Japanese Scholar, Oka Expected by Feb. 16

Sachio Oka will arrive at Commonwealth February 16. He had planned to be here much sooner but was kept in New York by illness.

Oka, a native of Japan, is a graduate of the University of Tokyo. He has been in America since 1929. He wrote the chapter, "The Shadow of Japan," in the symposium, "Recovery Through Revolution," edited by Schmalhausen.

His work at Commonwealth will be arranged upon his arrival. It will include lectures on the Orient and on aesthetics.

He describes himself as a "writer by profession, a teacher of literature by training, a psycho-sociologist by inclination, a Marxist by philosophy, and a junior of a workers' organization by present occupation."

PRIMP PRINTERY

A neat tonsorial job was recently perpetrated on the print shop by the campus beauticians, Lucien and Ray Koch.

In place of the customary "shingle" a more modern job was applied in the shape of weatherproof tar-paper.

The type-mice can now disport in a less humid atmosphere and the printer needs not as of yore work with an umbrella over his head whenever Jupiter Fluvius pluvius.

WINTER VEGETABLES

Gardener Alois Oppeck, who began to raise garden about half a century ago in Austria, has established somewhat of a record even for Arkansas by furnishing for the Commonwealth kitchen green vegetables thus far all winter.

This would have been impossible, of course, if the winter had not been very mild.

Alois is a landscape gardener and horticulturist as well as a cage-bug raizer. He has succeeded in raising...
Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx, by Sidney Hook, JOHN DAY.

View, spatial experience can be described in either Euclidean or in one of the many varieties of non-Euclidean geometry." Furthermore, "just as it is possible to translate any description of the objects of a physical relation, written in terms of Euclidean geometry, into the language of non-Euclidean geometry, so theoretically it is possible to re-state any explanation of an empirically observed economic phenomenon in terms of the marginal utility theory of value into the cardinal utility theory of value and vice versa.

The Great Contradiction

In other words, one system is as good as the other. Hook did not undertake to demonstrate how, for instance, the "law of the falling rate of profit" can be accounted for as readily by one system as by the other. But he is sure that it can be.

He brings up for discussion the so-called 'great contradiction,' stating it thus: "The source of profit is surplus-value. Surplus-value can be produced by labor-power alone. [italics mine - W.C.] The wages of labor-power represent the variable capital of the concern. If the total capital is employed, and if the rate of exploitation is the same, the larger the variable capital, the greater should be the profit, and the greater the rate of profit. Let A represent a concern whose total capital is $1,000,000, of which $900,000 is invested in constant capital c, and $100,000 in variable e. The rate of exploitation being 100 per cent, the profit or surplus-value s will be $100,000. The rate of profit, which is given by s divided by c plus e, will be equal to 10 per cent. Let B represent a concern whose total capital is $1,000,000, of which $700,000 is invested in constant capital c' and $300,000 in variable capital e'. The rate of exploitation being 100 per cent profit or surplus-value, s' will be $300,000. The rate of profit which is given by s' divided by c' plus e' should be 30 per cent. Is it? It is not. "The rate of profit is independent of the organic composition of capital." [Italics mine, W.C.]

In the first place, when Hook says that surplus-value can be produced by labor-power alone," he is extreme

ly careless, to say the least. Marx in Vol. I of Capital, page 58, says "Human labor-power in motion, or human labor, creates value...Labor-power has value but labor produces value..."

I am not accusing Hook of ignorance of this distinction. Elsewhere he himself has said: "...the distinction between labor and labor-power is the cornerstone of Marx's economic doctrines..."

No Explanation

After stating the "great contradiction," Hook says "the rate of profit is independent of the organic composition of capital." We might set against this the statement of Lenin that "Capital with a 'high organic composition' (i.e. with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital to an extent above the social average) yields a below-average rate of profit; capital with a 'low organic composition' yields an above-average rate of profit." (Teachings of Karl Marx, page 25).

It would seem that a book entitled "Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx" would contain an explanation of the so-called contradiction. Hook, however, says "all Marx did was to point to the fact that the abstract and ideal conditions postulated as holding in the first volume did not actually exist. This, of course, is not all Marx did.

