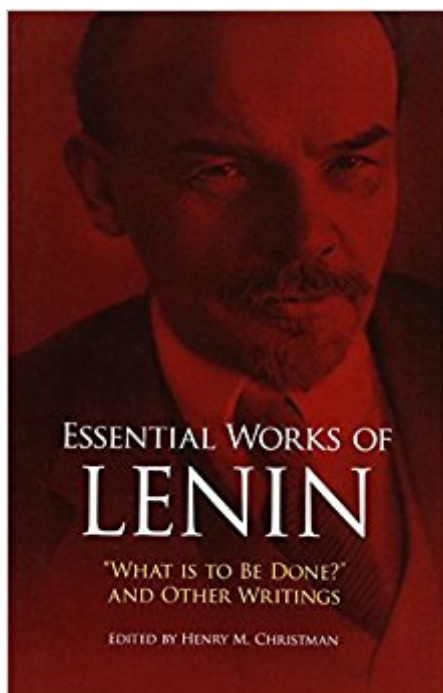


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Essential Works Of Lenin: "What Is To Be Done?" And Other Writings



Synopsis

Among the most influential political and social forces of the twentieth century, modern communism rests firmly on philosophical, political, and economic underpinnings developed by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, later known as Lenin. In this volume, comprising the four works generally considered his most important publications, Lenin presents the goals and tactics of Communism with remarkable directness and forcefulness. His first major work was *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, written in prison after Lenin had been arrested for anti-government activities in 1895. Represented here by key sections, the book developed a number of crucial concepts, including the significance of the industrial proletariat as a revolutionary base. *What Is to Be Done?*, long regarded as the key manual of Communist action, is presented complete, containing Lenin's famous dissection of the Western idea of the political party along with his own concept of a monolithic party organization devoted to achieving the goal of dictatorship of the proletariat. Also presented complete is *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in which Lenin examines the final "parasitic" stage of capitalism. Finally, this volume includes the complete text of *The State and Revolution*, Lenin's most significant work, in which he totally rejects the institutions of Western democracy and presents his vision of the final perfection of Communism. For anyone who seeks to understand the twentieth century, capitalism, the Russian revolution, and the role of Communism in the tumultuous political and social movements that have shaped the modern world, the essential works of Lenin offer unparalleled insight and understanding. Taken together, they represent a balanced cross-section of this revolutionary theories of history, politics, and economics; his tactics for securing and retaining power; and his vision of a new social and economic order.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Russian (translation)

Some of the material was heady. Imperialism: The Final Stage of Capitalism was fantastic, and is relevant to this modern era post 2010. A century later and Lenin's work has much relevance. The last book contained within "The State and Revolution" summed up what is to be done, how and why. The other work assist with building up to the two I mentioned above, but are still good reads for one who has a curiosity of communism. The book also assists with understanding capitalism, and how the East views the West.

An edition aimed at those who still want to know what is to be done. As to the others, they don't know what they do.

We are reading here a translation of Russian words which were spoken 100 years ago. Over time the definitions of some words have become mystifying and the glossary does not take them into account. The author, Lenin, does not make efficient use of language and tends to speak in "word salads." A few crisp sentences could replace entire pages.

This book consists of several shorter books:THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA (excerpts), WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, IMPERIALISM: THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM, and THE STATE AND REVOLUTION. Topics discussed are trade unions, the new role of banks, imperialism, the decay of capitalism, and a Marxist view of the state.

This book requires a excess amount of knowledge of Russia circa 1880-1900ish. If you know nothing of Russi around the time of Lenin, this book will be confusing. You may have to read another book to understand it. That being said, this is a great book. It gives a lot of insight on Leninism as it was then; a growing school of thought.

