

## Report to Reagan-Fascell Program

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# WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH PSEUDO- DEMOCRACIES? The Case of Azerbaijan

## INTRODUCTION

*Dear Colleagues and Friends,*

The title of my report is "What is to be done with pseudo-democracies? The Case of Azerbaijan."

Through the example of Azerbaijan, I'm going to consider the political regimes that have declared themselves democracies: those which have, on paper, all the democratic institutions, but which do not, in fact, wish to have any of them implemented in real life.

Such regimes, which provide for their citizens certain rights (for example, "personal rights") but refuse to grant them civil and political ones, have been previously studied in political science. For example, Professor Larry Diamond calls them "hybrid regimes." Other terms to characterize these regimes, such as "semi-," "quasi-," and "pseudo-authoritarian," also exist. But I believe that "pseudo-democracy" is the most appropriate definition for this phenomenon because this title more precisely captures the essence of such regimes: specifically, their hypocritical and deliberately imitational character.

I would note that my research on the example of Azerbaijan concerns, namely, the "Not Free" countries in the Freedom House classification, and some of my recommendations do not apply to "Partly Free" countries such as Georgia or Tanzania.

In this report, I will briefly give descriptions of the following:

### *Plan of the Presentation*

1. The State of Democracy and Autocracy in the World
2. The Situation of Azerbaijan as a “Not Free” Country
3. Agenda for Azerbaijani Democrats
4. Agenda for Outside Supporters of Liberal Reforms
5. The “Image Problem” of Democratic Countries
6. Agenda for Civil Activists of Western Countries in Support of Reforms

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## **1. THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY AND AUTOCRACY IN THE WORLD**

### **The End of History is Near!**

Attending various conferences here in Washington, DC, I have heard the notion that it is time to reduce Western aid for democracy in the world because the European Union and the United States are now experiencing serious economic crises and foreign policy challenges. And, of course, democracy cannot be imposed from the outside and built overnight.

I believe this view is pessimistic and unfounded.

First of all, as if it did not look paradoxical, we can count on our fingers the number of countries that have set up democratic regimes by themselves. The rest of the democracies were established with support from the outside. Let’s recall the downfall of feudalism in Europe during the Napoleonic wars, the spread of democracy around the world after the World War II or the Cold War. We can also recall the assistance of France in the struggle of the American people for independence.

So, “No man is an island” and democracy almost never emerges only as a result of internal development.

And today, in my opinion, the situation in the world is much more favorable for the spread of democracy than it was during the Cold War. In the next 15-20 years, the world has a very good chance of getting rid of authoritarian regimes for good.

Today, there are no more powerful anti-democratic camps trying to expand their political system throughout the world. All that players such as China and Russia are capable of today is supporting authoritarianism near their borders.

Democracy is regarded as the only legitimate political system worldwide, and almost all authoritarian regimes are making efforts to look democratic.

Governmental control over communications is lost.

Moral power and the control of authoritarian regimes over the spiritual sphere of the individual are lost. Accordingly, the control of people’s self-organization is lost, and all this leads to the weakening and collapse of authoritarian regimes.

Cruelty is retreating around the world. The abolition of the death penalty is spreading to more and more states.

For example, in Cuba, the punishment for the speaking against the regime was 25 years in prison, and today it is only 3-4 years. A man that insulted the dictator before could be cruelly killed in countries like Azerbaijan, but now he can get just 2-3 years in prison. Attitudes toward women, and minorities are changing for the better. Because of movies like "Bless the Beasts and Children," animal rights are on the agenda now, and a couple of months ago bullfights were banned in Barcelona.

**Imperceptibly for us "the Spirit of the Times" - Zeitgeist - is positively changed.**

The number of free countries in the twentieth century increased ten-fold, and today we are witnessing such a momentous event as the Arab Spring. We see the winds of change in Russia, Iran, and Burma...

In all of that, I see a serious reason to be optimistic. I have an unbearable feeling, and this is my message, that Fukuyama's "End of History" is near!

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## 2. SITUATION IN AZERBAIJAN

### as a "Not Free" Country

On paper, we in Azerbaijan have all the democratic institutions: elections, separation of powers, constitutional rights, an independent judiciary, an ombudsman, and a lot of signed international human rights agreements. But in reality, none of this actually exists, which is just as it was in the former Soviet Union. Today Azerbaijan is in a situation I call "Back in the USSR."

