

'MARXISM vs. MAXISM'

UNDER THE title "Marxism vs. Maxism," Publisher Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard press has printed a new chapter in our seven-month-old debate on peaceful transition to socialism.

The leading editorial in the Pittsburgh Press of the Scripps-Howard chain of Sept. 8, asserts with indignation that "sometimes

times the Marxism preached by Alan Max" sounds "more like Maxism (without an 'R')."

I am happy that Roy Howard has more confidence in Marxism than in Maxism. So have I.

The debate between this column and the Scripps-Howard papers began, the reader may recall, back in February. At that time, the statement of Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th



Congress on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism, was interpreted by the Scripps-Howard papers as excluding Britain and our own country.

This column insisted that Khrushchev's statement was ambiguous, but that in any case, American Communists depended on their own independent judgment as to the future of this country and that for some they had foreseen the possibility of peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism here.

(I would add that it was unfortunate that Khrushchev, who cleared up so masterfully the ambiguities on inevitability of war left some fuzzy formulations in his bold generalizations on peaceful transition.)

SINCE THE Scripps-Howard papers insisted on standing by their interpretation of Khrushchev and since they would not permit the American Communist Party to speak for itself, I called attention recently to another article in the Soviet press.

This was written by A. Sobolev, a theoretical writer. It was titled, "Some Forms of Transition from Capitalism to Socialism" and appeared in the May issue of "International Affairs."

Since the Scripps-Howard editors, who are such avid students of Khrushchev, insisted that he excluded Britain and the U.S. from the possibility of peaceful transition, I noted that Sobolev specifically praised the program of the British Communist Party on parliamentary transition. I also noted that Sobolev did not suggest there was any special type of country in which peaceful transition was excluded.

To this, the Scripps-Howard editors replied:

"But poor Max didn't read far enough again. For Sobolev does say the following Page 14:

"... The forms by which the revolution develops and the old bourgeois power is overthrown can and do differ completely. When the bourgeoisie offers exceptional resistance, force must

be applied. When the bourgeoisie, after being overthrown, attempts to restore its mastery by force the working class is obliged to resort to arms. . . ."

Then followed this challenge from Scripps-Howard:

"Marxism is still Marxism—Max's efforts at Maxism (without 'R' notwithstanding). Comrade Max—try again. We're still listening to Khrushchev and Sobolev."

At this point, Poor Max has the following to say:

There is simply no contradiction between my assertion that Sobolev was not excluding any countries from the possibility of peaceful transition, and the paragraph quoted by Scripps-Howard.

What Sobolev was doing in the paragraph just quoted was to indicate the condition that could occur—in any country—which would bar a peaceful transition. This condition would be the resistance by force on the part of the minority to the will of the majority.

By ALAN MAX

Poor Max wishes to ask some questions of Editor Roy Howard:

1. Do you believe that a minority has a right to use force to thwart the majority will?

2. Do you condemn Abraham Lincoln for using force to break the attempt of the Confederacy to disrupt the Union by force and violence?

3. Do you believe that a peaceful transition to socialism is possible in the United States if and when a majority so desire?

As for myself, I believe it is possible. I believe that the monopolists will want to resist by force and violence. But I also believe that the people, after a series of successful struggles against the power of the monopolists, may well be strong enough to avert the violence.

This is my understanding of Marxism in the second half of the 20th Century in the United States.

Roy Howard, I await with interest your answers to my three questions.