

Theoretical Struggle Crucial Part of Working Class Movement

In his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* V. I. Lenin laid out very important guidelines for the working class and its Party in building its revolutionary struggle. Despite significant differences between Russia at that time (1902) and the U.S. today, 75 years later, the basic principles Lenin sets forth in this pamphlet still hold true and have great significance. It is vital for the Party in this country, and through it the working class broadly, to learn and to apply these principles in order to carry out the struggle for socialist revolution.

One of the main points Lenin stresses in this pamphlet is the need for the working class to master Marxist theory, the science of revolution, in opposition to the reactionary theories of the capitalist class. Citing Frederick Engels, collaborator with Karl Marx in founding the science of revolution, Lenin emphasizes that there are *not merely two* forms of the working class struggle that must be waged—the political and economic—but *three*, the third being the theoretical struggle. Lenin summed up in a very concentrated and powerful way the importance of this in the statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." In other words, the working class can emancipate itself and all mankind only by grasping and applying the science of Marxism, which provides the only correct method for understanding the development of things and the laws governing them—in both nature and society—and which represents the outlook and interests of the workers as a class in overthrowing and sweeping away capitalism and class society as a whole.

What does it mean to "wage the theoretical struggle," what are the main forms this must take, and what is the correct relationship between this struggle and the economic and political struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, under the conditions facing the U.S. working class in this period?

Basically this revolves around three main points: (1) establishing as a firm foundation of the Party a *basic understanding of the most important points of Marxist theory*, continually raising the all-around theoretical level of the whole Party, and continually training workers and other revolutionary forces who come to the fore in struggle against the enemy in these fundamental questions of theory in order to develop them as communist leaders of the working class; (2) applying the general principles of Marxism to concrete situations, to actual problems, especially with regard to the present conditions, as well as the historical development, of our own country, in order to concretely analyze these conditions, solve these problems and develop specific policies to push forward the revolutionary movement; and (3) combatting the reactionary theories of the bourgeoisie and its representatives, in both open and disguised form, and developing Marxism and popularizing it among ever broader ranks of the masses through the course of this. All three of these are, of course, interrelated and none can be done well unless all three are taken up and progress made in each of them, and unless the relationship between them is correctly handled.

At any given time one or the other of these will be key. In an *overall sense* studying theory with particular problems in mind and applying it to solve concrete questions posing themselves in the actual movement of the working class and masses is the way in which Party members and others will *most* deepen their grasp of theory and their ability to apply it in a living way. This is also stressed by Lenin in his statement that "theoretical work only supplies answers to the problems raised by practical work." ("What The 'Friends of the People' Are...," *Collected Works*, Vol 1, pp. 297-98, footnote) Mao Tsetung, too, makes the same point very forcefully: "Marxism," he writes, "emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action" ("On Practice") and "It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying it." ("Rectify the Party's Style of Work")

Dogmatism and Empiricism

These statements by Lenin and Mao are directed against dogmatism—the tendency to treat Marxism as a set of ready-made formulas which must only be memorized and recited, to deny the primacy of practice and the overall dependence of theory on practice, and to see the world and the scientific analysis of it as static and unchanging, which is in direct opposition to the basic principles of Marxism itself. But there is another serious error that historically has arisen in the revolutionary movement which also divorces theory from practice—empiricism. Empiricism takes partial experience as universal truth, denies or downplays the importance of *indirect knowledge*—knowledge summed

up from the experience of others—and of theory generally. Some forms of empiricism even insist that all that is knowable and all that exists is what is immediately experienced.