All civil and political rights in the country are repressed. The country has about 70 political prisoners, 16 prisoners of conscience (according to Amnesty International), about 240 religious activists arrested. Demonstrations and rallies being banned, like-minded persons can not meet even indoors.



**Political prisoners in Azerbaijan**

The social status of political parties is very much reminiscent of “dissident clubs,” having only moral power over people’s minds as it was in the former USSR.

Unfortunately this parties/“dissident clubs” continue to try to behave like real political parties and society helplessly continues to rely on them, demanding that these dissident clubs, without the participation of ordinary citizens, should save the country from dictatorship. And when no achievements are observed, society is gravely disappointed. Instead of support, these dissident clubs are faced with accusations of betrayal or incompetency. This is in spite of the fact that these dissidents should enjoy double respect, for despite the huge pressure, they are not broken, have not sold out, and still continue to act.

There is no free market in the country, any notable economic activity is controlled by the regime, and almost every store has a portrait of the president's family hanging on the wall.

Social protests are suppressed by oil money.

*Thus, in our pseudo-democracy we only have such democratic resources as*

- Dissident clubs;
- Youth organizations operating almost underground;
- Human rights defense organizations operating under high pressure;
- Pro-democratic religious activists;
- Just one independent newspaper (*Azadlig*) and one independent news agency (*Turan*);
- Democratic organizations in the Azerbaijani diaspora throughout the democratic countries;
- Relatively free Internet access, to which our people have emigrated in search of self-expression and self-organization; and
- Radio Liberty in Azerbaijani;
- Widespread satellite TV programs from the West, Turkey, and Russia.

*Thus, the ruling regime of our pseudo-democracy has two goals:*

- 1. To establish an anti-democratic regime to the fullest.**
- 2. Submit it to the West as a democratic regime.**

And a pseudo-democracy spends a huge amount of money for this mimicry.

I tried to estimate how much such mimicry costs per year:

- The budget of our pseudo-parliament (the budget of 2006) ... .. - US\$9,9 million.
- Pseudo-elections to parliament (2005) ... .. - US\$6,4 million.

- The pseudo-Central Electoral Commission (2006) ... .. - US\$3,6 million.
- Pseudo-ombudsman (2006) ... .. - US\$0,46 million.
- Pseudo-membership in international democratic orgs (2006)..... - US\$9,1 million.
- The pseudo-constitutional court (2006) ... .. - US\$1,99 million.
- Pseudo-public TV (2006) ... .. - US\$11,95 million.

**Total: US \$ 43.4 million**

I have probably missed something, but the sum turns out impressive: annually our pseudo-democracy spends more than US\$40 million on its “democratic cosmetics.”

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*Briefly, the reasons for the failure of democracy in Azerbaijan are as follows:*

- Historically, the roots of self-governance and civil liberties in the country are weak.
- We have an authoritarian Soviet heritage.
- The country is rich in natural resources, which allows the people live too inefficiently and without reforms.
- We have an unfortunate geopolitical location between authoritarian Russia and Iran.

(“Poor Azerbaijan, we are so far from God and so close to Russia.”)

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### **3. AGENDA FOR AZERBAIJANI DEMOCRATS: POLITICAL AND CIVIL ACTIVISTS**

For democrats in “Not Free” countries, the main task is to **keep the flame burning**, and by their own example to awaken people and help them to defeat the fear imposed by repression.

In a “Not Free” country, a “democrat-politician” transforms into a “democrat-dissident,” like Vaclav Havel. When the intimidated society is not able to support you as a real political party, then you must behave according to your actual social status: the status of a dissident.

If you do not have material strength, you should think about your moral strength. The democrat-dissident has to become a moral example for the people. He should become a pure democratic crystal particle, which is capable of triggering the rain of democracy.

Democrat-dissidents should elaborate a different type of activity than a politicians. Instead of fiery and populist speeches, acts of conscience are needed—acts like chaining yourself to the fences of the Kremlin.

Democrat-dissidents should also develop new forms of nonviolent protest.

In a pseudo-democracy there are no longer need of morally suspicious political coalitions and maneuvering; no need to compete for domination among your peers. You do not have to bear false witness to protect your *esprit de corps* and the moral image of your comrades. It is better to be alone, but pure like crystal, and the people will listen to you.



