

### III

## A LENINIST EXAMINATION OF "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?", THE "BIBLE" OF THE "NEW COMMUNIST MOVEMENT", AND OF HOW THE "NEW COMMUNIST MOVEMENT" UPHOLDS THE "FAITH".

Since *What Is To Be Done?* is unquestionably the major theoretical document in which Lenin broke with the petty bourgeois democrats of the party-building period in Russia, the "Economists", on both the questions of organization and of politics, it is not a bad thing that the "new communist movement" flocks to this particular book. Unfortunately, however, armed as it is with an idealist conception of history, with its approach to the class struggle today *not* from the standpoint of "the real needs of the material life of society" but from the point of view of "the good wishes of 'great men'", the "new communist movement" looks upon Lenin as "the Creator", who, they believe, will provide them with a blueprint, a magical formula for building a Leninist Party.

If the "new communist movement" tested the propositions and conclusions of *What Is To Be Done?* in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the masses including in the 75 year history of the international labor movement since this book was written, if they understood dialectically the magnificent contribution to the international proletariat which this book represented, i.e., in the historical conditions our movement faced in *that* period, and if they could study the "*letter*" of this great pamphlet with the concrete conditions of our situation in the USA in mind, then they would be able to grasp the "*substance*" of this great document and apply it to our effort to build a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party in the USA today. Instead these petty bourgeois democrats of today *deify* Lenin and elevate *What Is To Be Done?* into a *bible* from the study of which "all blessings flow." With their idealist conception of history, however, the "Revolution", "Nirvana", "the Kingdom of Heaven", "Heaven on Earth", etc., can be reached without having to tackle US imperialism and without having to wage and win, through work and sacrifice, the awesome struggle for the hearts and minds of the working class and toiling masses to the cause of socialism and communism.

The purpose of this chapter then, is to root out the last vestiges of an "excuse" for the idealist conception of party-building, etc., which the Marxist "individual" worshippers, and "book worshippers" cling to in order to be able to cover with the names "Communist" and "Leninist", what they really are - *petty bourgeois of the chief oppressor nation in the world trying to defend their privilege*. Their practice is, in the name of "party-building",

to discourage and alienate the working class and oppressed peoples within the US multi-national state from taking up in decisive fashion the task of party-building today. In this chapter then, we "dare" to meet the "theoreticians" of the "new communist movement" on *theoretical* ground!

To hold their excuse up to the light of day (to "riddle it with light" as Wendell Phillips would say), it is necessary to carefully and systematically unravel the "mystery" which they have created around Lenin's teachings on party-building.

#### A. The Objective Conditions and the Subjective Tasks of the Russian Marxists of 1902:

The most authoritative work of historical materialism yet produced, *The History of the CPSU(B)*, opens its second chapter (dealing with the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party) with the following lines:

"The end of the nineteenth century in Europe was marked by an industrial crisis. During the period of the crisis (1900-03) about 3,000 large and small enterprises were closed down and over 100,000 workers were thrown on the streets. The wages of the workers that remained employed were sharply reduced. The insignificant concessions previously wrung from the capitalists as the result of stubborn economic strikes were now withdrawn.

Industrial crisis and unemployment did not halt or weaken the working class movement. On the contrary, the workers' struggle assumed an increasingly revolutionary character. From economic strikes, the workers passed to political strikes, and finally to demonstrations, put forward political demands for democratic liberties, and raised the slogan, 'Down with the tsarist autocracy!'"

Further on it points out that,

"The working-class movement influenced the peasantry. . . .

The revolutionary actions of the workers and peasants indicated that revolution was maturing and drawing near in Russia. . . .

Under the influence of the revolutionary struggle of the workers the opposition movement of the students against the government assumed greater intensity. . . .

The revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, and especially the reprisals against the students, also induced the liberal bourgeois and liberal landlords who sat on what was known as the Zemstvos to bestir themselves and to raise their voices in 'protest' against the 'excesses' of the tsarist government in repressing their student sons."

*The History* draws the conclusion:

"The rising tide of the working-class movement and the obvious proximity of revolution *demand*ed a united and centralized party of the

working class which would be capable of leading the revolutionary movement." (pp. 28-31, Lenin's emphasis)

Given the objective conditions described above, Comrade Lenin's view described on page 52 of *What Is To Be Done?* is certainly apt and provides the conditions for the organizational and ideological propositions and conclusions he put forth in this document. Lenin says,

". . . the fundamental error committed by the 'new tendency' [Economism] in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its subservience to spontaneity, and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a mass of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The more spontaneously the masses rise, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy.

Revolutionaries, however, *lagged behind* this rise of the masses in both their 'theories' and in their practical activity; they failed to establish an uninterrupted organization having continuity with the past, and capable of *leading* the whole movement." (page 52, Lenin's emphasis)

Hence, the Russian Marxists needed to develop both a political program and a revolutionary organization of the proletariat which could come to lead the rapidly developing revolutionary movement (led by the revolutionary proletariat) to power in Russia.

For the most part Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* made a decisive contribution to the accomplishment of both these tasks.

#### B. The Great Objective Role and the General Political Strength of "What Is To Be Done?"

The Economists of the 1900-02 period, responded to the tremendous growth of the spontaneous movement of the Russian working class by saying, in so many words, that the continued spontaneous growth of this movement was all that was required to make the revolution. The Economists saw in the developing movement an opportunity for the socialists to abdicate and renounce their responsibility for the concrete class struggle of the Russian proletariat, instead of facing up to the increasing urgency and importance for the socialists to develop revolutionary ideology and organization to lead the spontaneous movement. Lenin says,

"The fact that the masses are spontaneously entering the movement does not make the organization of this struggle *less necessary*. On the contrary, it makes it *more necessary*; for we Socialists would be failing in our duty to the masses if we did not prevent the police from making a secret of (and if we did not ourselves sometimes secretly prepare) every strike and every demonstration. *And we will succeed in doing this*, precisely because the spontaneously awakening masses will *also advance*

from their own ranks increasing numbers of 'professional revolutionists' (that is, if we are not so foolish as to advise the workers to keep on marking time). (page 104, Lenin's emphasis)

Discussing one Economist writer, Lenin adds. "... he 'worships' the mass movement, i.e., he regards it as something that relieves us of the necessity for carrying on revolutionary activity and not as something that should embolden us and stimulate our revolutionary activity." (p. 104, Lenin's emphasis)