This is probably the best book on the personal writings and political blueprints of Vladimir Ilyich

Lenin. The main problem that Leninism ran into, was that an oligarchy of the communists can become as insensitive and remote from the laboring masses, as a czarist monarchy had been before. Lenin felt the peasants did not have the savvy intellectual prowess to keep the socialist-labour movement going forward. And also that the peasants would be prone towards nostalgia for the czar and his church beliefs. Regicide did little to stop the peasants' human need for a spiritual superman figure and Josef Stalin fit the bill. Many remaining WW2 Soviet veterans carry a picture of 'Uncle Joe' with them. The world war and later the cold war, gave stalwart leaders a reason to justify a 'closed-market system'. Yet this led to another problem with Leninism. The idea of laboring for the sake of labor, regardless of real economic-market/social value. In America, Richard Nixon tried 'fixed-prices and price-caps' on some large domestic products, which only led to a worsening of the economy with even higher inflation rates. Ronald Reagan also had the strange idea of 'Supply-side economics', which was correctly lampooned by George Bush Sr. as 'VooDoo Economics'. The faulty idea that a large supply produced would induce a large demand for the product. For example, if the government produced a hefty supply of 'reusable solar-powered flashlights (with modest capacitance)', would there then be a hefty demand for them in the dark fall-winter months and also in the light spring-summer months? If disposable batteries became scarce, because of strict local/state/federal environmental laws imposed, then demand for 'solar-powered flashlights' would increase to meet market-demand. The need and value of the product is driven by market-demand. -Lenin, who was an admirer and distorter of the scientific ideas of Charles Darwin, did not understand that people are fickle humans. Whose tastes and values are subject to ready change. Regardless, of what laws and penalties the bureaucrats impose upon them. -Interesting book concerning socialist economic theory.

This is good because it is a collection of Lenin works, although the editor is an anti-communist and interprets and teaches Lenin dogmatically.

The Essential Works of Lenin does provide a remarkably concise introduction to Lenin's thought. It will not be easy for the novice reader, so a perusal of The Communist Manifesto, or other introductory writings will be important to get a firm grasp on Lenin's Marxist views. The final 90 page chapter "The State and Revolution" may be the most accessible and intelligible of Lenin's views; much of the earlier portions of this 364 page book deal with Lenin's critique of other socialists who have deviated from true Marxism (this is the most difficult part to read, because it assumes a knowledge of his historical context). The book then, is a good one, but introductory exposure to

Marxist thought will help. It does provide a valuable, concise biography of Lenin in the introduction. That aside, let us turn to a critique of Lenin's thought. Lenin was a very intelligent critic of capitalism, with many penetrating insights into the function and abuses of a capitalist economy. It is not that Marxism was based on a complete illusion, but that it was based on a partially-true, compelling illusion that perhaps makes it so seductive, and so dangerous. I dissent, for example, in thinking that only the "dictatorship of the proletariat" can supplant the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that somehow a freer, fuller democracy will result from a worker-managed society in which the state will subsequently "wither away." History demonstrated that instead of withering away, the Communists party only solidified its tyranny over the masses, and substituted one dictatorship for another. That Lenin or Marx possessed a real historical "science" of political-economy I think has been disproved. While claiming not to be a utopian, it is difficult to see how some of Lenin's claims are anything but - in terms of the transformation of human beings by the abolition of class antagonisms. People remain people, inherently biased, often selfish, not concurring, and striving to realize two very difficult things: a society with the greatest possible freedom and equality for all. Do not be mistaken, however. Just because Lenin (as Marx) made serious errors in their theory, does not excuse the student of ethics, politics, or religion from treating these writings of Lenin with the serious academic study they deserve. Lenin may have been wrong about much, but right about a great deal too. Understanding his thought will be important for any student of history and politics. That said, this book does very little to comment on religion. Famous for their antipathy towards religion, choose another book if you are interested in their ideas about religion. This book does do very well on Lenin's political-economic theory. Lenin also draws quite considerably on Engels, considering him and Marx to be the only true interpreters (beside himself) of the doctrine. A final note - the book also does not mention Adam Smith - it is just assumed that capitalist theory is wrong, and Lenin spends much of its time battling the "false" or "opportunist" Marxists (Bernstein, Kautsky, the anarchists). See Marx or perhaps another volume on Lenin for a more direct confrontation of Smith and classical economists.

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