Then Hook quotes a paragraph from Marx explaining why there is an average rate of profit. The paragraph contains the phrase, "prices of production," but does not explain the meaning of the phrase. The Marxian concept of the "price of production" is not explained in Hook's book. Neither is the "great contradiction" explained, although Hook seems to feel that it has been.

"Socially Necessary"

After stating the "contradiction" at such length Hook should have felt more or less obliged to explain it. It is a contradiction of the labor theory of value, to say, as Hook does, that the rate of profit is independent of the organic composition of capital or that equal amounts of capital produce equal amounts of surplus-value irrespective of their composition.

However it is no contradiction to say that owners of equal amounts of capital receive equal profits, on an average, irrespective of the composition of
surplus-value produced in spheres of production where the capital is of low organic composition cannot be retained by the owners of such spheres but must be passed on, in part, to the owners of those spheres of production where constant capital is relatively high. As a product leaves one factory to enter another as raw material it sells not at its value but below its value—it sells at its price of production (value of different ingredients plus average rate of profit on capital invested). The question of this first factory does not get all the surplus-value created by its own workmen. It is only when the commodity is sold to the ultimate consumer that all its value is realized—allowing for fluctuations of price above and below its value. Likewise, the philosopher, says, 'Just as in the single commodity the surplus-value produced by one capital had to be distributed among all the capitals engaged in its production and circulation, so here the various amounts of surplus-value produced in the different spheres of production are distributed among the whole social capital or that part thereof which enters into the equalization process, that is, of those branches of industry where the law of equal return prevails.' Hook very had room for some such brief explanation. The subject is important enough to have occupied half his book.

"Marx," says Hook, "in consonance with the classical school, insists that price must ultimately be derived from labor-cost; but in qualifying labor cost by the phrase, 'socially necessary,' he admits the powerful influence of demand.'

How does Marx 'admit the powerful influence of demand?' In 'Wage, Labor and Capital,' Marx says: 'We have just seen how the fluctuations of supply and demand always bring the price of a commodity back to its cost of production. The actual price of a commodity, indeed, stands always above or below the cost of production; but the rise and fall reciprocally balance each other, so that, within a certain period of time, if the ebbs and flows of the industry are reckoned up together, the commodities will be exchanged for one another in accordance with their cost of production. Their price is thus determined by their cost of production." (Italics Marx's)

Perhaps Hook thinks of demand as some 'powerful influence' pushing in from God knows where and disturbing the Marxian theory of value—forcing Marx to 'admit its power and to tack on the 'qualifying phrase socially necessary to take care of it.'

Surplus-Value to the Proletariat

On page 225 Hook speaks of 'the historical and moral element which enters into the determination of labor-power.' The phrase is meaningless. The Marxian expression is 'the determination of the value of labor-power,' which, of course, makes sense. The phrase 'determining labor-power' might, emphasis of course, be a typographical error. We shall give him the benefit of the doubt.

But we cannot blame the printer for the following mistake: 'The portion of surplus-value which goes to the entrepreneur, the landowner, the banker on the one hand, and to the proletariat in the other..."' [Italics mine. W.C.] Any beginning student in Marx knows that surplus-value does not go to the proletariat, since by definition it is that part of the new value created which is not returned to its creator, the proletariat.

Again Hook is not merely ignorant. He says, 'But the fact remains that the one which is produced during this latter time (surplus labor-time) is surplus-value for which the worker receives no return whatsoever.'

Hook says that the theory of value and surplus-value in its specific Marxian form is not an ideology, 'for it is not an unconscious reflection of class activity.'

Compare this to the following quotation from A. V. Lunacharsky: ('Marxism and Art,' New Masses, November, 1932) "But Marxism is more than such a theory (theory of human society and its evolution); it is a definite program; it is itself the ideology of a definite class—the proletariat.

Why Save the Labor Theory?

But since Hook does not regard, and claims that Marx did not regard, Marxian economics as 'a deductive exposition of an objective natural system of political economy,' and since Hook believes it is possible to restate any explanation of an empirically observed economic phenomenon offered from the point of view, say, of the labor theory of value into the

marginal utility theory of value and vice versa," he quite logically asks himself, 'Why save the labor theory of value?'