Concerning the Economists' resistance to the development of the organization of the revolutionary proletarian party, (what became known as the party of the new type, or the Leninist party) Lenin said,

"... the principal cause of the present crisis in Russian Social-Democracy is that the leaders ('ideologists', revolutionists, Social-Democrats) lag behind the spontaneous rising of the masses. It shows that all the arguments advanced by the authors of the Economic Letter in *Iskra*, No. 12, by B. Krichevsky, and by Martynov, about the dangers of belittling the significance of the spontaneous elements, about the drab every-day struggles, about the tactics-process, etc., are nothing more than a glorification and defense of primitive methods. These people, who cannot pronounce the word 'theoretician' without a contemptuous grimace, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and ignorance as 'sensitivity to life', reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative practical task." (pages 99-100, Lenin's emphasis)

Concerning the resistance of Economism to the provision of proletarian politics, of Socialist consciousness and direction, to the spontaneous class struggle of the Russian proletariat, Lenin said, "... it absolutely refuses independently to work out a specifically Social-Democratic policy corresponding to the general tasks of Socialism and to contemporary conditions in Russia." (page 44, Lenin's emphasis) Lenin's struggle for such a Social-Democratic policy, led him to polemicize against the Economists by exposing the limitation of (while not opposing) Trade Union Politics, from the standpoint of Social-Democratic (later Bolshevik) politics.

Lenin says.

"The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms in the sale of their labor power, for better conditions of life and labor. . . .

Revolutionary Social-Democracy always included, and now includes, the fight for reforms in its activities. But. . . it subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for Socialism. . . .

As a matter of fact, the phrase 'to give the economic struggle itself a political character' means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. . . .

Thus, the pompous phrase: 'To give the economic struggle *itself* a political character', which sounds so 'terrifically' profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to *degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-union politics!" (pages 60-61, Lenin's emphasis)

Lenin fought against various theoretical arguments which the Economists projected to restrict the scope of political activity of the proletariat in the struggle for its emancipation. Lenin asks,

'Is it true that in general, the economic struggle 'is the most widely applicable method' of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is absolutely untrue. All and sundry manifestations of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, in addition to the evils connected with the economic struggle, are equally 'widely applicable' as a means of 'drawing in' the masses. The tyranny of the Zemstvo chiefs, the flogging of the peasantry, the corruption of the officials, the conduct of the police towards the 'common people' in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving toward enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes, the persecution of the religious sects, the severe discipline in the army, the militarist conduct toward the students and the liberal intelligentsia—all these and a thousand other similar manifestations of tyranny, though not directly connected with the 'economic' struggle, do they, in general, represent a *less* 'widely applicable' method and subject for political agitation and for drawing the masses into the political struggle? The very opposite is the case. Of all the innumerable cases in which the workers suffer (either personally or those closely associated with them) from tyranny, violence and lack of rights, undoubtedly only a relatively few represent cases of police tyranny in the economic struggle as such. Why then should we beforehand *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring *only one* of the methods to be the 'most widely applicable', when Social-Democrats have other, generally speaking not less 'widely applicable' means?" (pages 58-59, Lenin's emphasis)

Lenin draws the important conclusion: "... is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers if *we do not undertake* the organization of the *political exposure of autocracy in all its aspects*?" (page 57, Lenin's emphasis)

Lenin points out further that,

"The growth and development of the revolutionary organizations not only lag behind the growth of the labor movement, which even B-v admits, but also behind the general democratic movement among all strata of the people. . . . The scope of revolutionary work is too narrow compared with the breadth of the spontaneous basis of the movement." (page 120)

Finally, Lenin says,

"We have neither a parliament, nor the freedom to call meetings, nevertheless, we are able to arrange meeting of workers who desire to listen to

a *Social-Democrat*. We must also find ways and means of calling meetings of representatives of all and every other class of the population that desire to listen to a *Democrat*; for he who forgets that 'the Communists support every revolutionary movement', that we are obliged for that reason to emphasize *general democratic tasks before the whole people*, without for a moment concealing our Socialistic convictions, is not a Social-Democrat. He who forgets his obligation to *be in advance of everybody* in bringing up, sharpening and solving every general democratic question, is not a Social-Democrat." (pages 79-80, Lenin's emphasis)

Here Lenin is directing the Socialists and the revolutionary proletariat to the *immediate* strategic task in Russia, the bourgeois democratic stage of the revolutionary overthrow of Tsarist autocracy.

It should be noted at this point that Lenin's striving for the training of the Revolutionary Marxists both politically and organizationally is precisely for the purpose of broadening the opportunities for the proletarians *themselves* to increasingly participate in and take over the functioning of their revolutionary party.

As regards *organization*, Lenin says,

"Such workers, average people of the masses, are capable of displaying enormous energy and self-sacrifice in strikes and in street battles, with the police and troops, and are capable (in fact, are alone capable) of *determining* the whole outcome of our movement--but the struggle against the *political* police requires special qualities; it can be conducted only by *professional* revolutionaries. And we must not only see to it that the masses 'advance' concrete demands, but also that the masses of workers 'advance' an increasing number of such professional revolutionists from their own ranks." (P. 103, Lenin's emphasis)

Regarding *political knowledge* Lenin says,

"But *such* activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the sops of 'economic' politics alone, we want to know everything that everybody else knows, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less on what we already know, and tell us more about what we do not know and what we can never learn from our factory and 'economic' experience, that is, you must give us political knowledge." (p. 71-72, Lenin's emphasis)\*

\*Here it must be remembered, for example, that one of the early key tasks of the Russian Marxists was the translation of the works of Marx and Engels into Russian. This task was carried out by the Emancipation of Labor group and required the language skills of petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Secondly, and more importantly, it must be remembered that when Lenin was writing *What Is To Be Done?*, Russia was in the bourgeois democratic stage of the Revolution. Precisely, because Russia was lacking in bourgeois democracy, the vast masses of the working class and other toilers were effectively deprived of the opportunity to read, to learn and acquire culture, etc. At the same

Brilliantly resolving the two basic practical tasks of the Russian Marxists in those concrete conditions (i.e. organization and political line) in favor of the revolutionary proletariat, Lenin projected his now famous plan for an All-Russian newspaper.

