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## POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

### On Samuel Francis and the League of the South

Dr. Samuel Francis seems to think that those of us who hope to reform the American empire by devolution are suffering from an "infantile disorder" and pursuing a goal neither possible or desirable (*Principalities & Powers*, February). Then he turns around and admits that nothing else has worked. His only hope seems to be a fantasy of "white Middle American solidarity" that is even more chimerical than the possibility of real political devolution. Dr. Francis seems to think that we need only change the "power elite." He imagines the Rockefeller meeting late at night in secret conclave to force the "Middle American majority" to accept Madonna, airbags, Bob Dole, Nigerian taxi drivers, and all the rest of the flotsam of empire.

Let me suggest a simpler explanation. We have just the kind of government and culture New York and California want and deserve. Dr. Francis would have Southerners hang on in the hope of saving others from the fate to which they have readily consigned us.

—Clyde Wilson  
*Columbia, SC*

Reading "An Infantile Disorder" in your February issue didn't affect me as it did my League of the South friends who had warned me about Samuel Francis's attack on our movement. When I told them so, they wondered why I didn't feel betrayed by a fellow Southern conservative. I replied that there was no betrayal because Francis is no Southern conservative—he's his own unique creation.

I'm convinced that Francis's excursions into the darkness of Marxist-Leninist thought have overwhelmed his politics. The temptation is obvious: surveying a directionless American majority cowed by a well-oiled liberal-left establishment, Francis sought an intellectual undergirding that could support and focus the majority's disparate voices, and he eventually cobbled his "Middle American Radical" ideology from Marxist-Leninist scrap parts. Like Ayn Rand, who mirrored Marxist philosophy in her Objectivist manifesto of capitalism, hedonistic materialism, and atheism, Fran-

cis fabricated a conservative-sounding philosophy on a superstructure borrowed from the enemy.

Confusion, however, is inevitable when you try to hang conservative wallpaper in a Marxist den. For example, Francis argues that the South isn't distinctive enough to be its own nation. Then, without blinking, he asserts that there are too many cultural divisions within the South to maintain unity, pointing to the different cultures in eastern Virginia and eastern Tennessee, and in northern and southern Louisiana. The cultural differences between various areas of the South, he declares, are "at least" as great as the differences between England and Scotland. I would conclude that if Chattanooga and Norfolk are as different as London and Edinburgh, then the greater differences between Boston and all Southern cities certainly justify a Southern version of the Scottish National Party.

But a "Middle American Radical" peering at life through a Marxist-inspired, class-based ideology focused on "middle-income, white" Americans cannot comprehend Southern nationalism. Francis exhorts his readers to resist "the domination of the ruling class" by building a "Middle American solidarity." He then ridicules Southerners who refer to white Northerners as, of all things, "Yankees," and admonishes them instead to link arms with their Northern brothers to "stand firm" against the "overclass-underclass alliance." Regional differences are illusions, since "White Southerners are a vital part of the Middle American core, as are their Northern counterparts."

This echoes Lenin's ranting against the workers who passionately prepared for war against their "fellow workers" at the outbreak of World War I. When confronted with the German Socialists' support of their country's military budget, Lenin raged that "it must be a forgery!" Trotsky agreed, asserting "Workers have no Fatherland!" Now Francis tells us that middle-income Southerners have no Dixie.

Even the title of Francis's attack on the League of the South has a creepy Leninist ring to it. Anticipating Bukharin's and other "left" communists' opposition to limited free-market re-

forms, Lenin published "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" in 1920. Now, there's nothing wrong with lifting an occasional phrase from the leftists, or gleaning a lesson or two from their experience. But Francis's dependence on Marxism is too disturbing to ignore. He disparages the Christian Coalition's message as a "false consciousness," a Marxist term for an ideology that distracts workers from legitimate ideology. He identifies the Middle Class (he always capitalizes the term) as "the new proletariat." He urges Middle Americans to realize that "as another fighter once said, you have nothing to lose but your chains of slavery." He outlines a Middle American strategy in an article entitled "State and Revolution," recycling a title used by Lenin in 1917.

I fear he sees himself as a Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin of the middle class, or rather, Middle Class. Dr. Francis, after having immersed himself in Marxist dogma for so long, seems to have gone native on us. Like Kurtz, he has become what he thought he was fighting.

