. *There is no middle way.* He may hesitate, become confused, put forward fantastic ideas, he may blame, he may curse, he may damn the 'narrow' representatives of the proletariat, the 'narrow' representatives of the bourgeoisie. For they represent the minority. They may be cursed, he may utter loud phrases about the majority, about the wide general character of your Labour Democracy, about pure Democracy. You can string together as many words as you like. They will be words which conceal the fact that if the peasant does not follow the worker, then he follows the bourgeoisie. There is not, and cannot be, a middle path. And those people who at this most critical transition in history, when the workers are starving and their industries are at a standstill, *do not assist the workers* to take the grain at a juster and *not* at a 'free' price, not at a Capitalist, not at a commercial

price, these people are fulfilling the programme of the Kolchakians, however much they may personally deny it, however sincerely they may be convinced that they are conscientiously carrying out their own programme.

V

I will now touch on the last question which I mentioned, the question of the defeat and victory of the revolution. Kautsky, whom I named for you as the chief representative of old and rotten Socialism, has not understood the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He has reproached us with the fact that a decision of the majority would be a decision which would guarantee a peaceful solution. Decision by dictatorship is decision by military means. That is, if you do not win by military means you will be defeated and destroyed, for civil war does not take prisoner, it destroys. This is how the scared Kautsky 'scared' us.

This is perfectly true. It is a fact. We confirm the correctness of this observation. Here there is nothing to argue about. Civil war is more serious and harsh than any other. It has always been so in history, beginning with the civil wars of ancient Rome, because international wars have always ended in deals between the propertied classes, and only in civil wars does the oppressed class direct its energies towards completely destroying the oppressing class, towards destroying the economic condition for the existence of that class.

I ask you, what are 'revolutionaries' worth who are frightened of a revolution which is commencing because it may be defeated? There never has been, no, and there will not be, and cannot be, revolutions which do not risk defeat. Revolution is a desperate struggle of classes which has reached its severest point. Class struggle is inevitable. Either you must renounce revolution altogether or else it is necessary to recognize that the struggle against the propertied classes will be the most terrible of all revolutions. With regard to this there has been no difference in views among Socialists who were at all class-conscious. When I had to go through all these renegade's secrets in Kautsky's writings, I wrote a year ago that even if, this was in September of last year, even if to-morrow the imperialists were to overthrow the Bolshevik power, we would not for a moment repent

having taken it.* And not a single class-conscious worker among those who represent the interests of the toiling masses will repent of this, will doubt that our revolution has, nevertheless, been victorious. For a revolution is victorious if it moves forward an advanced class and delivers serious blows at exploitation. In these conditions revolutions are victorious even when they suffer defeat. This may seem a mere play on words, but in order to prove this we will take a concrete fact from history.

Take the Great French Revolution. Not for nothing is it called Great. For the class for which it worked, for the bourgeoisie, it did so much that the whole of the nineteenth century, that century which gave civilization and culture to the whole of humanity, passed under the sign of the French Revolution. Throughout the ends of the earth it did nothing but carry out, partially fulfil, and complete what had been created by the great French revolutionaries of the bourgeoisie whose interests they served, although they were not conscious of this, concealing it by words about freedom, equality and fraternity.

Our revolution for our class, for the class which we are serving, for the proletariat, has already done in a year and a half incomparably more than the great French revolutionaries did.

They held out for two years and perished under the blows of the united European reaction, perished under the blows of the united hordes of the whole world who smashed the French revolutionaries, restored the legitimate and lawful monarchy in France, the Romanovs of those days, restored the landlords, and for long generations crushed any revolutionary movement in France. But, nevertheless, the Great French Revolution was victorious.

Anyone with a conscious attitude towards history will say that the French Revolution, although it was defeated, was, nevertheless, victorious because it gave to the whole world such bases for bourgeois Democracy, bourgeois freedom as were already irremovable.

Our revolution in a year and a half has given the proletariat, has given that class which we are serving, has given those aims for which we are working, has given for the overthrow of the rule of Capital, immeasurably more than the French Revolution gave for its class. And therefore we say that, even though we should take as a possible hypothesis the worst of possible cases, if to-morrow some lucky Kolchak or other got rid of literally each and every Bolshevik, the

* See Lenin's book, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.

revolution would still be invincible. And as a proof of our words we may point out that the new state organization which has been brought forward by this revolution has already made a moral conquest of the working class of the whole world and already enjoys its support. When the great French bourgeois revolutionaries perished in struggle they perished as individuals, they had no support in other countries. Every European state was armed against us and most of all advanced England. Our revolution now, after only a year and a half of the rule of Bolshevik power, has brought it about that the new state organization which it has created, the Soviet organization, has become comprehensible, familiar, and popular to the workers of the whole world, has become their own and for them.