This is tied in with the revisionist line that "the movement is everything, the final aim nothing," which Lenin sharply criticizes in *What Is To Be Done?* Speaking of those who apply such a method, Mao wrote that "vulgar 'practical men' respect experience but despise theory, and therefore cannot have a comprehensive view of the entire objective process, lack clear direction and long-range perspective, and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution, they will lead it up a blind alley." (*On Practice*)

In the course of leading the Chinese revolution through various stages, Mao many times had to struggle against this kind of line as well as the mirror-opposite error of dogmatism. For example, about six years ago, during the struggle against the counter-revolutionary Lin Piao in China, who cooked up the theory that "geniuses," not the masses, make history. Mao had to sternly warn members of the Chinese Communist Party, especially its leading members, to study more Marxism and take this task more seriously. This was because Chen Po-ta, another opportunist in a leading position in the Chinese Party's Central Committee, dished up a shoddy attempt to "prove" Lin Piao's "genius theory," and many members of the Central Committee were temporarily taken in by this.

On this Mao rather sharply commented that many leading people thought they had a firm grip of Marxism or could rest on their revolutionary "laurels" and did not need to study, so they got fooled for awhile. But, while stressing that "Even those who have a better grasp of Marxism and are comparatively firm in their proletarian stand have to go on studying..." ("Speech at CPC National Conference on Propaganda Work," 1957), Mao also pointed out many times that it is not enough for only leading members of the Party to study, not enough even for Party members as a whole to study Marxism, but, as he emphasized once again within the past two years, the entire Chinese people must undertake this task, in order to continue to successfully wage the class struggle and continue on the socialist road toward the achievement of communism.

This same point was addressed very sharply in Chou En-lai's report to the 10th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in August, 1973. Chou said that "It should be emphatically pointed out that quite a few Party committees are engrossed in daily routines and minor matters, paying no attention to major issues. This is very dangerous. If they do not change, they will inevitably step onto the road of revisionism."



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Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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If such is the case in a great socialist country like China and for the Chinese Communist Party, whose correct line has been developed in struggle against erroneous lines through its 55 year history, and which has stood as a beacon light for communists all over the world, it is all the more so for our Party in this country, which is an infant Party. And the need to train ever broader ranks of the masses in Marxism in relation to and as a key part of the struggle against the bourgeois ruling class is also a constant, urgent task for the RCP, as the Party of the working class in the U.S.

In fact, at the present time in this country, although dogmatism mainly characterizes a number of opportunist so-called "communist" groupings and although dogmatism has some influence within the Party itself, within the Party empiricism now represents a greater error than dogmatism. This is for two main reasons.

One, the history of the U.S. is one in which pragmatism—which our Party's *Programme* characterizes as the view that "It is not really possible to know the laws that govern nature and society; if something seems to work, never mind the reasons, do it"—is deep-rooted and has been particularly promoted by the bourgeoisie and its "philosophers." It also characterized the Communist Party in this country for long periods, even during the time when it was still overall a revolutionary party and the vanguard of the working-class.

Secondly, the tendency toward pragmatism—which is essentially a variant of empiricism—has some soil to grow in in our Party exactly because our Party, from its very foundation, and in the roots that gave rise to it, while carrying out much theoretical work and ideological struggle has *correctly laid stress* on the need to link up with and sink roots in the practical struggles of the working class and masses of people. For these reasons, while continuing to expose and oppose dogmatism both inside and outside the Party, it is especially important for the Party to combat empiricism in our own ranks.

Theory In Its Own Right

This points to the need, especially great right now, of studying theory "in its own right." This means studying it to gain a deeper grasp of the fundamental principles of Marxism, the first point outlined before. While in such study, examples from the mass struggle, economic and political, against the ruling class can and should be brought out to *illustrate* the points of theory being studied, this is not the same as studying theory with particular problems in mind, which has the opposite emphasis—concentrating on the particular problems and applying theory specifically to them in order to solve them. The fact that this latter method is, as stated, *overall* the main way in which people's grasp of Marxism is deepened, does not eliminate the need to *also pay serious attention* to studying theory "in its own right."

On the other hand, "in its own right" does not mean and is not the same as "for its own sake." Studying in the latter way means turning Marxism into a dogma, divorcing it from practice altogether and robbing it of its revolutionary role as a guide to action. In fact there is and has been a general tendency in the history of the revolutionary movement to separate theory from practice in the peculiar form where theory is treated as a thing in itself and dealt with dogmatically, forcing things into quick and easy categories and conclusions, while practice still remains mired in pragmatism. This tendency has existed and continues to exist in the RCP, and must be actively combatted.

