

# Marxism for Today

By HAIM KANTOROVITCH

Capitalism is on its last legs but a determined struggle by the workers is necessary before a Socialist victory will be assured, writes Haim Kantorovitch, noted Marxist scholar, in the second of a series of six articles written especially for the SOCIALIST CALL.

He warns against the complacent view that merely because capitalism cannot distribute the goods it produces, it will automatically be replaced by a more smooth-running system. As an editor of the American Socialist Quarterly, Kantorovitch has earned a reputation as one of the leading Socialist theoreticians of the day.

Capitalism carries the seeds of its destruction in itself. It suffers from inner contradictions which cannot be solved unless capitalism itself is destroyed.

It is doomed to destruction by its own inner insoluble contradictions, which the more capitalism develops, grow more sharp and more menacing. "The same conditions that produce wealth produce poverty; the same conditions which tend to the development of productive power develop also the power of repression." (Poverty of Philosophy, Marx.)

In the "Communist Manifesto," Marx and Engels laid bare some of the most important and most menacing contradictions of capitalism.

"Modern bourgeois society," the "Communist Manifesto" declares, "with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spell."

## Contradictions Become Glaring

The foundation of capitalism is private property of the means of production, but the development of capitalism makes production as well as the use of the means of production more and more social. The contradictions between private ownership and social production become more and more glaring from day to day.

Capitalism rests on the foundation of free competition, but the growth of capitalism necessarily brings about the creation of trusts, cartels and monopolies, which abolish free competition in practice. Technological development constantly increases the wealth of society, at the same time increasing the misery of the masses. Every new improvement in industry increases the army of the unemployed; the social order is more and more disorganized.

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation," says Marx, "grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this, too, grows the revolt of the working class as a class always increasing in number, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of the capitalist production itself."

## Fetter on Production

The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter on the mode of production which has sprung up and flourished along with it, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at least reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are being expropriated." ("Capital," Vol. I, Chapter 34).

At the time when the "Communist Manifesto" was published, it was easy for the savants of capitalism to meet Marx's analysis of capitalism with the contempt scientists usually have for the prophecies of the dreamer. In our time it is clear to all that it was not Marx who indulged in idle dreams, but his "realistic" critics.

The inner contradictions of capitalism become so evident that no

one dares deny them; they have grown since the time of Marx, not only in intensity, but also in number. Capitalism has already reached a point where non-Socialist economists, such as Stuart Chase, can't help admitting that "capitalism as we have known it is being liquidated under technological pressure. To deny this is to deny the facts of the modern world."

The fashionable term "planning" covers, however, a multitude of different ideas. Many of those who advocate planning, have communism in their minds as their goal—others, state socialism, or state capitalism—still others look to fascism. All agree that the old capitalism, the capitalism of laissez-faire, of free and unbridled competition, of rugged individualism, has outlived its time and is dying.

## Capitalism Doomed

Capitalism can not save itself. It is doomed to destruction by its own weight, it is driven to its grave by its own inner contradictions. This is the crux of the Marxian "prophecies" which are prophetic more.

It is, however, a great mistake to interpret Marx's views on the inevitable breakdown of capitalism in a purely mechanical or fatalistic way. Capitalism will not break down mechanically, will not simply collapse and make place for a new social order. The Marxian doctrine is of the inevitability of the fight against capitalism, and the inevitability of victory in that fight.

The development of capitalism has for the first time in history made possible the organized, planned and conscious struggle for socialism. It has itself created the weapons by which it will inevitably be smitten, and it has reared in its own bosom, the heirs that it destined to take its place. But this will not, in the opinion of Marx, take place mechanically. It will require a long and hard struggle between the forces of the old society and the representatives of the new.

## Socialism Must Win

This struggle is inevitable, the victory of socialism is assured, but Socialists will have to fight and fight hard for their victory. Nothing less than a social revolution is required in order to gain this victory.

The concept of social revolution is an organic part of Marxism. Without this concept, Marxism loses its soul.

There is nothing either new or original in Sidney Hook's definition of Marxism as "a theory of social revolution." This was known to every Marxist before Sidney Hook took up the "reform" of Marxism, but we admit that in the post-war Socialist movement it surely was not superfluous to remind people that "Marxism is the theory of social revolution."

## Laidler on Security

Next week part of an address delivered by Dr. Harry W. Laidler before the Judicial Committee of the Pennsylvania Legislature on "The Need for Social Insurance" will be carried in the SOCIALIST CALL.