I have shown you that the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, that it is necessary and undoubtedly essential for the transition from Capitalism. Dictatorship does not only mean violence, although it is impossible without violence, it also means an organization of labour which is higher than the preceding organization. That is why in my short welcome at the commencement of the Congress I emphasized this fundamental, elementary, simple task of organization, and why I act with such merciless hostility towards all kinds of intellectual inventions, to all kinds of 'proletarian cultures'. To these inventions I oppose the ABC of organization. Distribute bread and coal in such a way that there is a careful attitude to every pood of coal, to every pood of bread, this is the task of proletarian discipline. It is not that kind of discipline which is based on the rod, as discipline was based with the feudal serf owners, or on hunger, as with the Capitalists, but comradely discipline, the discipline of the workers' unions. Solve this elementary simple task of organization and we shall be victorious. For then the peasant will follow us absolutely who is now hesitating between the worker and the Capitalist, who does not know whether to follow people whom he does not yet trust, but who cannot deny that they are carrying out an order of labour which is juster, under which there will be no exploitation, under which 'free' trade in grain will be a state crime, to follow them or those who, as of old, promise free trade in grain which apparently means freedom of labour. If the peasants see that the proletariat is building its state power in a way which shows it knows how to construct order, and the peasant demands it, wants it and is right in this although there is a great deal that is confused, a great deal that is reactionary, and a great

deal which is prejudiced connected with this peasant desire for order, then the peasant will finally, after a lot of hesitation, follow the worker. The peasant cannot simply, lightly, and at once pass from the old society to the new. He knows that the old society gave him 'order' at the cost of ruining the toilers, at the cost of turning them into slaves. He does not know whether the proletariat will give him order. It is impossible to demand more from him, downtrodden, ignorant, scattered. He will not believe any words, any programmes. And he is right not to believe in words, since otherwise there would be no way out of deceptions. He will only believe in action, in practical experience. Prove to him that you, the united proletariat, proletarian state power, the proletarian dictatorship, know how to distribute grain and coal in such a way as to save every pood of grain and every pood of coal, succeed in managing so that the surplus of every pood of grain and every pood of coal does not go for speculative sale, does not serve the heroes of Sukharevka, but is used for just distribution, for supplying the hungry workers, for maintaining them, even at such times as these of unemployment when the mills and factories are standing idle. Prove this. This is the main task of proletarian culture, of proletarian organization. Violence can be applied without having any economic roots, but then it is doomed by history to perish. But violence can be applied which is based on an advanced class, on the higher principles of the Socialist system, order and organization. *And then it may temporarily meet with failure, but it is invincible.*

If proletarian organization shows the peasant that the order is correct, that the distribution of labour and grain are correct, that care for every pood of grain and coal is being shown, that we as workers by our comradely, co-operative discipline, are able to carry this out, that we are fighting by means of violence only in order to maintain the interests of labour, taking grain away from the speculator but not from the toiler, and that we are entering into an agreement with the middle peasant, with the peasant toiler, that we are ready to give him everything that we can give at present—if the peasant sees this, then his alliance with the working class, his alliance with the proletariat will be indestructible, and towards this we are going.

I have, nevertheless, been a little carried away in my theme and must return to it. In all countries now the word 'Bolshevik', the word 'Soviet', have ceased to be monstrous expressions as they were until recently, like the word 'Boxer', which we repeat without

understanding it.* The word 'Bolshevik' and the word 'Soviet' are now repeated in every language in the world. The class-conscious workers see that the bourgeoisie in every country fills its newspapers in millions of copies every day with slander upon the Soviet power—they are learning from this abuse. I recently read some American newspapers. I saw the speech of an American clergyman who said that the Bolsheviks are immoral people, that they are introducing the nationalization of women, that they are robbers and thieves. And I saw the reply of the American Socialists. They are distributing for five cents the Constitution of the Soviet Republic of Russia, of this 'dictatorship' which does not grant the 'equality of Labour Democracy'. They answer by quoting one paragraph from this Constitution of these 'usurpers', 'robbers', 'violators', who are destroying the unity of Labour Democracy. By the way, when they welcomed Breshkovskaya,† the most important Capitalist newspaper in New York printed in letters a yard long on the day Breshkovskaya arrived, 'Welcome, grandmother!'

The American Socialists have reprinted this and said: 'She is for political Democracy—American workers, are you astonished that the Capitalists praise her?' She is for political Democracy. Why must they praise her? Because she is against the Soviet Constitution. 'And here you are', say the American Socialists, 'here is one paragraph from the Constitution of these robbers.' They always quote the same paragraph which declares that he who exploits the labour of another may not vote and does not have the right to be elected. This paragraph in our Constitution is going all over the world. Soviet power precisely because it has openly declared that everything is subordinated to the dictatorship of the proletariat, that it is a new type of state organization, precisely because of this has won the sympathy of the workers of the whole world. This new organization of the state is being born with the greatest difficulty because to defeat disorganizing, petty bourgeois looseness is the most difficult thing, is a million times more difficult than overcoming the landlord violator or the Capitalist violator, but it is a million times more fruitful for the creation of a

* Lenin is referring to the 'Boxers', who were the Chinese rebels under a religious and reactionary leadership in the anti-imperialist movement at the beginning of the century.

