

SWP

**discussion
bulletin**

Vol. 18 No. 6

Published by the Socialist Workers Party, 116 University Place, N.Y.

March 1957

Bill 7

**Marxist Method
and the Lessons of the
Hungarian Revolution**

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by **Arne Swabeck**

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MARKIST METHOD
AND THE
LESSONS OF THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

A Reply to Marcy and Grey

By Arne Swabek

Our discussion of the events in Hungary has brought forth an amazing document, entitled, "The Class Character of the Hungarian Uprising," by V. Grey. The document characterizes this uprising as "a full-scale, nation-wide counter revolution throughout Hungary." (emphasis in original.) In its essence, this is what the Kremlin bureaucracy publicly proclaimed as its pretext for the armed intervention to crush the Hungarian revolution. Moreover, this intervention is supported in Grey's document as "a progressive and necessary act."

The most amazing part of the position taken by Grey, which is also the position of Marcy, is that these comrades, who are Trotskyists, should in this case become the unwitting supporters of the actions of the Kremlin bureaucracy. How is it possible to account for such a contradiction? By what method of thought did these comrades arrive at their position?

We know that politically conscious people arrive at positions that they take concerning important historical events, or problems, not by accident, or at least not generally so. Political consciousness not only makes obligatory, but it also helps, to construct a certain methodology; and revolutionists have always recognized its importance.

But our methodology, must serve to translate into comprehensible forms of thought in our minds the material reflections of the complex and contradictory characteristics of all reality, and thereby furnish a logical foundation for our theoretical and practical conclusions. In other words it must be dialectical. Any other method of thought will more often than not become a disorienting factor, and lead to false conclusions. And this is precisely what is revealed in the theoretical concepts and the political conclusions of Marcy and Grey. It is not a case here of inconsistency; on the contrary. The method of these comrades has been consistent throughout.

This being the case, it is not sufficient merely to argue against the Marcy-Grey position. It is necessary to make inquiries about the method of thought that led them to their present position. And this I propose to do. I shall attempt to examine the method pursued by Marcy and Grey by tracing it through its various manifestations.

Under the date of October 29, 1950, Marcy introduced to the party, in the form of a memorandum, his general concept of what he called the global class war, fought by global class forces. (Internal Bulletin, Vol. XII, No. 4, Nov. 1950). Treating the imperialist intervention in Korea as a first, though brief, phase of World War III, the memorandum stated:

"By the very nature of its objective dynamics and the irresistible sweep of its momentum, this war must necessarily develop into a global class conflict... The fact that the opening phase of the war may manifest itself (or rather conceal itself), even if only initially and temporarily, as a war between nations, should not in the slightest degree obscure its clearcut class character. It is not a war between the nations but a war between the classes."

The memorandum insisted that a "social regroupment of the basic classes" had taken place on a global scale, "a redistribution... of the material and social power of the bourgeoisie and proletariat... resulting in a shift of the revolutionary center of gravity to the East and the economic center of gravity to the far West."

Characterizing this war, its initial Korean phase and the present cold war, as a global class conflict did not really represent anything that was new. Marxists have always sought to determine the underlying class basis of wars, and endeavored to act according to the dictates of class interests involved. Similarly, there has been no difficulty among us in recognizing the two main forces in the sense of the mutually antagonistic social relations existing within the Soviet orbit, on the one side, and in the capitalist world, on the other.

Their Method and Ours

What then was new? In its essence the memorandum presented a rigidly conceived criterion of global class forces that was to furnish the basis of interpretation of reality. For Marcy and Grey this criterion became the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of all theoretical and practical conclusions concerning problems of our movement. As we follow their interpretation of reality, their method is revealed. The global class forces appear, as their interpretation unfolds from event to event, as homogeneous unchanging entities with political boundaries fixed once and for all. And this occurs in spite of all that history has taught us about the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy in this "global class war."