The point is that when it is said that Marxism is a guide to action, that must not be taken in the narrow sense, reducing Marxism to simply a tool for developing *tactics* in any immediate battle, but in a sweeping, all-encompassing sense—a guide for the working class to grasp the laws governing the development of all things, in nature and society, and to carry forward the world-historical task of wiping out capitalism and achieving communism and advancing mankind's struggle against nature (for production) and its struggle to develop science (scientific experimentation) to a whole new stage. Of course, from this point of view Marxism will also serve as a guide to formulating policies and tactics for immediate battles, but this will be guided by a grasp of how each such battle fits into the general and long-term revolutionary goal—which is the only way, in fact, that policies and tactics can be developed and deepened in a correct way over any period of time, in a way that will continue to move things forward, despite temporary setbacks or reverses.

To get at this more deeply, let's examine two statements, one by Lenin, the other by Mao, which may a

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pear to contradict each other. In "On Practice" Mao states, "Only social practice can be the criterion of truth." On the other hand, in "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism," Lenin exposes pragmatism, which, he says, "ridicules the metaphysics both of materialism and idealism, acclaims experience and only experience, recognizes practice as the only criterion..." (Collected Works, Vol. 14, p. 342, footnote, emphasis added).

Do Mao and Lenin actually disagree, is Mao denying the role of theory or Lenin denying the fact that, as Mao says, "theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice"?

No, neither is the case. What Lenin is criticizing is the particular empiricist view, summarized earlier, that only *immediate experience* can represent "truth," that things beyond the immediate, direct experience of a person, and the interrelationship of things in the world generally, are not knowable to that person—or to anyone at all. This denies the existence of objective truth—and of the objective world outside of and independent of any person or their mind, or "sensations"—and so is *idealist*. As Lenin pointed out such a view necessarily leads back to "god" as a unifying force to "tie together" all the different things in the world and the separate perceptions or "sensations" of different individuals. It contradicts the correct, materialist understanding that there is nothing in the world but matter in motion, no "supernatural" forces of any kind and nothing which is *unknowable*—though at any time many things are *unknown*, and this will always be so.

In fact, in "On Practice" Mao makes exactly the same point as Lenin. He states that "All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience. But one cannot have direct experience of everything; as a matter of fact, most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience, for example, all knowledge from past times and foreign lands." (emphasis added) And the thing that enables us to grasp the essence of things and their interconnections, to grasp objective truth, correctly reflect in our minds the objective world, is, Mao stresses, *precisely theory*. "Perception only solves the problem of phenomena," he points out, "theory alone can solve the problem of essence."

Theory and Practice

The Marxist theory of knowledge, as Mao summarizes it in "On Practice," shows that in all processes of gaining correct knowledge people's experience goes from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge—or, from practice to theory. In raising perceptions to a rational understanding of what is being perceived the role of theory is central. From perceptual to rational, from practice to theory, is a *leap*—as for example, in going from the perception that your car has broken down to an understanding of *why* it has, what has gone wrong.

But, as Mao repeatedly emphasizes, there must also be *another leap*—from theory *back to practice* (to fixing your car) which will now be on a higher level than before, because it is guided by more rational knowledge, by a deeper grasp of theory. This is the meaning of Mao's statement that practice is the only criterion of truth, of his analysis of the "dependence of theory on practice"—which does not at all deny the role of theory but shows how it *originates* in practice, in direct experience of all kinds, and must in turn be returned to practice, to guide it on a higher level. Otherwise, such theory will turn into its opposite, cease to correctly reflect the objective world, which is constantly changing according to the laws governing it, and will become not a guide to correct action in correspondence with these laws, but to inaction, or actually to *incorrect* action of one kind or another.

