UNCLE SAM'S BERTRAM WOLFE

MR. WOLFE WANDERS FURTHER BUT FARES WORSE

(Continued from No. 6, 1959)

Continuing his "authoritative" analysis of Marxism, Mr. Wolfe wanders on but fares no better.

Under the caption, "Marx's Betrayers — Man and History," he says,

"In a sober moment," Marx wrote,

> "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed."

Mr. Wolfe suddenly ends his quotation and affects an examination to "prove" that Marx's statement "is no more explicit than any other of Marx's sweeping generalisations. Nor any truer, as the Russian and Chinese revolutions were to demonstrate."

He immediately confuses social revolutions with mere industrial changes and political changes with changes in industrial development.

He conveniently ignores the fact that Marx specifically designated social orders according to the modes of production and the social and political structure corresponding to the economic basis of the society in question. Thus we get primitive communism, chattel slavery, feudalism and modern bourgeoise or capitalist systems of society.

Each of these systems or orders had a basic mode of production peculiar to itself. In each, changes were constantly taking place. But as Marx showed,

> "At a certain stage of development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production.
>
> "And, so, from forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into fetters. **Then comes the period of social revolution."** (our emphasis).

NO CONFLICT WITH MARXISM

As far as Russia and China were concerned there was no conflict with the economic theories of Marx.

The material conditions for the solution of the problems either existed or were in an advanced stage of development. Production of commodities under conditions unfettered by feudalistic relationships had become historically necessary and the Bolsheviks, in Russia, and the so-called Communists, in China, became the unconscious tools of history.

The disappropriation of the peasants was instituted by the so-called Communists in both these countries — in the name of communism, but in the cause of state capitalism — notwithstanding the pseudo-Marxist nomenclature adopted by the new ruling class in both countries.

In fact, the economic conditions and the resultant social relationships existing in Russia and China bear out the Materialist Conception of History promulgated by Marx and Engels.

To state, as Mr. Wolfe does, "that the industrial proletariat has lost numerical weight in the total population but gained greatly in status and in organised economic and political power," is to state an untruth.

A mere glance at Russian conditions shows that there has been great expansion in the number of industrial workers in Russia. On the other hand — and again, in contradiction to Mr. Wolfe — the organised economic and political power in Russia is in the hands of the ruling class. The proletariat, like the proletariat of all other capitalist countries, are totally bereft of either power.

THE STATE IS REFRACTORY

Mr. Wolfe would have us believe that the State, bucking Marx, has proved refractory.

Instead of it being "the executive committee" of the dwindling bourgeoisie, he says, "Its democratisation has made it ever more subject to labor vote, farm vote, and the vote of the intermediary classes."

Political parties, supported by "labor," "farmer" and "intermediary classes" (whatever these latter might be), are elected on policies based on the perpetuation of capitalism. Rather than proving refractory, the State has conformed admirably to the requirements of the capitalist class and functioned in the manner Marx always said it would.

In no way does it negate Marx's theories.

He can not point to any country, including Labor Australia, "Communist" Russia and "Communist" China, where the mode of production is basically different from that in other capitalist countries. And even Australia, with its years of so-called "Labor" rule, would not dare, like Russia, to claim its millionaires to be members of the working class.

With all the so-called "limitations," the State in these countries performs the functions of an executive, indeed a highly armed executive of the ruling class.

Further those who "sit" on these executive committees often proclaim that they can do a better job than can the avowed capitalist functionaries.

"THE MOST UNKINDEST CUT"

"The most unkindest cut of all' says Mr. Wolfe, "is that the worker himself has not consented to being increasingly proletarianised." He adds, "The workers themselves have never been attracted to the 'mission' Marx set for them." Marx used the term "proletariat" to describe the working class — that class which, in order to live, depends on the sale of its labor power to the owners of the means of production, the capitalist class.

Capital cannot exist without wage-labor; capitalism connotes a propertied class and a propertyless class. WHETHER THE WORKERS CONSENT OR NOT, THE SYSTEM INTO WHICH THEY ARE BORN CONDEMNS THEM TO THE RANKS OF THE PROLETARIAT.

However much Mr. Wolfe feels resentful of this, the fact remains that the majority of the people in the world today (including those in Russia, China and other Communist satellites) are the wage-slaves of the property-owning class. In other words, they are the proletariat. There is no question of choice, it is a matter of compulsion, economic servitude.

Misguided and deceived by the selected or self-appointed "leaders" they exercise the suffrage which Mr. Wolfe speaks of. But they vote for politicians whose policy is diametrically opposed to the interest of the working class. They give Labor Parties a mandate to administer capitalism; they support pseudo-Communist parties which perpetuate their slavery.

This is no new order; it is the very "utopia" against which Marx and socialists who agree with him warned the workers. Marx probably did more than any other thinker to dispel the utopian ideas prevalent among workers; yet the purblind Mr. Wolfe makes of Marx a utopian!

MARXISM — A SCIENCE AND A FAITH

Mr. Wolfe blithely blunders on, condemning Marxism "because on the one hand it claims to be a science . . . of history, sociology, economics and politics." On the other hand, "It is not a science, but a method.—Yet its staying powers lie in the fact that it is also an "ism." He later converts it into a "faith" charged with a multitude of imaginary qualities.

Proving nothing, he gallops on, laying low his own muddled creations by splenetic outbursts of invective — a veritable capitalist Don Quixote. Even that is not enough; his imagination carries him to the skies and he ends up with an apotheosis — he makes of Marx a God. Hitherto the most rabid anti-Marxists have claimed Karl to be the devil incarnate; it was left to Mr. Wolfe to create this new politico-theology.

After grimly struggling through tortuous paths of twisted thinking trying to show that Marxism is no science, he suddenly about-faces and concedes that "if there is anything 'scientific' about Marxism it is its critical and empirical observation of society."

Such somersaults make us giddy. But how do they affect Uncle Sam