"Save it, say some radical thinkers who have taught us that the materialists were convinced of its scientific untenability, because it is a good rallying cry to stir the proletariat into action," but Hook is not willing to save it on these grounds. 'This position has nothing to recommend it but its simplicity,' he says.

This is the way he makes up his mind to save it. 'It is... that conscious theoretical it can be of the practical activity of the working class engaged in a continuous struggle for a higher standard of living— a struggle which reaches its culmination in social revolution. It states what the working class is struggling for and the consequences of its success and failure. In this respect it is no different from the whole of Marx's doctrines which he himself tells us in the Communist Manifesto, only express in general terms the circumstances of an actually existing class struggle. In its full application it can be grasped only by one who has accepted the class struggle from the standpoint of the working class and thrown himself into its struggles. To the extent that economic phenomena are removed from the influences of the class struggle, in terms of the labor theory of value grow more and more difficult. The labor theory of value is worth saving if the struggle against capitalism is worth the fight.'

The writer of this review confesses himself unable to understand this paragraph. 'This may seem a cavalier way of settling the problem,' Hook declares. Certainly it is an obscure way of settling it. Perhaps it might be argued that all of the adverse criticism of Hook is due to the stupidity of his critics, but this argument has its drawbacks, because by the very title of his book the author promises to clear up some of our difficulties. If we can't understand Hook we certainly can't be aided toward the understanding of Karl Marx. Let's suggest another hook, 'Toward the Understanding of Sidney Hook,' and so on, ad infinitum, until even the dullest of us begin to catch on.

PLAN SUMMER SESSION

The most stimulating summer session in the history of Commonwealth is now being planned by the Commonwealth Association. Special lecturers from various labor factions, perhaps a university professor or two, and one or two writers will be here for the summer session beginning July 3.

The schedule will be announced in detail later. As usual, provision will be made for accommodation of visitors at rates lower than those of any summer resort or vacation place.
WITH MALICE
AFORETHOUGHT

by Clay Folks

Fair warning to my readers:—After a period of bitter recalcitrance, I am
surrendering, boots, breeches, and baggage. We oldsters simply must
yield to the youngsters: There is no possible escape. Although I am to
tomorrow toward my fifty-fifth milestone, I am now resolved to maintain at all
hazard that bounding resilience of spirit for which few elderly Americans are distinguished: to remain young; to let my childish and simian
propensity for initiatives function without the least trace of impairment;
and, consequently, to adopt with eagerness every bud and innovation that comes along.

It is now the vogue to initial everything, or almost everything: Sing it into print, and the readers of the popular periodicals, and even many looks,
must be able and willing to translate any and every imaginable sort of combi-
nation of letters, else they had as well quit trying to read at all. Of the possible combinations of the letters of the alphabet, there must be millions,
and if not all of them have yet been used, they will be within the next few
days.

Vociferously, I hereby serving notice on my readers that hereafter I, too,
will write a la American. So when, e. g., you come upon F. T. T. T. of L., don't fumble or stutter in sen-
scenlapelgument but read right on; Erichmenn Threatens Thirds Men's Lives. The A. A. P. A. will refer
to the American Aggregation of Pur-
sil'sanimous Asses: B. A. P. A. will refer
to the British Aggregation of the same;
S. to the Spanish, F. to the French, Bul. to the Bul-
garian, etc. The D. P. A. will refer to the
Democratic Party of America, and A. & H. O. S. C. A. will, of
course, stand for the Ancient and Honorable Order of Safe Crackers of
America, R. P. A.: Republican Party of America; D. B. T. U. O. A. C. W. I. M. W. S. (Decoration By The Use
Of A Composition Which Is Modeled While Sett); M. B. A. (Monthly Bulletin of the International Juridical
Association); N. S. C. of A. (New Soci-
alist Charter of Arkansas); G. R. T.
"S. H. H. (G-richels Rides The" So-
ricial's High Horse; H. C. P. R. I. T. R. O. T. A. L. (Haines Campus Pro-
ceedings Resulted In The Release Of
The Arrested Leaders); the S. S. M.
C. of M. (Simplex Shoe Manufacturing
Company of Milwaukee); H. L. O. P.
M. (A. V. W. Of Madison); N. D. C.
(Nursing Dairy Calves); S. P. for W.
D. (Suit Pock for: Wintry Days); P. P.
N. J. F. (Pregnant Poultry Need
Iodine Feed); R. I. R. (Riceland Reels); A. R. (Arkansas Reels); G. P. C.
(Glover's Puppy Capsules); B-D.
A. (Brain-Deficient Areas); S. S. H.
(Smooth Sex Hosiery); K.' H. F. T.
P. A. D. ("Kiuch" Holds False Teeth
Right All Day); D. L. W. & W.
M. I. B. R. (Dorothy Weatherall Won
a Watch and Has Money In Bank Re-
 sides).