Comrades Marcy and Grey will protest. The role of Stalinism was analyzed thoroughly in the memorandum, they will insist. Yes, that is entirely true. The role of Stalinism was described in terms of Lenin's admonition on the essence of the dialectic, in terms of the division of the one and the cognition of its contradictory parts. "For the Soviet state," it is said, in the memorandum, "the division of the one, (the struggle of opposites, which is absolute) ... must inevitably result in the separation of the revolutionary social structure from the reactionary superstructure."

Apparently this is a serious appreciation of the dialectic method. But, as we shall see, it was merely a literary appreciation. On that basis, a description of the dialectic laws of Soviet society, or any other society, may retain all its beauty of composition, but it become a sterile, lifeless appendage.

The value, and the power of the dialectic method lies precisely, if not exclusively in its application. When applied as a tool the dialectic method enables us to gain a more comprehensive understanding

of the laws of development in nature, in society and in relations between class forces, as well as in relations within the classes. It enables an interaction between these developments and human thought.

The developments of the material world are reflected in our minds and translated into forms of thought to serve as a guide to action. That means to utilize the dialectic method not merely to describe the historical process, but to apply it to conclusions that we draw from the events that occur, to the position that we take and to the actions that are necessary to carry this position forward in the reality of life.

For our particular period, the post-Lenin period, the dialectic method has proved to be an indispensable prerequisite for an understanding of the qualitative relations expressed now in terms of deadly conflict between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the working class. Moreover, the dialectic has enabled us not only to understand the origin and development of Stalinism, to foresee its breakdown and destruction, but also to become active participants in the struggle against it.

Unity of theory and practice is an essential part of the dialectic method. And in the struggle against Stalinism we test the validity of our theory and our practice against the concrete events and facts of reality for verification, or for change if that becomes necessary.

The First Example of Method

Unfortunately this is not the method of Marcy and Grey. Their method starts out from the rigidly conceived criterion of the global class forces. It is a criterion that to them applies equally at all times and in all situations; the relationship within the proletarian forces remains unchanging as it was once laid down in this schema. If the historical process does not conform to this schema, that is just too bad for the historical process. Events have to be painted in such colors as to fit the schema regardless of what the deformation may be. Is this an exaggeration? Well, let's examine the record!

In 1948 we had a dispute in the party on whether or not to give critical support to the Wallace third party movement. The dispute was entirely episodic in nature. I was the leading sponsor of the idea of critical support to this movement, in the mistaken belief that it constituted a first phase of a labor party development. Marcy supported this idea, but out of an entirely different motivation -- a motivation that fitted in with his schema -- as he spelled it out in his document on "The Global Class War and the Destiny of American Labor." (Internal Bulletin Vol. 15, No. 15, May 1953)

According to Marcy, the Wallace movement "was merged with a current that was global in character. What gave it such a character? It was the Stalinists." And Marcy took his stand on that basis, berating those who failed to understand "the real nature of the Wallace-type groupings, and their full significance in the present global class struggle." Equally Marcy berated the majority rejection of critical support as "an adaptation to the dominant trend of reaction.. thus making the party more dependent on the present anti-Soviet prejudices of the working class."

Leaving aside the real reason for these anti-Soviet prejudices, i.e., the Stalinist police regime, I merely want to add that I withdrew my proposal for critical support to the Wallace movement on opposite grounds of Marcy's motivation. I withdrew the proposal because I became convinced in the discussion that it was precisely this proposal, and not the other way around, that carried dangers of adaptation to the dominant trend of reaction. Inherent in this proposal I recognized the possibility of a dilution of the revolutionary tradition of the party.

How to Determine a Workers State

Our discussion of the class character of the Chinese revolution threw further light on the methodology of Marcy and Grey. China became a deformed workers state, says Grey, a dictatorship of the proletariat, though bureaucratically expressed, at the end of September 1949. He insists that "the date is crucial because it involves the criterion for determining a workers state." (Internal Bulletin Vol. 17, No. 2, April 1956)

Of course this was not the date when the expropriation of capitalism began in China. But it was the date on which the Stalinist leaders, heading the military victory, took power and established a new regime.