"...the principal content of the activity of our party organization, the 'trick' of this activity should be, to carry on work that is possible and necessary both in the period of the most powerful outbreaks as well as in periods of complete calm, that is to say: work of political agitation linked up over the whole of Russia, that will enlighten all aspects of life and will be carried on among the broadest possible strata of the masses. But this work *cannot possibly be carried on* in contemporary Russia without an All-Russian newspaper, issued very frequently. An organization. . . of *collaborators* of this paper (collaborators in the broad sense of the word, i.e., all those working for it) will be ready *for everything*, from protecting the honour, the prestige, and continuity of the party in periods of acute revolutionary 'depression' to preparing for, commencing and carrying out the *national armed insurrection* .... It is precisely such work that would help to cultivate the ability properly to estimate the general political situation and consequently, the ability to select the proper moment for the uprising. ....

"...In a word, the 'plan for an All-Russian political newspaper' does not represent the fruits of the work of armchair workers, infected with dogmatism and literariness (as it seemed to those who failed to study it properly), on the contrary it is a practical plan to commence immediately to prepare on all sides for the uprising while at the same time never for a moment forgetting the ordinary, every-day work." (p. 163-165 Lenin's emphasis)

Thus, Lenin met the needs of the revolutionary proletariat and of the broad revolutionary movement of the Russian masses in the developing revolutionary crisis facing the Tsarist Autocracy. Yet does it follow from this fact that *What Is To Be Done?* is 'perfect', that Lenin's position on every question discussed in its pages is equally dialectical, correct, and valid in those concrete circumstances? Of course not, and in fact there are at least two one-sided and incorrect propositions put forth by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*

### C. Two Particular Weaknesses in "What Is To Be Done?" and Lenin's Recognition of these Weaknesses at the Time:

1. In Chapter II of *What Is To Be Done?* in the course of discussing "the spontaneity of the masses and the class conscious-

time, this stage of the revolution brought forth hundreds of patriotic intellectuals to the revolutionary banner, and these students et. al. could be channeled into the constructive activity of aiding the working class of Russia, especially oppressed under the Tsarist autocracy, to understand the broad nature of the struggle in that stage of the revolution (i.e., who were its allies and its enemies, etc.). Hence the urgent need for the petty bourgeois intelligentsia to provide some broad political knowledge to the working class.

ness of social-democracy”, Lenin makes the following incorrect statement:

“We said that *there could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness, i.e., it may itself realize the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc.

“The theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. The founders of modern scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary Socialist intelligentsia.” (pp. 32-33, Lenin’s emphasis)

Further on in the same chapter, to substantiate his view, Lenin quotes Kautsky, who at that time (as the leader of the Second International) was his leader: Kautsky said,

“But Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises out of different premises. Modern Socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for Socialist production, as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia* [Kautsky’s italics]: It was out of the heads of members of this stratum that modern Socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, Socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without (von Aussen Hineingetragen), and not something that arose within it spontaneously (urwuchsig).” (p. 40)

Thus Kautsky and Lenin, here, both come out in opposition to the teaching of Comrade Engels. For Engels taught that even Marx, himself, the discoverer of the materialist conception of history, was really an historical accident, while the struggle waged by the workers in Lyons, and in the English Chartist movement, and the sharp class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of the advanced countries of Europe which followed, made the discovery of the materialist conception of history an historical inevitability. Lenin and Kautsky in *What Is To Be Done?* make

that which was *accidental* to the discovery of scientific socialism, namely Marx, a *necessity*, while rendering that which was *necessary* to the foundation for scientific socialism, namely the modern proletariat, as *incidental* to it!

Yet Lenin was already in 1902 such a great Marxist that in relation to this ideological error, Lenin himself seemed to be wary of the proposition he put forth. On the very same page where he states uncategorically that Social-Democratic consciousness could only be brought to the workers from without, Lenin also states,

“But there is a difference between spontaneity and spontaneity. Strikes occurred in Russia in the seventies, and in the sixties (and also in the first half of the nineteenth century), and these strikes were accompanied by the spontaneous destruction of machinery, etc. Compared with these ‘revolts’ the strikes of the nineties might even be described as ‘conscious’, to such an extent do they mark the progress which the labor movement had made since that period. This shows that the ‘spontaneous element’, in essence, represents nothing more or less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*. Even the primitive rebellions expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent . . . . The strikes of the nineties revealed far greater flashes of consciousness: Definite demands were put forward, the time to strike was carefully chosen, known cases and examples in other places were discussed, etc.” (p. 32, Lenin’s emphasis)

Here Lenin reveals the process of the development of “consciousness in embryonic form” out of the spontaneous struggle. It follows dialectically that over the long run, this spontaneous class struggle produces “consciousness”.--Yet Lenin draws the opposite conclusion here--saying that “in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement”. Yet again he follows this conclusion with the statement that, “In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that the early Social-Democrats of that period, *zealously carried on economic agitation...*” (p. 33, Lenin’s emphasis) In other words, the early Social democrats were intimately associated with the spontaneous movement of the working class!

2. Lenin proceeds to make one more error from the standpoint of Marxism, namely,

“Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement then *the only choice is*: Either bourgeois, or Socialist ideology. There is no middle course ( for humanity has not created a ‘third’ ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms, there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle Socialist ideology *in any way*, to *deviate from it in the slightest degree* means strengthening bourgeois ideology. There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the *spontaneous* development of the labour movement leads to it becoming subordinated

to bourgeois ideology,... for the spontaneous labour movement is pure and simple trade-unionism, ... and trade unionism means the ideological subordination of the workers to the bourgeoisie." (p. 40-41, Lenin's emphasis)

Here Lenin confuses the subjective and the objective situation. Certainly, objectively, in 1902, all struggle, whether in the realm of ideas, or in the realm of the concrete material class struggles of the various forms of the time, *objectively* served either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. For already by 1902 it was the capitalist vs. the socialist system which was strengthened or weakened by every struggle. These two systems were now in struggle for hegemony in the world. Yet there *could* be other ideologies reflecting older, more backward social-economic systems, and especially petty bourgeois ideology — a 'third' ideology representing an attempt at compromise between capitalism and socialism. This petty bourgeois ideology, while having an anti-capitalist, anti-monopolist, and anti-imperialist side to it, is capitalist in the long run. Certainly the renegacy of the Second International in the face of the political crisis which was the development of World War I revealed these forces, led by Kautsky, as powerful, significant proponents of petty bourgeois ideology in the international working class movement as Lenin then discovered and exposed so well.