This summation by Mao Tsetung is exactly in accordance with what Lenin says in "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" (and elsewhere) on the relation between theory and practice. Lenin's whole point, too, is that theory has its *origins* in practice, but is *not the same thing* as any particular practice, or experience; it is, in fact, a *leap* to a comprehension, a synthesis in the mind of things perceived in the world, things which exist outside of and independent of anyone's mind or "sensations."

This summation by Mao of the Marxist theory of knowledge is also the basis for the *mass line*. It is exactly by applying theory to the scattered, unsystematic experience of the masses, concentrating what is correct and criticizing what is incorrect, that the correct line is developed and deepened and can be taken up by the masses and become a tremendous material force to change the world. As with the development of knowledge in general, this is a constant process, of endless cycles, continually going from a lower to a higher level.

This, once again, emphasizes the importance of theory and its correct relation to practice. Without studying theory, both in relation to particular problems and also—if secondarily in an *overall sense*—in its own

right, it is impossible to not only link up with but *lead* the struggle of the masses, to act as the *vanguard* of the working class in carrying out its historic mission. How can theory be applied if it is not studied, how can it be applied well if it is not studied deeply and consistently?

Know Concrete Conditions

But, as stressed several times, it must not only be studied but applied—and applied especially to the concrete conditions, and the historical development, of the particular country in which the party exists. And this speaks to the second of the three points outlined at the beginning of this article.

It is good to know about the history of the Russian and Chinese revolution and other revolutionary movements in different countries; it is *absolutely essential* to study and learn the main lessons of these experiences. But it is not *enough* to do this, nor is it, overall, the *main aspect* of our theoretical work as the Party in this country.

Mao Tsetung sharply criticized exactly this kind of approach—of learning about other countries, but not studying the concrete conditions and history of your own country and not, on this basis, developing the line and policies to lead the working class to its revolutionary goal in your own country. During the War of Resistance against Japan in China Mao paid particular attention to combatting this tendency, criticizing those who "ignorant of their own country...can only relate tales of ancient Greece and other foreign lands..."

Of such people he noted that "though they read, they cannot digest. They can only cite odd quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in a one-sided manner, but are unable to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the concrete study of China's present conditions and her history or to the concrete analysis and solution of the problems of the Chinese revolution."

These people, he said, often "enjoy a reputation unwarranted by any real learning," and "have no intention of seeking truth from facts, but only a desire to curry favor by claptrap." He characterized such people as "gramophones" who "forget their duty to understand and create new things." Their influence, he pointed out, led to a situation where "we are studying Marxism," but, "the way many of our people study it runs directly counter to Marxism." In contrast to this, Mao insisted that "Marxism-Leninism is a science, and science means honest, solid knowledge; there is no room for playing tricks. Let us, then, be honest." (Above quotes from "Reform Our Study")

Does not all this have direct relevance to the revolutionary movement in the U.S. today? Do not all these sharp criticisms from Mao Tsetung apply perfectly to such completely dishonest and opportunist "gramophones" as the October League (OL) and some others, who, instead of making any serious analysis of concrete conditions, clutch, robot-like, to now this, now that phrase, quotation or formulation, treating and repeating them like religious incantations and branding as heretics those who try to approach and apply Marxism as a living science?

But it is not enough to learn by negative example from such as the OL who "have no intention of seeking truth from facts, but only a desire to curry favor by claptrap." As the Party of the working class in this country the RCP has the responsibility to not only study theory but to apply it concretely to the present day conditions, as well as the history, of the U.S.—while also studying and keeping in mind the world situation and learning from the historical and present day experience of the world revolutionary movement.

There is much work to be done in analyzing far more deeply the present position of U.S. imperialism, the alignment of class forces in the U.S., how different classes and strata are affected by the deepening crisis, how they perceive the development of things, how to build and broaden the united front under working class leadership, how to link the struggle of the oppressed nationalities with the overall workers' movement as the solid core of the united front, and many other vital questions. All this must be undertaken by the Party, in order to deepen our ability to apply the mass line, to develop lines and policies that can continue to lead the working class and masses forward toward the revolutionary goal and can enable ever broader numbers of workers and others struggling against the enemy to grasp and apply the science of revolution in order to achieve the concrete task of making revolution in this country.