Democrats should spread the idea that if a man in a pseudo-democracy cannot explicitly protest, then he should at least stay away from the lies surrounding him, at least do not participate in wrongdoings as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote in his appeal to the Soviet people, "Live Not By Lies."

Civil activists that are still standing should establish contacts with each other and with civil activists abroad.

*And they should also:*

- Support any democratic social networking,
- Support any citizen initiatives,
- Endorse non-conformism in society,
- Spread hope among people that the "End of History" is near, and
- **They had better learn to fight without any hope!**

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#### 4. AGENDA FOR OUTSIDE SUPPORTERS OF THE REFORMS

##### Why help civil activists in pseudo-democracies?

I would also like to answer the question of "Why should democratic countries help struggling peoples when things at home are not going well?"

- For humanism and solidarity,
- For "Soft security" in terms of the Helsinki Process
- To create new developed markets.
- To prevent the sudden explosions of civil unrest, harmful not only for the suffering country but for global situation as well.
- To build a rational and friendly community of nations in order to confront the global resource crisis. (This crisis is expected to come in the next 30 years)

So if we look at the foreign aid to democratization in the world through the lens of the profit then this aid can be considered as a long term investment. Besides the US spent just 0.2% of state budget to foreign aid — less then other most developed nations do.

## HOW TO HELP THEM?

As was mentioned previously, providing assistance toward liberal reforms today is far easier than it was during the Cold War. There is no longer any ideology that opposes democracy. Today only paranoia and manic-depressive psychosis persistently confront Liberalism. Authoritarianism in the world is as weak as it has ever been in history. The thrones of dictators are shattering and few of them remain.

**SANCTIONS.** The international democratic community has many types of sanctions against oppressive regimes and their efficacy continues to be debated. Should sanctions be imposed rather than a policy of constructive engagement?

Vacillation between these methods happens frequently, for example, in Belarus. In response to human rights violations in Belarus the West imposes sanctions, causing the dictator and his country to withdraw inward. Then comes the turn of “constructive engagement,” where the dictator is invited to international forums but then continues to violate human rights more vigorously. So, we have a vicious circle here.

In my opinion, if constructive engagement does not work, then there is no need to hesitate with sanctions. Some observers argue that sanctions do not help. I do not agree with that. I would say that sanctions do not help immediately. Sanctions, statements of protest and acts of solidarity, the broadcasting of Radio Liberty, the Internet and other liberation technology—these have a cumulative effect.

Today, many observers still cannot figure out how Arab Spring happened. It is obvious that this phenomenon is the cumulative result of the all-encompassing influence of the world’s democracy and liberation technologies on the societies of Arab countries.

**FOREIGN AID.** Sometimes, democratic countries spend millions of dollars to support democratic institutions which do not exist in pseudo-democracies at all. Millions of dollars and Euros are spent to develop a non-existent independent judiciary, Ombudsman, public television—not to mention some police training for the delicate handling of demonstrators. The European Union usually provides these types of programs to Azerbaijan.

It is understandable that this spending was done in order to enter the country. But isn’t it possible, along with police training, to provide assistance to civil society? Help to those who are keeping the flame burning? For example, to launch satellite TV for VOA or Radio Liberty in Azerbaijani? To that end, only \$ 500 000 per year is needed. And *that* would be a real help for our democracy.

One of the most effective foreign aid programs is Education USA or EU for our youth. The program has already educated some 2000 students from Azerbaijan in US and European universities. Many of them are now strong supporters of liberal reforms in the country. It is obvious that this program should be further developed and expanded.

**LEGAL DIMENSION.** The arbitrariness of dictatorship occurs as if in a legal vacuum. While violating the rights of citizens and spreading corruption, they themselves feel safe under the protection of national sovereignty.

"I am the King of the Castle and all I do is right" as they say. So the international community must constantly remind these kings and sultans that their acts to establish a corrupt dictatorship fall under the criminal penalty for *"Illegal seizure of power with the aim of self-enrichment at the expense of the country and its population."*

They must constantly be reminded of this provision. Let them see this provision in their sleep.

**MORAL DIMENSION. *Fight Against the New Slavery***

The rejection of dictatorship by the international community must be raised to the same high moral level as the rejection of slavery in the early 19th century!