Since Lenin (following Kautsky) made the idealist errors described here, it is understandable that he would be "blind", at that historical moment, to the *existence* of the very ideology which he expressed here, the petty bourgeois ideology. For Lenin talks here of "socialist theoreticians", even those from the working class, being *different* from the working class, rather than seeing "theoreticians" and the revolutionary "intelligentsia", to the extent that they were Marxists, being *different* from the petty bourgeoisie and *similar* to the working class!

We again see his dissatisfaction with the proposition he has put forth. Lenin is moved to write a footnote qualifying his statement that "...there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers in the process of their movement." The footnote begins,

"This does not mean, of course,,that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology."

But Lenin too quickly qualified this point.

... But they take part not as workers, but as Socialist theoreticians, like Proudhon and Weitling; in other words, they take part only to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and advance that knowledge." (p. 41)

Lenin's qualification is a logical consequence of having confused the historical accident (Marx) with necessity, and the historical necessity (the proletariat) with the accident. What follows from this argument is that the workers should try to be-

come like the intellectuals, rather than the intellectuals having the task of proletarianizing themselves. The science is looked at here, not from the standpoint of the proletariat, but from the standpoint of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia!

#### D. Stalin's Treatment of these Questions in 1905:

It is noteworthy that Comrade Stalin in two articles published in mid-1905 defends, *but improves on* the position put forth by Comrade Lenin in early 1902. In an article entitled, *Briefly About the "Disagreements in the Party"* (May 1905) Stalin says,

"Some day, of course, after long wanderings and sufferings, the spontaneous movement would come into its own, would arrive at the gates of the social revolution, without the aid of Social-Democracy, because the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism." (p.70, Vol. I *Works*, Stalin's emphasis)

Yet he too persists in quoting Kautsky, similarly to Lenin. "The vehicle of science is not the proletariat but the *bourgeois intelligentsia*", "it was in the minds of individual members of that stratum that modern socialism originated", etc., etc.

Yet Stalin goes on to say,

"What is scientific socialism *without the working-class movement?*--A compass which, if left unused, will only grow rusty and then will have to be thrown overboard.

"What is the working-class movement *without socialism?*--A ship without a compass which will reach the other shore in any case, but would reach it much sooner and with less danger if it had a compass." (p. 73, *Ibid.* Stalin's emphasis)

Here he puts the relationship between spontaneity and consciousness in the proper perspective.

He follows by explaining what Lenin's focus was in *What Is To Be Done?*

"Lenin says definitely that 'The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism,' and if he does not dwell on this at great length, it is only because he thinks it unnecessary to prove what has already been proved. Moreover, Lenin did not set out to investigate the *spontaneous* movement; he merely wanted to show those engaged in practical Party work what they ought to do *consciously*." (p. 73, *Ibid.*, Stalin's emphasis)

In the other article, *A Reply to Social-Democrat* (Aug. 1905) Stalin says, (and let the "new communist movement" take note!):

"...in our opinion, the opinion of the Bolsheviks, socialist consciousness is introduced into the working class movement by Social-Democracy, and

not only by Social Democratic intellectuals. Why do you think that the Social-Democratic Party consists exclusively of intellectuals? Do you not know that there are many more advanced workers than intellectuals in the ranks of Social-Democracy? Cannot Social-Democratic workers introduce socialist consciousness into the working-class movement?" (p. 114, *Ibid.*)

And Stalin goes on to show that Lenin fought to have the principal working class leaders of the working class movement from among the workers themselves become the members of the "committees", the dominant force in the Party, and that Lenin opposed the domination of the Party by the intellectuals.

These facts presented by Comrade Stalin are generally true, reflecting the fact that Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* had in practice advanced the cause of the proletariat. Yet from Comrade Stalin's use of the Kautsky quotes above as if they were positive, as well as his overly positive interpretation of Lenin's position in *What Is To Be Done?*, it is clear that he too had not yet clearly resolved this question of the relationship between consciousness and spontaneity in a decisive Leninist fashion in these 1905 articles.

But in his introduction to Volume I of his *Works* written in 1946, Comrade Stalin does aid us in learning how to deal with his works (and by implication those of Comrade Lenin) written in this period. Stalin says, "To understand and properly appraise these works, they must be regarded as the works of a young Marxist not yet moulded into a finished Marxist-Leninist." (page 4) In dramatizing this point Comrade Stalin points out that "The Leninist theory of the Socialist revolution thus arose in 1915-16." (page 6)

What then were the concrete conditions which in the first few years of the twentieth century led both Lenin and Stalin to put forth an inconsistent (and to an extent petty bourgeois vacillating) view in the relationship between the "class consciousness of social democracy and the spontaneity of the movement"?

#### E. Some Historical Materialist Reasons for the Appearance of these Theoretical Weaknesses

1. Since Tsarist Russia combined significant characteristics of an oppressed (as well as an oppressor) nation, and consequently since the bourgeois democratic revolution was on the order of the day, it is not surprising that in Russia, a significant number of intellectuals would participate in a leading way in the founding of the proletarian party. This point can be even more clearly understood when we realize that in Russia the party of the proletariat was founded about one half dozen years before the bourgeois party, the Constitutional Democratic Party (the Cadets). Hence the patriotic anti-imperialist petty bourgeois nationalists

had one main party to become involved with, the party of the proletariat

2. From the significant participation in the formation and early years of the proletarian party by the petty bourgeoisie, it follows that the line of the party on the party's role in the spontaneous class struggle would at least in these early years reflect the influence of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia within the party.

3. Strengthening the petty bourgeois influence in the R.S.D. L.P. in those years was the fact that prior to the 1905 Revolution in Russia, the party followed the line of the Second International and its chief spokesman, Karl Kautsky. Kautsky's unqualified, one-sided, incorrect statement that socialist consciousness was introduced from without, i.e. outside the working class movement, no doubt was dealt with by the young Marxists of the young Russian Party rather cautiously, until Kautsky and the Second International exposed themselves as the petty bourgeois renegades they were, on the eve of World War I.