But the Stalinist leaders took power in China not in the name of a socialist program, nor even in the name of the working class. They continued to cling to their program of the "bloc of four classes," and their theory of a "revolution in stages," i.e., the passage of China through an allegedly "new" stage of capitalist development.

Only to comrades who are more concerned with their own schematic proposition than they are with the living process of the revolution could this signify the creation of a workers state. Power in the hands of the Stalinists is not itself equal to a workers state, and much less so when this power is based on a capitalist program. Our adherence to the designation workers state for the Soviet Union, as has been so often emphasized, is primarily because of its socialist type of relations of production; the Stalinist power marks its special feature of degeneracy.

Marxists view the revolution as a process of development. And in the case of China a drastic change toward measures of expropriation of capitalism had to take place before we could recognize a qualitative change in the character of the regime. That change followed several years after the seizure of power, and as a result of the dialectical interaction of contradictory forces.

The weakness of the Chinese capitalist basis, the imperialist economic blockade and its military intervention, driving toward the Yalu River, compelled the Communist Party to change drastically its whole orientation. The objective logic of this gigantic struggle left the Stalinist leaders no choice except to break with capitalism, nationalize the decisive means of production and institute state planning. When these measures were taken, the new property relations

signified that a qualitative turning point had been reached in the process of developments. The social structure that furnished the foundation for the regime had been so transformed that it was possible to recognize a workers state, even though deformed by the ruling bureaucracy.

Interrelations of Leadership and Class

Marcy and Grey reject this view of revolutionary developments in China for one reason, and for one reason only. On the date that Grey calls crucial (September 1949), the military victory over Chiang Kai-shek's forces hoisted the Stalinist leaders into power; their army was predominantly peasant in its composition; their program was basically a bourgeois program; and the city proletariat did not play a decisive role. But to Marcy and Grey this date nevertheless had to mark the creation of the workers state.

The historical process at that point had to be painted in colors suitable to fit into the mold of their criterion of global class forces regardless of the composition of these forces, regardless of leadership, and regardless of program. The boundaries of the global class force remained fixed and absolute. And to make sure that this be so understood, Grey exclaims: "We are for the union and against the bureaucracy. But class is primary and bureaucracy is secondary. The revolution is primary and the leadership is secondary."

For the Hungarian revolution, however, according to Marcy and Grey -- who are in this case equally motivated by their need to fit the historical process into the mold of their arbitrary schema-- the class becomes secondary and the leadership primary.

Nobody will deny that the Hungarian working class, in the totality of its mass composition, was on the side of the insurrection against the Stalinist government. But says Grey: "The workers did not have a proletarian revolutionary leadership to put in that government's place. And the absence of such a leadership could not be filled at the worker's leisure. The question demanded an immediate answer." And Grey gives the answer. From his arbitrary premise he draws the equally arbitrary, and deadly false conclusion that the Hungarian uprising was "a full-scale nation-wide counter-revolution throughout Hungary."

From China to Hungary the methodology of Marcy and Grey forms a deadly parallel. In each case the political situation was vastly different. The interconnections and the interactions of social forces in motion differed in each case.

In China, because of these interrelations, the Stalinist bureaucratic leaders were compelled to play a progressive role. In Hungary, in order to maintain its powers and privileges against the social forces in motion, the degenerate bureaucracy played a reactionary role. Yet the rigidly conceived criterion of unchanging global class forces propounded by Marcy and Grey remained the same. It led Grey to demand that the Kremlin intervention, ordering the army

under its command, to crush the Hungarian revolution, be supported as "a progressive and necessary act."

An Independent Hungary and Soviets

Instead of the imperative necessity of a differentiation from the Stalinist bureaucracy this methodology led to an identification with Stalinism. For this Grey himself adduces adequate proof in his treatment of the demand for an independent Hungary which formed one of the central rallying cries at the very heat of battle: "An independent Hungary," says Grey, "which is not an independent Soviet Hungary is in reality, a dependent capitalist Hungary."