† Breshkovskaya, the so-called 'grandmother of the revolution', was one of the Leaders of the Socialist Revolutionary Party who passed over to the counter-revolution.

new organization free from exploitation. When proletarian organization solves this task, then Socialism has won finally. The whole of the activity of both extra-school and school education must be devoted to this. In spite of the unusually difficult conditions, in spite of the fact that the first Socialist revolution in the world is taking place in a country with such a low level of civilization, in spite of this the Soviet power has already won the recognition of the workers of other countries. The words 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' are Latin words, and every toiling person who heard them did not understand what they meant, did not understand how they are carried out in life. Now these words are translated from Latin into the popular modern languages and now we have shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat is Soviet power, that power when the workers organize themselves and say: 'Our organization is the highest of all; not one non-toiling person, not one exploiter has the right to participate in this organization. This organization is completely directed to one aim—to the overthrow of Capitalism. You will not deceive us by any false slogans, by any fetishes, such as "freedom", "equality". We recognize neither freedom nor equality, nor Labour Democracy if they are opposed to the interests of the emancipation of Labour from the oppression of Capital.' We have introduced this into the Soviet Constitution and already attracted the sympathy of the workers of the whole world towards us. They know that however difficult it may be for the new order to come to birth, whatever difficult trials, and even defeats, may fall to the share of separate Soviet Republics, no force in the world will lead humanity backward. (Loud applause.)

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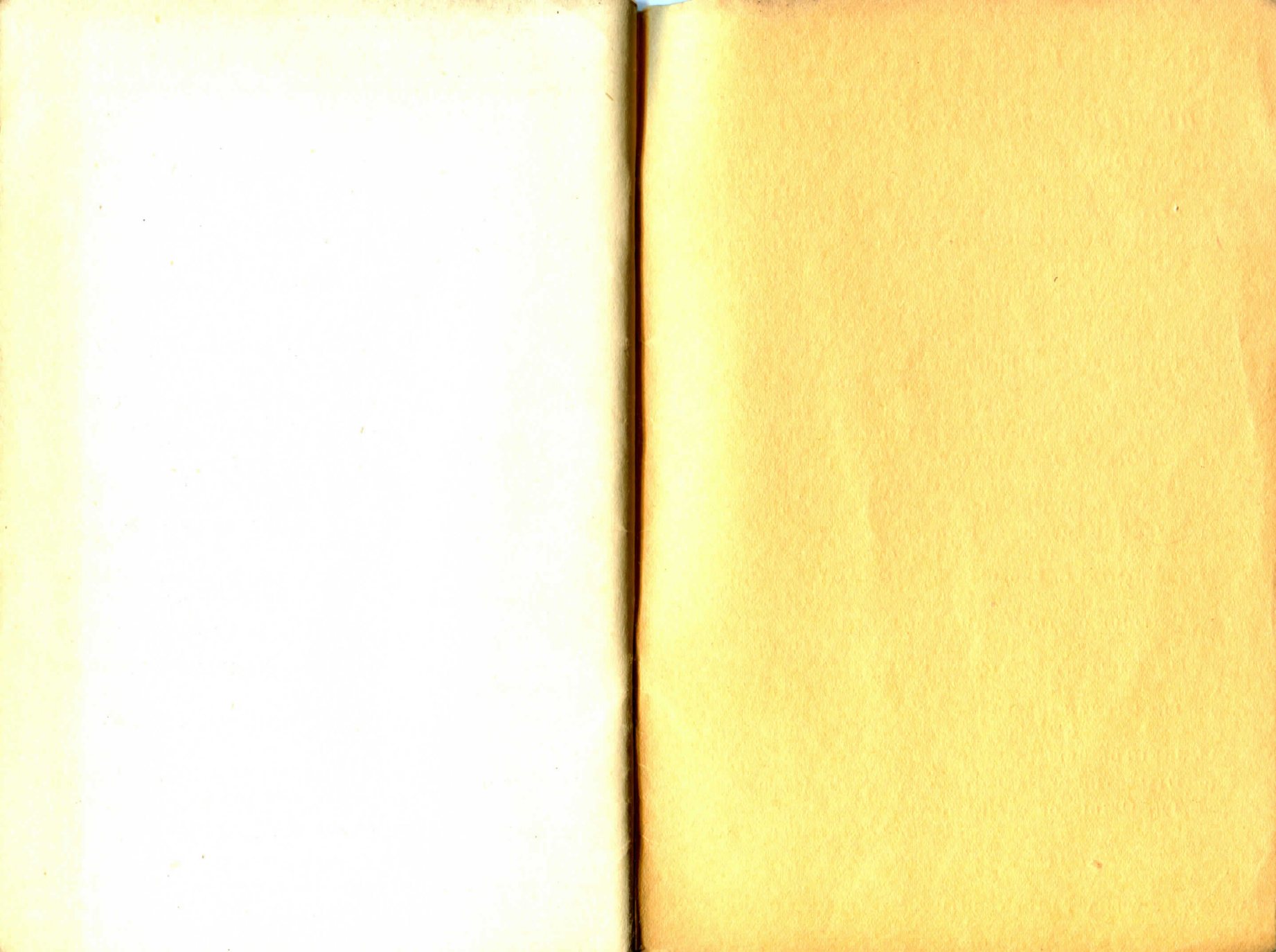
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