4. Finally, to understand the limitations of *What Is To Be Done?* and how the relatively inexperienced Party and its leaders, (even a Lenin) developed in response to the concrete needs of the objectively developing "spontaneous" movement, it is instructive to realize that while a key Leninist Party principle is "The Party is strengthened by purging itself of opportunist elements", the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership remained within the same Party as the Mensheviks for a decade after the publication of *What Is To Be Done?!!*

Armed with an understanding of these four points, it is understandable why Lenin, in successfully tackling the Economists and their position that the spontaneous struggle, the "masses", are everything; while the leadership, the organization, theory and program of the proletariat is nothing, would slide over too far to the point of upholding the Party, its theory, and organization, (to a certain extent). at the expense of the class and the masses.

#### F. Lenin's Further Development From Weakness to Strength on These Questions:

In fact, in response to the concrete historical development of the class struggle of the proletariat in the Russian Revolution of 1905, and in the first years of the first imperialist world war, Lenin corrected his weak and inconsistent views associated with the relationship between "social democratic consciousness" and the "spontaneous movement".

Whereas in *What Is To Be Done?*, following Kautsky's leadership, Lenin polemicizes against the concept that there can be any other ideology besides proletarian or bourgeois; in his important 1920 Preface to *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* Lenin states,

"Special attention has been devoted in this pamphlet to a criticism of 'Kautskyism', the international ideological trend represented in all countries of the world by the 'prominent theoreticians' and leaders of the Second International... and multitudes of socialists, reformists, pacifists, bourgeois-democrats and parsons.

"This ideological trend is, on the one hand, a product of the disintegration and decay of the Second International, and, on the other hand, it is the inevitable fruit of the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, who, by the whole of their conditions of life, are held captive to bourgeois and democratic prejudices."

"The growing world proletarian revolutionary movement in general and the Communist movement in particular, demands that the theoretical errors of 'Kautskyism' be analyzed and exposed." (page 12)

In *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin is even more sharp in his polemic against the petty bourgeois Kautsky:

"Workers fight! Our philistine 'agrees' to this (as every bourgeois 'agrees', since the workers are fighting all the same and the only thing that worries him is finding the means to blunt the edge of their sword). Fight, but *don't dare to win!* Don't destroy the state machine of the bourgeoisie; don't put proletarian 'state organization' in the place of the bourgeois 'state organization'!... "Because the petty bourgeois is *afraid* of the class struggle, and does not carry it to its logical conclusion, to its *main* object." (page 42, Lenin's emphasis)

"According to Kautsky, in a capitalist country there were bourgeois parties, and there was a proletarian party which led the majority of the proletariat, the mass (the Bolsheviks), but there were no petty-bourgeois parties! The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had no *class roots*, no petty-bourgeois roots!" (page 80, Lenin's emphasis)

It is clear that in response to the bitter experience which the international proletariat suffered through in WWI, when the social chauvinists and social pacifists of the Second International collaborated with their own imperialist bourgeoisie and mobilized their own working class against the workers of other lands, Lenin summed up the bitter lessons of this international trend (Kautskyism) and found its roots in the petty bourgeoisie.

It is clear from the above that Lenin recognized the existence of this "3rd ideology", of this "middle course", which if not ruthlessly fought by the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution would have doomed the peoples of Russia for decades after October 1917 to more of bourgeois and foreign imperialist oppression. As Comrade Lenin points out in his preface to *Imperialism* (page 14) "Not the slightest progress can be made toward the solution of the practical problems of the Communist Movement and of the impending social revolution unless the economic roots of this phenomenon

[i.e. the renegacy of the 2nd International] are understood and unless its political and sociological significance is appreciated."

Let us now turn to Lenin's correction of the other theoretical weakness that appears in *What Is To Be Done?*, namely that socialism, consciousness, is introduced into the proletariat from "without" by bourgeois intelligentsia, etc. In *Left Wing Communism*, in an Appendix discussing the split among the German Communists, Lenin says, "when the time is ripe the masses of the workers will easily and quickly unite themselves and unite all sincere Communists to form a single party capable of establishing the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat." (p. 86) Gone is the talk of the consciousness of the vanguard as something alien to the mass working class movement. Gone is the stress on the great role played by "theoreticians", by the "intelligentsia". Gone is the concept that those workers who participate in the formulation of the theory and tactics of the Marxist-Leninist Party do so *not* as workers but as (petty bourgeois) "theoreticians". Gone is the *omission* of the *petty bourgeois class and ideology* from Lenin's calculations. And gone as well is the *presence* of that very ideology and class influence on Lenin's approach to the question of building the Party.

By 1920, armed with the experience of the February and October Revolutions of 1917 added to the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the experience of the entire First World War, Comrade Lenin said:

"...Communism cannot be built up otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be vanquished, remoulded, assimilated and re-educated, just as one must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences.

"Of course, it is very 'difficult' under the rule of the bourgeoisie to overcome bourgeois habits in our own, i.e., the workers' party; it is 'difficult' to expel from the party the ordinary parliamentary leaders who have been hopelessly corrupted by bourgeois prejudices; it is 'difficult' to subject to proletarian discipline the absolutely essential (even if very limited) number of bourgeois intellectuals; it is 'difficult' to form in a bourgeois parliament a Communist fraction fully worthy of the working class; it is 'difficult' to ensure that the Communist parliamentarians do not play the bourgeois parliamentary game of skittles, but concern themselves with the very urgent work of propaganda, agitation and organisation of the masses.

"Yet all these 'difficulties' are mere child's play compared with precisely *the same sort* of problems which in any event the proletariat will inevita-



bly have to solve in order to achieve victory during the proletarian revolution, and after the seizure of power by the proletariat." (pages 92-93, *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin's emphasis)

Here Lenin displays his great confidence in the proletarian class, in its ability to solve the most difficult problems in the course of making the revolution and of consolidating its power. Such was the approach of the Lenin of 1920, who, even in 1902 already made demands on the petty bourgeois intelligentsia *precisely* in order to make possible the widest and deepest participation of the working class, but who by 1920, with the rich accumulated experience of the proletariat in the intervening years, placed all his confidence in the proletarian class without any *reliance whatsoever* on the initiatives of the petty bourgeois "theoreticians".

Which Lenin are we going to follow: the pre-WWI and pre-1905 Russian Revolution Lenin of *What Is To Be Done?*, or the Lenin of the period *after* the experience of the working class movement in the Russian Revolution of 1905 and in the horrendous tragedy of WWI, the Lenin of the era of the proletarian revolution, the Lenin of *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Imperialism and the Split in Socialism, State and Revolution, Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky* and *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*?