Dictatorship may be seen as a new kind of slavery. "The new slavery" today—it is a shame; it is a sin and a crime; just as traditional slavery was in human history. The modern kind of slavery is not only a disgrace to such a regimes, but also a disgrace to us all.

To have such kind of slavery today is unacceptable, even if the "modern slaves"—the people in dictatorships—do not openly protest against it.

***See Article 4 of The European Convention of Human Rights:***

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labor."

***Or see the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons:***

Article 3 (b) reads: "The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used."

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## **5. THE "IMAGE PROBLEM" OF DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES**

The positive image of democratic countries, as an example for the ultimate goal of liberal reform, is an important tool in the struggle for democracy in the world. After the end of the Cold War, this image was quite positive in countries like Azerbaijan, but unfortunately, today, it leaves a lot to be desired.



Our think tank, the FAR CENTRE, carried out a national opinion poll among Azerbaijani youth in August 2011, and found that 42% of the respondents preferred the Western model of development:

**FOR DEVELOPMENT IT'S BETTER TO COOPERATE WITH:**

- The Islamic world - 12%.
- Russia 17.5%
- **With Europe and the US - 42%**

*(Data: FAR CENTRE Survey, August 2011)*

However, only 5.4% of respondents named the United States among countries friendly to Azerbaijan.

**FRIENDLY COUNTRIES**

- Turkey - 58.6%
- Russia - 23%
- Islamic countries - 10.7%
- European Union - 7.4%**
- USA - 5.4%**
- Iran - 4.2%

*(Data: FAR CENTRE Survey, August 2011)*

As this data shows, confidence in the United States and the European Union is quite low. This happened, in my opinion, for two reasons:

- **Firstly**, because of the Western “policy of double standards” toward the democratic struggle in the world and in Azerbaijan in particular. (we can recall a case when a Bush administration official congratulated Ilham Aliyev on his "strong performance at the polls and reiterated [America's] desire to work closely with him and with Azerbaijan in the future”.

- **And secondly**, this disdain mainly occurs as a result of an error in the public’s mentality, which in my opinion was formed over the 10,000-year-long history of civilization. This opinion states that conquest and robbery is the absolute law of human and international relations, that it is Zero-Sum Game. One can become rich only through continued looting or cheating of the weak ones as Marx and Lenin alleged. Human labor relations and especially international relations in this conception are a Zero-Sum Game.

If one takes this "law of history" as a basis, one will certainly assume that no matter what the US does in the world, it is, ultimately, robbery and theft. No other options exist. Thus, US national

interest is pursued through robbery. The US is getting rich at the expense of poor countries, their oil, and their diamonds. Why would we want such a "friend?"

Marx argued that, as a result of the Zero-Sum Game, the rich become richer while the poor become poorer and poorer. Finally, the poor people, out of despair, will stage a world communist revolution...

But in the late 19th century, it became clear that the Zero-Sum Game does not work. Nobody really knows how it happened, but the rich have become richer only where the poor have also become richer. An owner must raise workers' salaries so that they can buy the owner's goods. For that reason, the poor became richer and the world communist revolution did not happen.

Reducing the role of resources in the production of goods, the division of labor and the free market cancelled out the Zero-Sum Game and imposed a new law - the "Positive-Sum Game" or "Win-Win Game," where both sides benefit as a result of interaction.

This new law should be especially and constantly explained to people, because the Zero-Sum Game dominated their minds for 10 000 years, but the Positive-Sum Game has only had a 100-year - history.

Now it is clear why people negatively perceive almost all Western initiatives. The West, as before in history, is suspected of robbery, that is, of playing a Zero-Sum Game.

So, to explain to the people that after the 10,000 years the main law of history has changed requires much more effort than what is currently expended today to explain US foreign policy.

I propose that there should be a special campaign to explain "The Sources of the US Conduct." (This is a reference to George Kennan's "The Sources of Soviet Conduct "(1946)).

Almost everyone I talked with about recent events in Iraq and Libya was absolutely convinced that the US carried out military operations there in order to seize their oil. Unfortunately, that is the way people think around the world. I find it hard to convince them that the oil money flows not into the US but into the Iraqi budget.

The provisions of the Positive-Sum Game should be constantly explained to the public, because today this law, and not the Zero-Sum Game, is indeed a source of US foreign policy.