Here the false method turns everything upside down. The demand for an independent Hungary came from the revolutionary forces. Their decisive section, the working class, was organized in Workers Councils (Soviets) carrying on the battle against the Stalinist bureaucrats who had destroyed the rule of Soviets and replaced them with hand picked rulers.

To the Hungarian workers the struggle for independence carried distinctly revolutionary implications. It was directed against the root source of the repressive police regime in the conviction that freedom from Kremlin control had become a prerequisite for workers democracy. This was essential to the creation of autonomous working class organization. It was essential also to the revision of economic planning in favor of the workers.

Only through the autonomy of workers states in the Soviet orbit is it possible to develop the full potentials of the nationalized property relations and to establish, moreover, a fraternal federation of these states, collaborating in social and economic development as equal partners. With that is bound up also the solution to the century-old national problem of Eastern Europe. This is precisely how Lenin viewed the concept of the right of national self-determination. To Lenin it meant, above all, a prerequisite for the strengthening of international working class solidarity.

At the outset of this polemic I made the observation that the method of Marcy and Grey had been consistent throughout. That, I am sure, has proved to be true in the various discussions where their position came into dispute. But the consistency of a static method led to a complete lack of internal consistency in their analysis of the rapidly moving events in Hungary. Their own presentation is contradictory from one paragraph to the next. The reason for this is that, while their method has remained consistent, the logic of that method led inevitably to a disorienting trap; analyses get distorted, theoretical concepts warped and false political positions follow unavoidably.

The Living Movement Versus Its Incidental Manifestations.

It may seem strange that the comrades of the minority should pay such inordinate attention to the role of Cardinal Mindzenty and to the oscillations of the short lived Nagy regime. But this is not as strange as it seems. It shows the attempt to seek support for a

preconceived schema, not in the dynamics of the living movement, where such support cannot be found, but in its superficial and incidental manifestations. On a similar plane is Grey's numerous quotations from the American bourgeois press which "hailed the freedom fighters." This can hardly be taken seriously. The uprisings in Eastern Germany and Poznan also elicited sympathy from the bourgeois press. This kind of sympathy expressed the hope of the imperialists that they may derive some benefits from the mass resistance to the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Trotsky once gave us some valuable advice on this point. In an article entitled, "Learn to Think," Trotsky said, "The policy of the proletariat is not at all derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign -- this would make every sectarian a master strategist." Conversely, to accept the characterization of the Hungarian revolution offered by the bourgeois publicists as the premise for our conclusions, would dispense altogether with the necessity of Marxist concepts.

It is perfectly true that these bourgeois publicists nominated Cardinal Mindzenty to be the next premier of Hungary. But this is no reason for us to get excited. There is no evidence whatever that the revolutionary forces took any particular note of the presence of his holiness. It is true also that Nagy could take over the reins of government in Hungary for the same reason that Gomulka could do so in Poland. Both had been purge victims and to that extent, in the eyes of the mass of the people, they symbolized opposition to the bitterly hated Stalinist bureaucracy.

But it is far more important to note the fact that the Hungarian insurrectionists carried the struggle beyond the change of regime in short order, aiming to make the revolution complete. And the workers paid no heed to the numerous appeals of Nagy to lay down their arms. Even after the savage assault by the Soviet army the workers continued the struggle by means of the general strike. These facts only go to show that far more serious criteria are to be applied to determine the character of the events in Hungary than their mere superficial and incidental manifestations.

"The history of revolutions," said Trotsky, is for us first of all the history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership of their own destiny...The masses go into a revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old regime."

Can there be any doubt that this applies to the events in Hungary? There the workers were in fact engaged in a continuation of the revolution of 1917. It was a new affirmation of the revolution in permanence. The workers were striking powerful blows against the bureaucratic obstacle in the way of the extension of the conquest of the Russian revolution. But the Hungarian masses also displayed the lack of prepared plans. Among them there was confusion, there were many shortcomings and, above all, the leadership of a revolutionary party was lacking.

Interaction of Social Forces.