#### G. The Ways In Which the "New Communist Movement" Abuses "What Is To Be Done?" In Their Effort to Render Lenin "Faithfully":

The "new communist movement" abuses *What Is To Be Done?* both in general and in particular ways:

1. *Particular Abuse*—The "new communist movement" while ignoring and concealing the core of Lenin's analysis in *What Is To Be Done?*, and its historical role in the Russian Revolution described in the first few sections of this chapter, have emphasized precisely those few propositions put forth there by Lenin which, mainly due to their undialectical character, could not stand the test of time.

In their discussions of *What Is To Be Done?*, the "new communist movement" like the Lenin of 1902 (though he had doubts), but in opposition to the Lenin of the WWI and the proletarian revolutionary period, pushes the idea that there is no "third" ideology while applying this very "third" petty bourgeois ideology.

And the "new communist movement," like Lenin of 1902 but unlike Lenin of the WWI and the Proletarian Revolutionary period, pushes the idea that socialist consciousness is brought to the working class from *without*, from *outside* the working class movement.

But whereas there was some concrete basis, some historical justification for the few one-sided propositions put forth by Lenin in

Tsarist Russia of 1902, today the "new communist movement" exposes its inextricable connection with petty bourgeois class *privilege* in pushing these propositions in a much more one-sided fashion than Lenin did in 1902 and without *any* material basis for these propositions in the developed imperialist US (north) oppressor nation. For Lenin pushed the role of the petty bourgeoisie, to a small extent, at the expense of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic stage of the revolution in 1902 Russia, whereas today the "new communist movement" pushes the role of the petty bourgeoisie decisively at the expense of the proletariat and its initiative in the *socialist* stage of the revolution in the US (north).

2. *General Abuse*—Comrade Mao Tsetung in *Reform Our Study* tells us, "...in studying Marxism-Leninism, we should use the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* as the principal material. It is the best synthesis and summing up of the world communist movement of the past hundred years, a model of the integration of theory and practice, and so far the only comprehensive model in the whole world." (p.10) One of the main conclusions drawn in the *History of the CPSU(B)* concerns the importance for the Marxist-Leninist Party to "master the advanced theory of the working class movement." In the course of discussing this conclusion the *History* states,

"Criticizing the German Marxists in America who had undertaken to lead the American working-class movement, Engels wrote:

'The Germans have not understood how to use their theory as a lever which could set the American masses in motion: they do not understand the theory themselves for the most part and treat it in a doctrinaire and dogmatic way, as something which has got to be learned off by heart and which will then supply all needs without more ado. To them it is a dogma and not a guide to action.' (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 449-450)" (p. 358)

"Opportunism does not always mean a direct denial of the Marxist theory or of any of its propositions and conclusions. Opportunism is sometimes expressed in the attempt to cling to certain of the propositions of Marxism that have already become antiquated and to convert them into a dogma, so as to retard the further development of Marxism, and, consequently, to retard the development of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." (p. 357)

This profound insight describes the general abuse which the "new communist movement" has inflicted on Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* in the practice of Party-building in the US today.

Armed with their idealist conception of history, the "new communist movement" tries to use *What Is To Be Done?* as the "Bible" with its observations about the concrete conditions of the working class of Russia in 1902 standing in for the concrete conditions of the US working class in 1974-76.

Lenin opens his discussion of "The Spontaneity of the Masses and the Class Consciousness of Social-Democracy" with the observation that, "the strength of the modern movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally the industrial proletariat) and that its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders." (p. 31) In summing up the discussion of the importance of the theoretical struggle (just prior to the above), Lenin said,

"History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is *more revolutionary than all the immediate tasks* that confront the proletariat of any other country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, places the Russian proletariat in the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." (p. 30, Lenin's emphasis)

Hence Lenin's propositions and conclusions were conditioned by the extremely revolutionary *objective* position of the proletariat and the toiling masses of Russia.

In contemporary US history, the working class and the toiling masses especially in the US (North) oppressor nation have *not* waged the kind of struggle against US imperialism that would warrant such a mechanical transposition from one extremely revolutionary objective situation of the toiling masses to another. Quite the contrary! Modern US history reveals that, in the face of the revolutionary war of national liberation waged by the heroic Vietnamese and Indo-chinese masses, the workers and toilers of the US multinational state for the most part loyally supported "their own" imperialists during the course of the barbaric imperialist war of occupation against the just war of liberation of the Indochinese peoples. And in the face of the developing economic crisis in the USA in the 70's the working class and toiling masses have thus far been quite moderate in their struggles against US monopoly capital and imperialism.

In fact in this period, it has been the proletariat and toiling peoples of the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa, Arabia, Latin America and Afro America who have been in the forefront of the struggle waged against international capital headed by US imperialism. In the post WWII period, the victories of the Chinese Revolution, partial victory in Korea and in Indochina, the Cuban revolution, and more recently the decisive victories of the heroic peoples of Indochina over US imperialism are clearly the main blows struck against international capital in this period.

Particularly instructive on this point, we believe, is the way in which the success of the national liberation movements of the "Portugese" colonies of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau against (US-backed) Portugese imperialism directly created the conditions in which the ruling class of Portugal was shaken to the

core and in which the working class of Portugal was inspired to carry out militant activity against "its own" ruling bourgeoisie. The relationship between the revolutionary movement of Portugal and "its" colonies in the 1960's and 1970's is precisely the opposite of the relationship between the revolutionary movement of Russia and of "its" colonies in 1902. In Russia the working class of the "mother country" led the oppressed nations to liberation, while, in *this* period, the oppressed nations of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau led the working class of Portugal to the brink of liberation.

In such a period as this, can it make sense that the working class of the chief oppressor nation in the world would be the vanguard of the international proletariat? Of course not!

Hence, in accepting and applying Lenin's conclusion that, "The more spontaneously the masses rise, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organisational work of Social-Democracy." (p. 52), the proletarian vanguard in the USA should draw precisely the *opposite* practical tasks from those drawn by Comrade Lenin.

This conclusion translated into practice in our current concrete situation would go about like this: "The less spontaneously the masses rise, the more isolated the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly grows the demand for greater *practical* struggle among the masses in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy.