In submitting these few I. E. of I. W. (Illustrative Examples of Initial Writing) I may have K. O. J. C.
P. (Ereigned Over a Little On Current Practice) by inserting initials of verbs; but you just wait a day or two.

Winter
Continued From Page One

on the thin soil of the Commonwealth
campus, flowers and shrubs seldom
seen in this section.
He expects to complete two new
"beauty spots" this season.

MANUMISSION

I sang erst of love and of mating,
Of flowers, of birds, and of bees.
But now, with my soul's new awaken-
ing,
I've worried and sickened of these.

The joy they once gave me has vanish-
ed
And none of their beauty remains.
They fled with the dreadful discovery
That I was encompassed with chairs.

The paucity of praise I once chanted
Are stilled and I utter a moan,
Though I glory in having recanted
And claiming my soul for my own.

To hell with their riches and splendor,
Their piauds and offers of place;
I've ended with being a vendor
Of self in a trade of disgrace.

I'm weary of being a chattel
Haggled up on a robber lord's shelf.
I'm ready, I'm eager for battle—
To fight to be lord of myself.

The chains that were binding and
galling
And burning the heart out of me
Are bents, in the sound of their falling.
That ring to the world that I'm free!

I'm free as a king of creation.
I'm free as a slave to a thrall.
I'm free, but my own abdication
Is bound in the freedom of all.—JH

SWITCHES SWITCHED

Commonwealth society is in a fog over a scandal involving the most promi-
nent members of the community.

The teacher of farm problems, Clay Folks, who is head of the wood crew
and incidentally one of the foremost writers of the South, measured off a
length of log to be cut for the fireplace in the Commons. David Englestein,
history teacher, wood-crew flunkie, and former acting-director of the
school, thought the log was too long.

An argument ensued.

Since it was impossible to carry the log to the fireplace immediately, Clay
cut a hickory switch to the length of the log. The switch, he said, would go
into the fireplace with six inches to spare. David maintained that there
would not have been any choice but to space. Clay promised David a quart of
wine if there were not six inches to spare.

David took the switch, and on the
way to the Commons stopped at his
cottage. There he asked opinions from
Director Lucien K. and All. Human,
former president of the student body.
They agreed with Clay.

"But why," asked Al, "should we
miss out on a quart of wine?" Briefly
he outlined a plan. Campus opinion
is that while David and Lucien, in fall-
ing in with Al's plan, were not exactly
dishonest, they were, at least, too
easily persuaded—lacking in moral
stamina.

Director Kech climbed a tree, laboriously,
and cut a hickory switch six
inches longer than the one he had cut.
They whittled diligently to make the
new switch look like the first one.

Clay was present at the measuring,
was amazed but unsuspecting. Not
until he reads this will he know that
he is a better judge of fireplace width
than of human nature.

Library
Continued From Page One

our labor skits recently published by
Commonwealth indicate that there is
a large demand for such material.

The labor research department
of the library plans to survey signifi-
cant trends in the American labor scene
and gather available material into
pamphlet form for the use of students,
workers, farmers and all those who
have a stake in the progress of the
labor movement. A simple, vigorous
style will be used and the usual trend
wording common in contro-
versial articles will be avoided.
Direct all statistics—figures can and
must—will be minimized and trends in-
terpreted from the viewpoint of the
interests of the labor movement.

Tell Your Friends About Us