Revolution

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Combat Reactionary Theories

In order to do this it is necessary, of course, to actively combat the reactionary theories spewn everywhere by the bourgeoisie, and its representatives both inside and outside the workers' movement, including those who call themselves "revolutionaries" and even "communists" but actually serve the counter-revolutionary interests of the ruling class. Not only is it necessary to wage struggle against them in order to expose them, but also in this process the Party and other genuine revolutionary fighters will deepen our own grasp of Marxism. For as Mao Tsetung also pointed out, "Marxism develops in the struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, and it is only through struggle that it can develop." ("Speech at CPC National Conference on Propaganda Work")

This relates to the third general point outlined at the start of this article—the third main form now of waging the theoretical struggle. But, as stressed before, these three forms are interrelated and affect each other. In particular, waging the struggle against opportunism and against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology generally, is indispensable to applying the mass line.

As the article, "Mass Line Is Key To Lead Masses in Making Revolution" (December 15, 1975 *Revolution*) points out: "There is, and will be so long as classes remain, a continual struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat over how to sum up the struggle, what lessons to draw from each battle and what road to take in order to change the situation. To the degree that the proletariat, through its Party, does not correctly sum up this experience, does not correctly concentrate the ideas of the masses, the bourgeoisie will, through its political leaders and representatives, put over its summation."

In order to lead the mass struggle forward, in order for the masses to recognize through the course of many battles the face and features of the enemy more clearly, to be able to distinguish friends from enemies and to fight more consciously and effectively, it is essential for the Party of the working class to struggle against bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology, to deepen its own grasp of Marxist theory and its ability to concretely apply it, and to train ever greater numbers of workers in this science. This is also essential in order for the working class to learn to differentiate its own class interests from those of others who are also oppressed by the ruling class, so that the working class can build the broadest united front under its leadership against the enemy and lead the masses in carrying the struggle through.

To sum up the main points, then: the working class, led by its Party, must take up and wage the theoretical struggle, in all its forms, along with the political and economic struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie. In fact these three forms of struggle of the working class—economic, political, and theoretical—are also interrelated, and it is also true that unless all three are carried out, "in harmony, in...[their] interconnections, and in a systematic way" (to quote Engels) then the struggle of the working class will be set back on all fronts.

All this does not mean that we should turn upside down the correct overall relation between practice and theory, making theory principal over practice, that we should reverse the correct dialectic, practice...theory...practice, or that the theoretical struggle, in any form, should be raised above, or divorced from, the economic and political struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. What it does mean is that the theoretical struggle cannot be ignored, or downgraded—and exactly that it cannot be divorced from the other forms of the working class struggle—without losing sight of the revolutionary goal and leading the working class up a blind alley.

Tasks in Present Period

Today, when there is not a revolutionary situation in this country and the working class movement is still at its beginning stages of development, or resurgence, in this present period, we are faced with a different freedom and different necessity than we will be at a point of a much higher tide of struggle, and particularly with the development of a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary mood among the broad masses. The more the working class movement develops and the more the Party, through the application of the mass line and correct policies based on it, brings new workers into its ranks, the more difficult it will be to pay attention to the theoretical side of the class struggle. Lenin pointed out in *What Is To Be Done?* that as the workers' movement in Russia, and the influence of Marxists within it, grew in significant proportions, this "was accompanied by a certain lowering of the theoretical level. Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical-training joined the movement because of its practical significance and its practical successes." Overall it was, of course, a very good thing that masses were drawn into the communist movement at that time. But it also had its bad side, a certain lowering of the theoretical level, which had to be paid attention to, but which could not, in the short run, be entirely prevented, without barring

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Over 5000 lined up at Detroit Cadillac in October when the company announced it was taking applications. Hundreds chanted WE WANT JOBS!, reflecting the anger of the American people at widespread unemployment.