In the beginning stages of the revolutionary movement in Russia, when the spontaneous risings of the proletariat lacked political leadership and when "groupishness" dominated the pre-party Marxist circles, Lenin organized these circles into the leading force in the practical activity of the St. Petersburg working class. *The History of the CPSU (B)* teaches us:

"Lenin put before the League of Struggle the task of forming closer connections with the mass working-class movement and of giving it political leadership. Lenin proposed to pass from the *propaganda* of Marxism among the few politically advanced workers who gathered in the propaganda circles to political *agitation* among the broad masses of the working class on issues of the day. This turn towards mass agitation was of profound importance for the subsequent development of the working-class movement in Russia." (pp. 16-17)\*

\*Today, the US working class is beginning to wake from their long slumber and a number of country-wide and local strikes have sprung up, reflecting this fact. Cadre in the "new communist movement" rather than participating in a *leading way* in these spontaneous uprisings by fighting with the workers side-by-side against international capital, either don't participate at all (being too busy studying theory divorced from practice) or use mechanical, ultra-left slogans and actions in an attempt to "recruit" to "their" group. Hence, at a

Does this mean that ideological struggle should cease, that the struggle to build a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party should stop temporarily, etc.? No, of course not. Does it mean that the "new communist movement" has to write less "theoretical" documents, make less speeches, and begin to listen to the workers' response to their propaganda and agitation far more attentively, that these "theoreticians" must become much more the *pupils* of the masses and the class, before becoming their teacher? Does it mean that a materialist approach to the actual state of affairs must be taken? Yes it does, indeed.

Some will accuse us of trying to drag the "new communist movement" backward, of slandering the working class, etc., etc., but in reality the approach of participating in a real *leading* way in the day to day struggle of the class and the masses is the only way that a genuine Party of the working class armed with a really revolutionary theory can be developed. In *Left Wing Communism* (p. 11) Lenin said, "...correct revolutionary theory...is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly *mass* and truly revolutionary movement."

The sectarian and adventurist practices of the "new communist movement" in pushing its "consciousness" on an unconvinced and in most cases hostile working class has the objective role of alienating the class from the genuine Party building movement. Whereas, if patient, genuine vanguard leadership of the day to day class struggle of the proletariat against capital is provided by the vanguard elements, then through their own experience, the working class will come to support the vanguard, and advanced elements of the proletariat will emerge and be discovered to participate in the building of the genuine Marxist-Leninist Party.

But the privileged petty bourgeois individuals who largely compose the "new communist movement" refuse to carry out the patient, protracted day to day struggle necessary to build a genuine *proletarian* revolutionary party in the US.

They also wish to go back to an earlier stage of capitalism *before* the last dying stage of capitalism, imperialism. Hence their emphasis on Lenin's teachings *prior* to 1914, prior to WWI, i.e. before material conditions clearly revealed the monstrous characteristics of *imperialism* and before Lenin demonstrated how these internal contradictions are leading to the ultimate destruction of world capitalism.

In essence, the "new communist movement" refuses to analyze and act on the basis of Lenin's teachings on imperialism. Thus, these petty bourgeois "theoreticians" cannot begin to grapple with

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time when the US working class needs strong political leadership in the day-to-day battles against international capital, the "new communist movement" is "dragging at the tail" by showing little, if any, concern for the actual ongoing struggle of the class and the masses.

the difficult political problems which the proletarian revolutionary movement faces in the USA, the chief imperialist country in the world today.

What kind of political consciousness is the "new communist movement" offering the working class today? *They* are pushing *Economism*, in the name of upholding Lenin's fight against *Economism*! By extolling the militancy of the working class in the US (north), by *idealizing* the working class, the "new communist movement" takes the approach that the workers are *so* revolutionary, that merely by being exposed to the advanced ideas of communism they will embrace these advanced "ideas" without any significant class struggle experience of their own under vanguard leadership. And according to the "new communist movement" the US proletariat is *so* revolutionary that the question of strategy, of reserves of the revolution, especially in the oppressed nations and regions both internationally and particularly within the present boundaries of US imperialism, (the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt, Puerto Rico, Aztlán, Appalachia, Hawaii, and Alaska) are unimportant! These questions all take a back seat to every little detail of Party-building "*right now*".

Objectively, their *strategy* for this (indefinite) period of Party-building is *recruitment* to the Party. Consequently all mass and class struggle activity they participate in is for the narrow aim of recruitment and not at all to win the struggle for reforms in which they are ostensibly engaged. Their participation in mass-class struggle activity then is based on a *deception*, a "playing at" the struggle for reform, in order to recruit. They practice deception, (rather than striving to win the *real* struggle for the reforms and if successful putting that much additional pressure on the ruling class and alleviating that much real suffering among the masses, and encouraging the masses who have won the battle to go on to win the class war, under the same tried and tested vanguard leadership.)

Yet their "trick" comes back to haunt them, for, to the extent that they are successful in recruiting anyone (and the RCP and OL are able to offer trips to China for many of their recruits, just as the CPUSA offers trips to the USSR as a bonus for signing on with their team), the basis for recruitment being deception of the masses, deceptive recruits are brought in. Any *honest* recruits have their honesty discouraged and their deceptiveness encouraged, etc.

Since on the one hand the political strategy of the "new communist movement" is to "build the party" and the strategic objective for this (long) period is to *recruit* to the party, and on the other hand, the working class of the US (north) oppressor nation is *so* revolutionary that the tasks of the "new communist movement" are the same as those outlined by Lenin for the Party of the Russian working class which was then in the *vanguard* of the international proletariat and since the US (north) oppressor nation is such

an *advanced* capitalist country that the dictatorship of the proletariat is "so close at hand we can taste it"; it follows (according to these petty bourgeois idealists), that no time or energy is required to deal with "minor", "insignificant" questions, such as the non-proletarian allies of the US(north) proletariat in making the socialist revolution, the nature of the struggle of the oppressed peoples within the present US imperialist boundaries, the relationship of the struggles of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa, Arabia, Latin America, and Afro-America to the proletarian revolution in the US (north) oppressor nation, (they almost *never* even mention the Vietnam War at all anymore!) etc.\*

Hence the conclusions:

A. In the name of upholding Lenin's political struggle *against* Economism, the "new communist movement" pushes Economism in the political sphere, for the entire "new communist movement" "absolutely refuses *independently to work out a specifically Social Democratic policy* corresponding to the general tasks of Socialism and to contemporary conditions in" the USA. The Economism of the "new communist movement" limits the political knowledge which it is willing to share with the working class to bare slogans and lying statements of braggadacio and exaggerations of those (comparatively few) incidents in which the working class *is* advancing its cause in present conditions. The "new communist movement" is unable or unwilling to bring broad political knowledge to the US working class concerning the US working class' *stake* in the many national and class struggles against imperialism, and especially against US imperialism, being waged around the world.