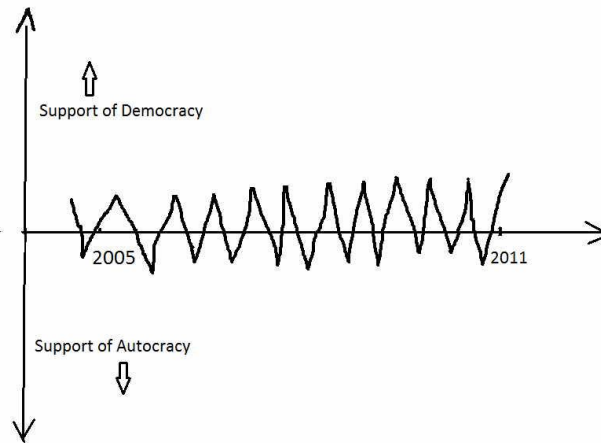
***Provisions of the "Positive-Sum" Game are as follows:***

- Collaboration today brings much more money than robbery.
- We help you, because if you prosper, then we will prosper as well.
- We want you to develop and become rich in order to be able to buy our X-ray machines.

The phrase that is usually delivered to explain Western principles is: "We stand for the free movement of people, goods, and ideas," but ordinary people in the world find it hard to comprehend the meaning of this.

As a contribution to the campaign mentioned above, here is (see the diagram below) a comic diagram, which I have made to illustrate the results of Western policy, which is often called a "policy of double standards."

SHORT-TERM RESULTS OF THE US "DOUBLE STANDARD" POLITICS  
2005 - 2011

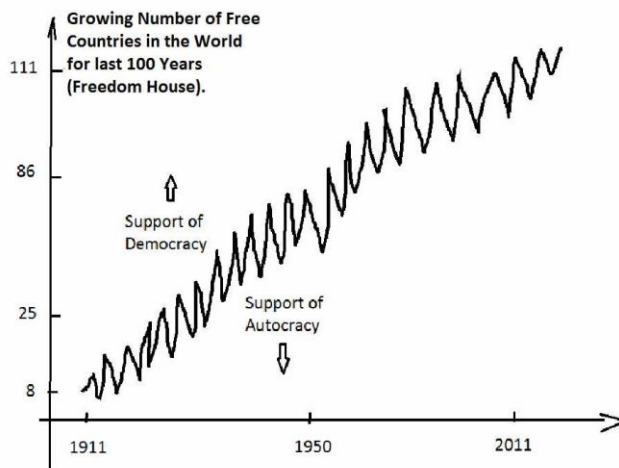


In the diagram one can see the result of US policy over the short term (for the past 5 years) with its support sometimes for democracy, and sometimes for autocracies depending on US interests.

**But the key here is that US interests have changed from the Zero to the Positive-Sum Game. The US will only prosper if the world prospers as well.**

And the second diagram shows the long-term results (for a hundred years) of such policy. As you can see, as a result of this "policy of double standards," the number of democratic countries in the last 100 years has increased 10 times!

LONG-TERM RESULTS OF THE US "DOUBLE STANDARD" POLITICS  
1911 - 2011



by Hikmet Hadjy-zadeh  
Azerbaijan

With these diagrams, which I first drew on a napkin in some restaurant, I was able to convince my companions that the Positive-Sum Game exists, and that as a result of Western foreign policy, freedom in the world is expanding.

Such examples can be elaborated further and I would even suggest introducing a special subject in US colleges: "The Sources of the US Conduct." So far, unfortunately, we often hear from young and noble American students and professionals abroad that Bush was awful and Reagan was immoral, the US wants to seize Libyan oil and Zimbabwean diamonds, etc.

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## 6. AGENDA FOR CIVIL SOCIETY OF THE WESTERN COUNTRIES

### People Against the New Kind of Slavery

People under dictatorships would be very grateful if civic activists of democratic countries would pay more attention to their pain. After all, if you care for a freezing dolphin in the Arctic ice or for a trapped deer—look at us, we also fell into a trap and also freeze in our prisons. We encourage you to join in the fight against the new slavery—perhaps the last slavery on earth.

The moral pressure of NGOs, celebrities, and public figures can soften planned acts of repression, and sometimes even save lives.