“Promise”...

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more pile-ups of unsold goods and more layoffs, are increasing. The laws of capitalism drive businesses to produce as much as possible, without regard to needs but only potential profits, while at the same time they restrict the purchasing power of the masses. Right now, even with another 200,000 more unemployed last month, bringing the official figures to 7.8 million, the number of hours those still working spent on the job also jumped dramatically, as the bosses tried to wrench even more production (and profit) from each worker. This led to even more goods being made, while even fewer could buy them.

Last Spring the capitalists' various experts, especially those whose job is to reassure the public that things really are going somewhere besides to hell, pointed to the upsurge in consumer spending as proof that the economy was turning around. But as was said in *Revolution* (April 15, 1976), it's capital spending—for things such as new plants and machinery—that is crucial for any real expansion of the economy. Historically the capitalists have been driven by competition to invest in new machinery, and it's this investment that drives the overall expansion of the economy by providing jobs (and therefore more market for consumer goods) as well as a market for yet other machinery and raw materials.

At things developed over the last year, although there was some small upward motion in machine tool orders and so on, the capitalists haven't been able to get together enough capital for any heavy expansion, and now with the drop in consumer spending many companies are dropping or putting off even their limited plans for capital spending. Because of the falling rate of profit, although their profits may be very big they're still not big enough to really expand the already massive amount of capital they have invested in plants and machinery. This contradiction—that they have to expand their capital investment in order to up their rate of profit but they can't raise the capital because their rate of profit is too low—has been an underlying cause driving the imperialist economy into crisis in the first place.

This is driving the capitalists to desperate measures, as various capitalists and groups of capitalists try to save themselves and damn the rest. This month's steel price hikes are an example of one of the ways that this is happening.

The 6% boost in the price of steel didn't come from any sudden increase in the demand for steel or any shortage of the metal. The demand for steel has hit a low—the mills are producing below what they did ten years ago. But the steel companies had to try to raise their prices anyway, because they're so desperate to up their low rate of profit that it's better for them to risk losing business by charging more than to go on the way that they have.

This kind of thing hasn't been the main force behind inflation, but it is important as a sign of the desperate situation the capitalists face, and it will help feed inflation's fires if the especially strong monopoly position of the steel companies enables them to make this price increase stick.

Of course Carter had to bark a little when the steel

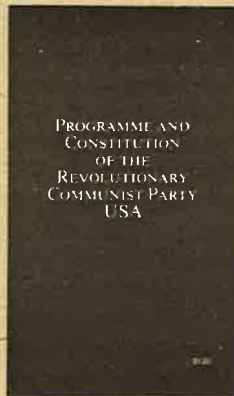
companies made their move—but how could he bite the hand that feeds him? Other capitalists (such as the auto makers) don't like to see the price of the steel they use going up, especially since it'll make their goods even more expensive than their European and Japanese competition, but they know that all U.S. industry is hurt by the weakness of the steel companies. The steel price hike was one of many things that recently led to a whole chorus of cries of distress about the economy's slowdown and pleas that the incoming President do something to stimulate the economy.

Carter's Tax Cut

Carter responded by pulling a rabbit out of his hat—the declaration by one of his top economic wizards that there will “almost certainly” be a tax cut next year, which by odd coincidence was just what a round-table meeting of the biggest finance capitalists recommended. But this is a very old trick. In fact Ford pulled the same rabbit out of his own football helmet two years ago, and even then the rabbit was already nearly dead. This tax cut that Carter's aides say will work miracles produced little for Ford or any of the other Presidents that tried it. In fact, it helped bring about the conditions of today.