B. Given the changed conditions of the USA in 1976 from those of Russia in 1902, the "new communist movement" in mechanical-ly applying the conditions of Lenin's time to our present concrete situation, gives a "left" form to *its* Economism.

Whereas, in 1902 Russia, the spontaneous mass movement was so powerful and rapidly developing that the Economists based their repudiation of vanguard Marxist theory and organization on their (over) "confidence" in the spontaneous movement of "the masses" at the expense of the necessary role of the vanguard theory and party; so today in the US (north) where the spontaneous class

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\*At the same time, the "new communist movement" basing itself on Lenin's relatively primitive understanding in 1902 of the role of the petty bourgeoisie in the class struggle of the proletariat sneak in as "proletarians" all kinds of privileged petty bourgeois intelligentsia, including university students, lawyers, teachers, doctors, technicians of all kinds, professors and so forth (as well as the lumpen proletariat) under their definition of "working class," so that their own class and national roots in the privileged (petty bourgeois) class in the privileged (US (north) oppressor) nation are protected and so that they can experience real "recruitment" (in numbers) to their "proletarian Party."

struggle activity and mass movement is lethargic, is only slowly beginning to move out of the apathy of the post WWII "honeymoon" with US imperialism, the "new communist movement", the "Economists" of our time, repudiate Marxist theory and program in the name of Marxist theory and they repudiate Leninist party organization in the name of Party-building by pushing these vanguard ideas in isolation from and at the expense of the spontaneous movement.\*

Whereas, Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* even with its few weaknesses met the needs of the working class movement well in that time, condition and place by basing the book on a correct estimate of the objective conditions of the "spontaneous" movement and projecting his propositions and conclusions on the basis of that materialist estimate of forces; so today the "new communist movement" by clinging to these same propositions and conclusions under the vastly different concrete conditions which our working class movement faces, have put themselves in opposition to Lenin's teachings and to his cause, the cause of communism.

Whereas the Economists of 1902 repudiated participation of the vanguard theory and organization in the spontaneous movement by extolling the virtues of and exaggerating the strategic potential of the spontaneous movement at the expense of the vital role of the proletarian *vanguard*; the Economists of today in the USA, likewise repudiate participation of the vanguard theory and organization in the spontaneous movement, only *now* it is by extolling the virtues of the "words" of Marxism, the "thought of Mao Tsetung", and "the Party", and exaggerating their strategic potential at the expense of the *spontaneous movement!*

Whereas the Economists of 1902 advocated that the vanguard Socialists "tail" the spontaneous process on the basis that the spontaneous process would be sufficient for the ignorant working class

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\*Four or five years ago, we had the opportunity to meet with a young man who argued for the entire evening against *our* view that what is necessary in this country is a Leninist Party. This fellow was extremely arrogant and rigid in his belief that the "party of the new type" had become *outmoded*, was no longer necessary, etc. No more than 6 or 8 months after this four or five hour discussion, we saw the fellow for a second (and last) time at a meeting of people seemingly busy at the task of building a Party of the new type in the USA! The fellow was a local leader of this new "Party-building tendency". And lo and behold, he was now just as arrogant and rigid as before, only he was now a spokesman *for* rather than *against* "Party building"! No self-criticism crossed his lips in our brief conversation that day, even when we reminded him of his previous views. Such an experience as this can only be understood in light of the fact that *objectively* this fellow was *consistently opposing* the building of a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party in the USA—at first by directly discouraging initiatives in this direction, and afterwards, more subtly by joining an early "Party-building is the central and/or only task" tendency.

to fulfill the revolutionary tasks which history had assigned it; the "new communist movement", the US "Economists" of today, advocate that the vanguard Socialists "tail" the spontaneous process in order to *recruit* to the "all important" Party "line" and organization, because the spontaneous process itself has no significance.

Lenin was correct in pointing out that the ideological roots of opportunism lie in the belittling of the role of Socialist consciousness in the working class movement. Lenin was correct in seeing this belittling of the role of consciousness as based in the *worship* of the spontaneous movement by the Economists in 1902. But Lenin in 1902 did not see that belittling the role of socialist consciousness could be also by *reviling and casting aside* the spontaneous movement. Yet Lenin's one-sidedness grasped the principal aspect of the contradiction in which the correct relationship between consciousness and spontaneity existed in that period. Hence even the two points of one-sided weakness in *What Is To Be Done?* served to advance the cause of the revolutionary proletariat in that time, place and condition.

In fact Lenin's very correctness, and the Party's subsequent success laid the material conditions for the development of the other aspect of the contradiction between consciousness and spontaneity to emerge from the secondary to the primary aspect of the contradiction. That is, the very success of the "Party of the new type", the Leninist Party, laid the conditions in which the "Economists" of today can belittle the role of Socialist consciousness in the spontaneous process by extolling Socialist consciousness as a "thing in itself", divorced from the spontaneous process!

For, as Comrade Stalin points out, "As regards the *significance* of social ideas, theories, views, and political institutions, as regards their *role* in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the role and importance of these factors in the life of society, in its history." (*Dialectical and Historical Materialism* p.22)

It is in this light that we can understand how the petty bourgeois "theoreticians" of the "new communist movement", armed with their idealist conception of history, belittle the role of the Party, of the science of Marxism-Leninism, etc. precisely by raising the subjective factor above the objective factor in the dynamics of the historical process.

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In this chapter we have tried to deal with the "theoretical" arguments of the "new communist movement", with the quotes from Lenin which they have discovered to "justify" their idealist con-

ception of Party building, etc. In the following chapter the historical experience of successful Party building efforts will hopefully serve to utterly demolish the anti-Marxist, anti-proletarian propositions and conclusions, theory and practice of the "new communist movement" concerning the building of a genuine Marxist-Leninist Party.