Ten years of the repressive Stalinist regime compressed all forms of dissatisfaction into open rebellion spreading to all layers of the population, including the rank and file members of the Communist Party. But revolutions set all social forces into motion, reactionary as well as progressive. And this was no exception. Capitalist restorationist elements appeared alongside of worker revolutionists.

Yet, although of short duration because of the bloody Kremlin intervention, the Hungarian revolution became a process of development obeying its own laws. The validity of the laws of causality was here fully vindicated. There was an inner connection of events and an interaction between the forces in motion and in conflict. The bureaucracy was compelled to shift the reins of the regime from the Rakosi-Gero sector to the forces around Nagy in order to conciliate the masses.

At the same time the mass movement, initiated by the student and intellectual circles, took on more concrete and more definite form and direction when the workers went into action. Alongside of the shift in the regime the authentic mass movement shifted from the intellectual circles to the working class. The intellectuals and peasants became allies of the workers.

While the restorationist elements - not at all a decisive force -- rallied to the Nagy government, the revolutionary workers took the lead through their Workers Councils (Soviets). And the workers formulated their demands and their programmatic declarations on a constantly rising scale of political consciousness. The dialectic interaction had produced a constantly clearer line of demarcation between the social forces that were set into motion.

But the most decisive factor here is the appearance once again on the historical scene of the Workers Councils, appearing as the organs of the workers struggle for power. As in Russia, they arose directly out of the workshops when the mass movement entered the openly revolutionary stage; and they became the pivot around which the toilers united in their struggle against the regime. Moreover, the selection of the delegates to the Workers Councils was carried out once again under fire, in a red-hot atmosphere.

But the Workers Councils appeared also as an affirmation of working class determination to maintain and to extend the proletarian forms of property relations. This was made amply clear by the councils at the very outset. Their existence was a demonstration of workers democracy in life; and their struggle resulted in nothing less than a dual power situation. What the workers sought was the means to end the bureaucratic regime. This marks out the Hungarian events clearly as a stage in the political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. Besides, there are clear indications here that the Workers Councils are also the historical mass instruments of the political revolution.

The Dialectical and the Static Method.

The decisive role of the working class during the events in Hungary is beyond dispute. It strove for the creation of the authentic organs of revolutionary power -- the Soviets. This is what determines fundamentally the character of the Hungarian revolution.

Sad to say, however, it is precisely on this crucial question that Marcy and Grey violate Lenin's precept of the essence of the dialectic method..." the division of the one and the cognition of it contradictory parts...the mutually exclusive and opposed tendencies..." Lenin explained further, "the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory and relative. The struggle of the mutually exclusive opposites is absolute as movement and evolution are."

Since the extension of the Soviet property forms to Hungary the unity of opposites had existed in fact. The unity of the mass of the workers, on the one hand, and the bureaucratic caste, on the other, consisted in the common defense of the nationalized property relations. This unity was conditional, transitory and relative. It implied no support from the workers to the bureaucracy; and it implied little or no regard for the workers welfare on the part of the bureaucracy. The latter were concerned primarily with the protection of its own powers and privileges. But the struggle between these mutually exclusive opposites was no less of an existing fact. It was absolute, though carried on by means of attrition, and it reached the point of qualitative change with the open insurrection.

For Marcy and Grey this dialectical relationship in Hungary did not exist. They saw only their own hermetically sealed formula; it excluded fresh air. The concrete historical facts were replaced by their own programmatic norm. Their rigidly conceived criterion of global class forces left no room for an understanding of the dynamic interplay of mutually exclusive opposites engaged in deadly struggle for supremacy on a social foundation which both supported. Only the bureaucratic state could fit into that rigid criterion. The living mass movement was not a part of it. The bureaucratic state represented the global class force that, according to Marcy and Grey, should be supported.

Speaking of the Hungarian workers, Grey concedes: "They wanted freedom from bureaucratic dictatorship." However, he insists in the same breath: "But their first duty was to defend their own dictatorship from the amorphous democratic majority that was taking the power from them under Nagy." What Grey calls, "Their own dictatorship" that the workers should defend, cannot mean anything else but the Stalinist dictatorship. And he adds mournfully: "Apparently nobody understood this."