Authoritarian leaders, no matter how omnipotent they may appear, are usually thin-skinned and woundable persons. Dictators need not only obedience, and money, but also respect and admiration. And we must convince Western leaders not to glorify them, but to treat them according to their unjust deeds.

Whenever you meet a dictator, try to remind him of what he has done to his citizens. And if the dictator should say that you are interfering in the internal affairs of his country, then show him the international human rights covenants he has signed, in which he agreed that he will respect the right of persons to OBSERVE and PROMOTE the implementation of such a covenant.

See

CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE VIENNA MEETING OF CSCE, 1986

(26) ...the participating States will respect the right of persons to observe and promote the implementation of CSCE provisions and to associate with others for this purpose..."

I am glad to inform you that a campaign in which celebrities come out against the new slavery has been started as an initiative of Human Rights Watch. The campaign, entitled "Sing for Democracy," appeals to famous artists to refuse to sing for dictators even for a huge payoff. Sting has already responded to this appeal and refused to participate in a concert (in 2011) dedicated to the jubilee of the Kazakh president Nazarbayev. And we welcome Sting, who continued in the noble tradition of great European musicians such as Beethoven, Grieg, and of course the Beatles, who refused to support injustice using the power of their music.

And here's a shot from the famous Beatles movie, *Yellow Submarine*, where the Beatles freed the country of Pepperland from authoritarianism with their music.



By the way, that was exactly what The Beatles' songs did with the USSR.

Along with celebrities, we can find a lot of civic groups, movements, and public figures that could be involved in the campaign against the "new slavery:" anti-globalists, religious democrats, all kinds of moral movements, environmental movement, and many others, could be supportive.



### **Anti-globalization movement demonstration**

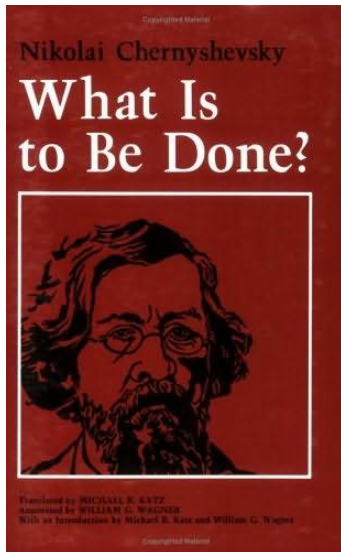
Participation in such a campaign could bring great moral satisfaction to civil activists, especially since the results of their activities will manifest very soon—because Fukuyama's "End of History" is near!

*Thank you, dear friends, for your patience.*

In conclusion, I want to go back to the title of this presentation—"What is to be done?"—which refers to revolutionary manifestos well-known in the former Soviet Union, such as:

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

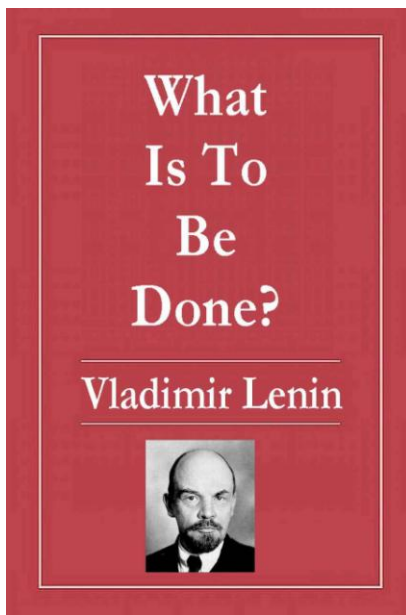
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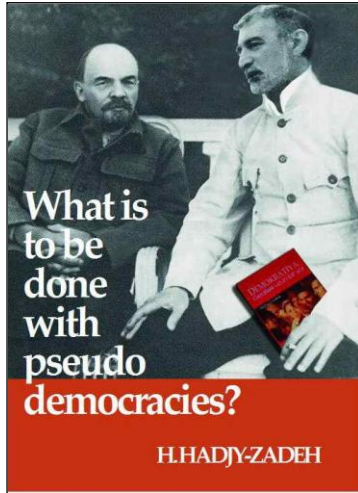


WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Burning Questions Of Our  
Movement

V.Lenin





WHAT IS TO BE DONE  
WITH THE PREUDO-DEMOCRACY?  
by H.Hadjy-zadeh

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