From what's been said about Carter's plan so far, just like Ford's tax cut, Carter's will also have as its centerpiece an increase in the investment tax credit for business, meaning that they will have to pay taxes on even less of their income if they reinvest in expansion. Along with this, as before, there will probably be other tax breaks for business and a few features designed to increase the purchasing power of the masses so that business can sell what's made. Supposedly this will lead to new jobs, and other trickle-down benefits for the working class.

What few jobs Carter does offer directly—250,000 more through the CETA training program is the biggest current promise—are hardly more than an insult,



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given the more than eight million officially without jobs.

But all the government's economic stimulus in the past has led things to the mess they are in today, and Carter's plans will have the same effect. Whether by cutting down the amount of money the government takes in (through tax cuts) or increasing the amount the government pays out (through government spending), either way this has forced the government deeper into debt. Government borrowing ends up competing with business borrowing for available funds, and less money is available for capital expansion. No capital expansion means precious few new jobs. Furthermore, government spending of what it doesn't have is another strong factor leading to inflation.

Inflation like Heroin

This inflation is like heroin—the addict gets sick if he doesn't get it, but he'll only need more and more to stay alive if he does. The things the government has done to artificially stimulate business has given rise to inflation, and inflation in turn cuts away at the power of the masses to buy, and even more crippling to the capitalists, it cuts at their power to accumulate enough funds to replace and expand their means of production. The new shot of dope that the addict demands may make him feel better for a while, but it sure won't cure what ails him, which in this case is fatal.

The conservative business economists like the *Wall Street Journal* warn that experience has proved that this stimulus only causes more problems in the long run, while the liberal *Business Week* warns that without more stimulus the economy faces a big fall. Both are right. But whichever route they take, unemployment, inflation and all the other miseries of the system in crisis is where it's taking us.

The capitalists in this country were able to temporarily climb out of their last major crisis in the 1930s and put off the current one for so long because of World War 2 and the dominant position of U.S. imperialism in the post war world. This enabled them to expand their exploitation onto the far corners of the world, including pushing aside other imperialist powers. They were able to “prime the pump” through massive government deficit spending, and flood other countries with U.S. dollars, thereby exporting inflation. But all this gave rise to struggle against imperialism and the U.S. in particular everywhere, and along with the rise of the USSR as an imperialist competitor, today the chickens are coming home to roost.

In this situation, whatever the capitalists and their government do to try to cure economic stagnation and unemployment only leads to inflation, while inflation just works to pull down the economy even more and contributes to unemployment as well. The working class gets it coming and going while the capitalists totter back and forth on their tightrope, trying to maintain what balance they can with the factors for inflation and unemployment to keep from plunging into the darkness below. As events are proving very quickly, the election “vote your pocketbook—choose your poison” routine was hypocrisy and a hoax. ■

Theoretical...

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workers who *should have joined the movement* from doing so.

At the present time in the U.S. our situation is somewhat different. Although, from its formation, the Party has continued to seek deeper roots, forge stronger links with the mass struggles of the working class and has drawn people in this movement into the ranks of the Party, all this is still not at the same level that Lenin is summarizing in *What Is To Be Done?*

While this is not as good as the situation will be when the working class movement is on a much higher level—in terms of mass struggle and class consciousness—and when the Party has drawn far greater forces in the working class into its ranks, still the present situation does provide us with the opportunity—and indeed the necessity—to lay as strong a theoretical foundation in the Party as possible and to pay as much attention as possible to training advanced workers, as well as Party members, in the fundamentals of Marxism. And this must be done in close connection with the task of forging all possible links with and building to the greatest degree the mass struggle of the workers, and others oppressed by the enemy.

So long as we carry this out with correct methods, linking theory with practice in an overall way—while also studying theory “in its own right”—and waging the theoretical struggle in correct relationship with the economic and political battle against the bourgeoisie, it will enable us to maximize every possible gain now and to make the greatest possible preparation for the future. It will enable the Party to continue carrying out the policy of preparing its own ranks and the masses for the inevitable development of a revolutionary situation in the future and to continue to make the greatest strides toward that future at each stage of the struggle. ■