Political Revolution and Defense of the USSR.

On the abstract theoretical plane, I assume that Marcy and Grey

accept the necessity and the inevitability of the political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. Its concrete manifestation is something else. Their method of analysis prevents them from recognizing the political revolution when it appears on the historical arena in its living reality, as it did in this initial stage in Hungary.

We are supporters of this political revolution which we consider the only means to regenerate the workers state. However, we hold the overthrow of the bureaucracy to be subordinated to the preservation of the socialist type of property relations and the planned economy. It is precisely these property relations -- the remaining conquests of the October revolution -- that determines our political conclusion of unconditional defense of the USSR. In other words it is the social foundation that we defend, not the bureaucratic regime, and least of all its misdeeds and crimes.

Of the contradictory developments in the USSR, we defend the progressive features and we reject the reactionary. In fact, we have always endeavored to make clear that uncompromising struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy is an integral part of our defense of Soviet property relations. Both are interrelated as two aspects of one central task, which is again subordinated to the central strategic goal of the world revolution.

We defend the Soviet property forms as a proletarian conquest once gained and in preparation for its extension in the world revolution. At the same time the struggle against capitalism and for the world revolution is the best defense of the USSR. And the sooner the parasitic bureaucracy is swept out of the way the firmer the Soviet foundation and the more secure its socialist future.

With the extension of the Soviet property forms to the countries of Eastern Europe and with it, the extension of the powers and privileges of the bureaucracy, including its monstrous repressions, it became self evident that our views of the necessity of the political revolution and the defense of these property forms applied to these countries as well. And the question of interrelation of these two tasks was posed most sharply and most directly in the Hungarian revolution. How is this to be resolved?

Trotsky once answered the hypothetical question: "And if the Red Army tomorrow invades India and begins to put down a revolutionary movement there shall we in this case support it ... Is it not simpler to ask," Trotsky added, "If the Red Army menaces workers' strikes or peasant protests against the bureaucracy in the USSR shall we support it or not? Foreign policy is the continuation of the internal. We have never promised to support all the actions of the Red Army which is an instrument in the hands of the bureaucracy. We have promised to defend only the USSR as a workers state and solely those things within it which belongs to a workers state."

"The crushing of a revolutionary movement in India, with the cooperation of the Red Army, would signify an incomparably greater danger to the social basis of the USSR than an episodic defeat of

counter-revolutionary detachments of the Red Army in India. In every case the Fourth International will know how to distinguish where and when the Red Army is acting solely as an instrument of the Bonapartist reaction and where it defends the social basis of the USSR. " (In Defense of Marxism, pp. 29, 30)

A Correct Strategy Emasculated

Did we know how to distinguish in whose interest the Red Army acted in Hungary? Obviously the Kremlin bureaucrats did know. While they would have good reason to fear the eventuality of a capitalist restoration, there need be no doubt that they saw in the Hungarian events a revolution directed at the very heart and core of the bureaucratic system. And that they feared much more. Consequently, they gave the Red Army its order to march; and in Hungary it acted solely as an instrument of the Bonapartist reaction. With its massed military might it crushed savagely the workers' strikes, their councils and their revolutionary insurrection. The Red Army restored the hated bureaucratic regime.

But Marcy and Grey, who are devoted to the concept of the defense of the USSR, are also victims of their own disorienting method. This method, proceeding from the idea of global class forces that are frozen in their positions, unchangeable and devoid of internal contradictions, prevents them from seeing the two aspects of the one central task: the political revolution in the Soviet orbit and the defense of its property relations.

Hence they berate the Hungarian workers who took the road of political revolution, "your first duty was to defend your own dictatorship." (the Stalinist dictatorship ... A.S.) And thus, caught in their own erroneous method, Marcy and Grey turn the concept of defense of the Soviet Union into its opposite: defense of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Whether or not they mean to do so, this is the regrettable reality of their position.

