

FRANKLIN'S SOCIALISM THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Turning Point has had various disagreements of a non-basic character with Comrade Francis Franklin. However, in the current issue of Towards Socialism, Franklin has introduced a basic revision of Marxism-Leninism.

In the article, "Some Legal Advice and Thoughts on Legal Rights", Marxist revolutionary theory is treated with caution and super-legality and reduced to a theoretical vulgarization which is as revisionist as Dennis' current burlesque at Foley Square.

In our last issue, "Communists on Trial Before the World", we observed Dennis' "peaceful establishment of Socialism" and exposed it as revisionism by extended quoting from Marxist classics. That quoted material equally exposes Franklin. Towards Socialism declares:

"According to the Federal Constitution, the American people have the Constitutional right to change totally the entire present Governmental machinery, to substitute for it a Soviet type of Government, if they desire, whenever the majority should desire to exercise their Constitutional right to amend the Constitution... It is entirely legal to propose that the American people substitute for the present Government, through which Wall St. monopolists rule the country (i.e. a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie), a really democratic republic through which working people will rule (i.e. a dictatorship of the proletariat). The Federal Constitution makes this entirely legal--even though the present trial proves that capitalists do not intend to abide by their own law. Such a government, whose advocacy and formation are not contrary to law, is what Communists advocate. It is not a crime." (All emphasis in the original.)

Yes, it is entirely legal for Dennis or Franklin to argue such Kautskyite peaceful social evolutions. But it is not Marxist. It is a traditional perversion of Marxism which offers the revolutionary movement the crutches of "legal" protection and helps it limp away from the embarrassing original theories of Marxism. Franklin admits that the bourgeoisie does not allow such orderly social changes and reacts with ungentlemanly violence. But with this very admission, his constitutional soul outraged by the bourgeoisie's lack of attention to the rules of class struggle in polite society, Franklin submits: What Communists advocate is "not contrary to law... It is not a crime." Of course it's a crime, and Franklin will never convince the bourgeoisie that it is not a crime to overthrow the capitalist system by revolutionary violence. Franklin's advocacy of a-so-to-speak-socialist amended capitalism is a crime -- a crime against Marxism-Leninism and against the proletariat. (Early in his article, Franklin warned of FBI agents, "Do not try to educate them." We might add: Franklin, don't try to educate the bourgeoisie to your uncriminal and legal destruction of their system.)

Angela Calomiris, FBI stool who rose to leadership in the West side Section of the CPUSA, testified in court that Franklin taught the Marxist revolutionary doctrine at Jefferson School. With his theory of Socialism as amended capitalism, Franklin has clearly repudiated her charge -- and Marx's doctrine. To further clear and clarify himself, Franklin has taken precautions in another way:

"Comrades should also not allow the version of Marxism presented by government stoolpigeons and also by pseudo-'leftists' to hide the well known Leninist principle that other than the pathway of democracy there is no pathway to socialism. (Read Lenin's Two Tactics and 'Left Wing' 'Communism: An Infantile Disorder, and Dimitroff's Report to the 7th World Congress.)"

A very shrewd collection of evasions. We are not concerned here with the drive of FBI stools. But certain prosecution tactics must be faced squarely. For instance, in order to embarrass the "12" (and, inadvertently, Franklin), Prosecutor McGohey stated correctly the following basic Marxist concept undoubtedly prepared by his research staff: "Socialism cannot be established by peaceful evolution, but on the contrary can be established only by violent revolution, by smashing the machinery of the government, and by setting up in its stead a dictatorship of the proletariat."

"This smashing of the machinery of government and the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be accomplished only by the violent and forceful seizure of power by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party."

Is this accurate or not? That is the question. We say it is, and that its accuracy should be shoved back down the throats of the McGohey's. Franklin has evaded this "version of Marxism" presented by the government. This "version of Marxism" does not "hide" any "well known Leninist principle": on the contrary, it is rarely stated so accurately in these days of CPUSA-bred philistinism to which Franklin succumbs. Marxism stated correctly by McGohey is still correct; Kautskyism paraphrased by Franklin is still Kautskyism.

Who are the unnamed "pseudo-'leftists'" who have hidden Franklin's "well known Leninist principles"? Undoubtedly, our insistence (T.P.'s April issue on the "12") on the Marxist-Leninist idea of the proletarian revolution as against evolutionary social change has provoked Franklin. He would have his readers believe that Turning Point and any others who quote Marx and Lenin in context to expose the opportunism of the CPUSA leaders aid the government stool pigeons. This is "guilt by association" with a revisionist vengeance.

Franklin, in the above quote, misrepresents Lenin's utilization of reforms and bourgeois democratic struggles in the march towards a socialist revolution. Franklin utilizes his fragmentary paraphrase of Lenin in the retreat towards evolutionary Socialism. To top it off, he refers the reader to what obviously are not the main sources for clarification against revisionism on the question of the proletarian revolution. We have repeatedly used the lessons of Two Tactics and Left Wing Communism and Dimitroff's Report to expose the revisionism of the CPUSA leadership; but the only use Franklin finds for these books, in his retreat from revolutionary violence, is to detour the reader from the "pseudo-leftist" sources of TP--Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky, State and Revolution, Maailsky's Report to the 7th World Congress, Foundations of Leninism, etc.