—Michael C. Tuggle  
Charlotte, NC

## Dr. Francis Replies:

After engaging in a debate with me on "secessionism vs. nationalism" at last year's John Randolph Club meeting in Chicago and after reading my critique of secessionism in *Chronicles*, Clyde Wilson still doesn't get it. It is not what I "would have," but rather what is politically possible that determines whether secessionism is practical. Much of my argument in Chicago and the article was directed explicitly at the possibility of a successful secessionism, its desirability within the framework of what is possible today, and the likely damage a secessionist movement might cause to other, more serious movements of the right. Moreover, Dr. Wilson's claim that he and his secessionist colleagues merely advocate "reform of the American empire by devolution" is transparently dishonest. What they advocate is not simply "devolution" or decentralization within the national unity of the United States, but outright secession, the "political independence of the South by all honorable means," the dissolution of American national unity. I advocate authentic federalism, restoration of the 10th Amendment, as a means of decentraliz-

ing federal power and retaining national unity.

As for Mr. Tuggle's rather breathless and entirely fatuous detection that I am really a crypto-communist, more needs to be said. First, he is in error that I "always capitalize" the term "middle class." In fact I never capitalize it, though I do capitalize "Middle American" when referring to a distinct social and political identity. In any case, the word "American" is a proper noun and is always capitalized, except perhaps in the orthographical fantasies of the League of the South.

Second, it is true that I use terms and a certain amount of jargon drawn from Marxism, mainly as metaphors and partly in irony, though I suppose it is asking too much to expect those of Mr. Tuggle's bent to catch the latter. In discussing what I take to be an embryonic revolutionary movement, I consider that metaphors drawn from the main revolutionary movement of the last hundred years are appropriate.

If I have become like Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, Mr. Tuggle is like the schoolboy who disliked Milton's poetry because he found it to be so full of quotations. The fact is that Marx's most enduring influence on social and political thought is his identification of many of the main themes and problems of modern social theory—class, class power, class revolution, alienation, ideology, and proletarianization, among others. My concern with these issues reflects less the influence of Marx and Lenin than of later social and political thinkers who dealt with the same issues but gave answers radical-

ly different from those offered by Marx. Any serious attention to my writing should make this plain, but it sailed past Mr. Tuggle, who has confused my attention to issues raised by Marx with agreement with the answers Marx offered.

If Mr. Tuggle can draw himself away from ferreting out my communism long enough, he might notice that my thought reflects the anti-Marxist classical elite theory advanced by Burnham, Pareto, and Mosca (who ultimately rely on Machiavelli) far more than it does that of Marx or Lenin, my knowledge of whom I am the first to admit is superficial. He might also note my use of several other scholars and thinkers who are distinctly non- or anti-Marxist: Robert Nisbet, Lewis Namier, Fitzjames Stephen, Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, Ronald Syme, M.E. Bradford, Forrest McDonald, David Hackett Fischer, Donald Warren, James Lincoln Collier, Raoul Berger, John Lukacs, and Andrew Hacker, to name a few. My characterization of Middle Americans, or rather middle americans, as a "proletariat" is explicitly drawn from Hacker. As for my use of the phrase "false consciousness," would Mr. Tuggle prefer I use his own word "ideology," which was also extensively used by Marx in much the same sense as "false consciousness"?

If Mr. Tuggle can get past the Marxist metaphors I often deliberately use in my headings and come at last to the substance of my beliefs, even he should be able to perceive that I am really not a Marxist and that disagreeing with his infantile secessionism does not make me one.

## — CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS —

**ALBANIAN** separatists have been attacking policemen in the Serbian province of Kosovo for years, though only recently has the conflict escalated to the point where Slobodan Milosevic felt compelled to respond with a show of force. Not surprisingly, Milosevic's action was met by the familiar media barrage against the cruelty of "the Serbs" and bellicose statements by Madeleine Albright, who threatened Serbia with new sanctions.

The current American strategy is to force Milosevic into elevating Kosovo to the status of a constituent federal republic in the rump Yugoslav federation,

which has been reduced to Serbia and Montenegro. The province would thus be detached from Serbia, of which it is the oldest and most treasured part: Serbian medieval kings left magnificent monasteries and castles as evidence that this was indeed the cradle not only of the Serbian state but of its neo-Byzantine culture.

This "federal strategy" is the untold reason for the State Department's insistence that the problem of Kosovo be resolved "within Yugoslavia," with no mention of Serbia. The rationale is the spurious claim that, although always a part of Serbia, Kosovo was also represent-