By their method Marcy and Grey are trapped in a purely mechanical concept. In the United States the Communist Party, in their view, gave to the Wallace movement its global class character.

In China the seizure of power by the Stalinist leadership on a certain date, regardless of whether or not it signified a social transformation, that was to be interpreted as the rise of a workers state. The only basis for this interpretation was that the new regime represented the global class force.

Finally, in Hungary the working class unitedly rose up against the Stalinist bureaucratic regime. And yet, that regime to Marcy and Grey embodied their mechanical concept of the global class force.

The Revolution and Its Leadership.

On one point the comrades of the minority are entirely correct. They place great emphasis on the importance of leadership -- the importance of the revolutionary party. Our conception of the revolutionary party is an historical generalization that sums up the whole

problem of leadership. The validity of this conception was in Hungary verified in its negative sense. The absence of the revolutionary party more than anything else accounted for the revolution stopping short of its goal.

But the conclusion that Marcy and Grey draw from this situation is utterly unacceptable. To attempt to see this generalization in every segment of time and space in full-blown form is to misunderstand the origin and the development of the revolutionary party. Instead of viewing the creation of the party as a difficult and complex process of development, as an aim to be attained in struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, they present a lifeless equation: no party, no revolution. And to advise the workers to defend the bureaucratic regime would negate the very purpose of creating a revolutionary party.

However the Hungarian workers did organize Workers Councils throughout the country. They attempted to organize a national congress of councils. As in Russia, so also in Hungary, the masses, when they could no longer endure the old regime, sought first to create their own broad instruments of struggle, capable of representing all the toilers.

Under the banner of the Workers Councils the masses entered forcibly into the realm of rulership of their own destiny. The Workers Councils threw open the doors to all the exploited. Through these doors passed all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. To paraphrase Trotsky: The organization, broadening out together with the movement was renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat could struggle for leadership of the Workers Councils on the basis of the widest democracy.

Thus where the comrades of the minority put a question mark, it is necessary, on the contrary to state the affirmative: the Workers Councils were for the Hungarian revolution a magnificent conquest.

The revolution did not wait for the revolutionary party to appear; but the cadres for the party were being assembled in these councils. They must be viewed as the principal arena through which the revolutionary party can be forged out of the struggle of political tendencies; through which the party can be forged parallel with the unfolding of the revolutionary development. This is how Lenin viewed the similar problems of the Russian revolution. We must hold fast to this view for the development of the political revolution, for it is founded on the stubborn facts of life. It was clearly indicated by the course of events in Hungary.

The political revolution has so far entered only its initial stage. That it will go on to find its culmination in the Soviet Union is for us beyond dispute. And for us the political revolution signifies also a continuation of the original expropriation of capitalism and the transformation of property relations.

Regeneration of Soviet democracy has become a life and death necessity for the full development of the productive forces. It is an essential prerequisite to raise the social foundation in the Soviet territories from the level of state property to genuine peoples property in the means of production.

Logic of the False Method

Finally, a word on our problems here in the United States. We commonly acknowledge the great tasks that the profound crisis of Stalinism imposes upon us. We are keenly aware of the need for us to assist the revolutionary elements of the Communist Party to find their way out of the crisis dilemma. But a correct understanding of the lessons of the Hungarian revolution is an indispensable prerequisite to such an assistance.

Unfortunately in this respect also Marcy and Grey, by following the logic of their method of thought, have landed in a blind alley. They have nothing to offer these CP elements. To tell them that the Hungarian uprising was nothing but a counter-revolution and to demand that they support the Kremlin intervention in Hungary can serve only to push these elements back into the Stalinist straitjacket. This should give Marcy and Grey special cause for concern: and I for one, hope that they will reconsider their position, and re-examine their disastrous method.

Insofar as our whole party membership is concerned, it is necessary to study carefully, and to absorb the true lessons of the Hungarian revolution so that we may be fortified in the important task before us -- to assist in the ideological reorientation that is now posed before socialist minded workers.