Franklin certainly wasn't making himself very clear when, having lumped together government stool-pigeons and us "pseudo-'leftists'", he then dismissed this unique combination with the charge of hiding "the well known Leninist principle that other than the pathway of democracy there is no pathway to Socialism." Is this the clearest Leninism Franklin could draw from "Two Tactics", "Left-Wing Communism", and Dimitroff's Report?

"Two Tactics" states: "We must not forget that there is not, nor can there be, at the present time, any other means of bringing Socialism nearer, than complete political liberty, than a democratic republic." Did this give Franklin inspiration for his Socialism via Constitutional amendment? "Two Tactics" can hardly be accused of underwriting legalistic illusions when it says:

"It is of greater advantage to the bourgeoisie if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place more slowly, more gradually, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reforms and not by means of revolution... On the other hand, it is more advantageous for the working class if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place by way of revolution and not by way of reform; for the way of reform is the way of delay, of procrastination, of the painfully slow decomposition of the putrid parts of the national organism." The context of Franklin's paraphrase is a negation of this. The "Short History of the CPSU(B)" states: "Lenin considered that the most effective means of overthrowing tsarism and achieving a democratic republic was a victorious armed uprising of the people. Referring to the slogans presented by Lenin in Two Tactics, the "Short History" says:

"First, the tactics of realizing in a revolutionary way the 8-hour day in the towns, and the democratic changes in the countryside, that is, a way which disregards the authorities, disregards the law, which ignores both the authorities and the law, breaks the existing laws and establishes a new order by unauthorized action, as an accomplished fact." (p.71)

What would Franklin say to this "pseudo-'leftist'" behavior? One can do better than erect Constitutional amendments on the lessons of Two Tactics. The Short History states: "While advocating the victory of the bourgeois revolution and the achievement of a democratic republic, Lenin had not the least intention of coming to a halt in the democratic stage and confining the scope of the revolutionary movement to the accomplishment of bourgeois-democratic tasks. On the contrary, Lenin maintained that following upon the accomplishment of the democratic tasks, the proletariat and the other exploited masses would have to begin a struggle, this time for the Socialist revolution." (p.73-74)

Certainly this means a little more than Franklin's fragment thrown into the midst of the CPUSA's Foley Square Memorial Service for Kautsky. To the question,

does Marxism-Leninism advocate revolutionary violence, Franklin answers: "Other than the pathway of democracy there is no pathway to Socialism." To the question, can Socialism come about as a result of the development of bourgeois democracy as Franklin implies, Stalin answers no. (See p. 9 of this issue.) Franklin's contribution is both evasive and confusing.

The secret to Franklin's confusion is given by Lenin in his article "Marxism and Revisionism".

"Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy--which tends to an even more acute decision of a dispute by mass violence than formerly--will never be able through parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation that are consistent in principle and really prepare the working-class masses to take a victorious part in such disputes."

The argument might be given that Franklin offered nothing more than an article on legal aspects. The only legal advice Franklin offered was silence. For the rest, he suggested meeting the "situation according to circumstances"! Actually, Franklin was not offering legal advice; he was using his legal theme only as a vehicle in distilling the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution into a Constitutional amendment.

A high point of class debauchery is the Franklinite justification for refusing to squeal on one's comrades. Notice that this advice though sedate in its legal form, is quite ridiculous in its class content:

"In reference to any request to inform on the membership of other people in the CP, it is important to observe that the C.P. is a legal political party and that Americans by law, have secrecy of the ballot."

According to Franklin's own justification, a Communist who belonged to an illegal Party would have to inform on his comrades (and he would be within his "legal" rights in so doing!) And while we fear that Franklin is now attaining the stature of a reviser of Marxism, we certainly don't think that he would counsel any type of squealing. Why, then, the spineless constitutional acrobatics? No, Franklin, a Communist refuses to squeal simply because he is a loyal member of one class in an irreconcilable struggle with another class, because he hates the bourgeoisie consciously and instinctively. If one has an angelic, Christian-mystical attitude towards his class enemies and needs constitutional reasons for not squealing, he should consciously try to indoctrinate himself with a little revolutionary hatred.

To the request, "Will you rat?" the answer is very simple--NO! Perhaps even this NO is excessive verbiage and is better replaced by jet-propelled saliva. The saliva in this case may not be constitutional but it has "class content".

Obsession with legality influences even those who choose the rough field of anti-opportunism, to switch to the well kept lawns of Socialism-via-Constitutional-amendment (part of the estate of amended Marxism). "Constitutional" Communists might do well to adopt a little more audacity in the class struggle and a little more caution in the drive to revise Marxism-Leninism.

The most important Leninist "legal advice" to Communists is not to succumb to legalisms. Communists should use the legal to further their revolutionary aims--not to emasculate them.