

# The Salvation Army of capitalism

Those old enough to remember the halcyon days of the Dalhousie New Democratic Youth could have derived some satisfaction from last Thursday's debate on "Social Democracy: A Means or an Obstacle to Social Liberation", sponsored by the emerging Dalhousie New Democratic Party Association. The old organization became so intrigued by the "bullet or ballot" question that it was dissolved by the party

leadership since it was doing nothing to aid their image with the voters.

Marty Dolin who, as assistant to NDP provincial leader, Jeremy Akerman, was arguing in favour of social democracy, got off to a bad start by equating social liberation with social change. He then outlined how the electoral process could be used to achieve the kind of changes he wanted: principally a mixed economy of public enterprise competing with private firms under the control of some sort of government planning. Dolin said he believed in the ballot box method since he did not want to see the public economy become universal and wanted to allow people to express their reservations about government planning.

Hagos Yesus, Dolin's opponent, replied that any idea of a mixed economy was mixed up. He also pointed out Dolin's false start by explaining that the subject of debate was social liberation -- not something to be equated with social change. Social liberation, in Yesus's view, required that we achieve socialism, a form of society in which people are free from the domination of a class motivated by the desire for profit. Further, Yesus maintained that this kind of transformation cannot be achieved by electioneering since class rule cannot be ended through the ballot box; because an election victory still does not give one control over the economy. He said that since there are no elections in the factories and offices to choose the owners, the power to change the everyday work situation -- the most important aspect of peoples activity during their lives -- is not obtained

in elections. Democracy, explained Yesus, is a myth in a society where a class of owners has absolute control over the productive apparatus of the economy. By upholding the liberal mythology, that denies the role of class in society the social democratic parties were functioning as the salvation army of capitalism, he stated.

The opening remarks of the two speakers were followed by a lengthy question period during which Yesus was the most successful in defending his position by turning aside misconceptions of the result of one party rule. He admitted that a "dictatorship of the proletariat" was a necessary condition for the creation of socialism but not sufficient in itself. This lead Dolin to cite his experience in having visited "socialist" countries: he referred to the creation of an oligarchical dictatorship in Mexico following their revolution in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Yesus reiterated that socialist dictatorship was not sufficient for social liberation since it had to be protected from exactly the sort of sabotage Dolin had described. The lesson of history, for Yesus, was not that the method of rule of the working class over the former exploiting classes was unworkable but rather that it must be prevented from becoming an oligarchy.

The counterpart to the dictatorship of the proletariat was Dolin's

assertion that people have the right to be wrong, which meant that they had the right to make choices which required that any social change had to occur through and preserve the democratic process. Clarifying his position, Dolin asserted that people had the right to choose fascism; he endorsed democratic forms as an end in themselves without concern for their role in social liberation. He supported the ideal of a socialist programme being elected in a democratic election and instituting social liberation through that process. He asserted that at all costs democracy should never be lost in the struggle for social liberation. In response to questioning Dolin admitted that in some countries and in specific situations it had become necessary and justifiable to have armed struggle for liberation but he said he would not support such behaviour today in Canada. He said that preparing now to defend a socialist government from attack by capitalists seeking to defend their privileges was preparing for a confrontation in never, never land.

In parting, Dolin remarked that he felt it was strange to talk about armed struggle of workers in a four million dollar monument to bourgeois values (the SUB) indicating that he probably finds it easier to carry out his sort of education work among audiences who don't expect logical discourse.

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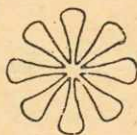
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## Geneva Congress on crime

by Valerie Mansour

At a recent gathering of Amnesty International, Glen Hancock of Imperial Oil's Public Affairs department, led a discussion regarding the September '75 Congress on Crime which was originally to be held in Toronto. The Congress, which included one thousand representatives from one hundred and thirty nations, was moved to Geneva last summer when it became apparent that the Canadian public would not accept the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the country. However, the PLO caused no fuss at the meetings and listened quietly throughout the twelve day session.

Crime was considered under such topics as the change of reform, role of the police, treatment of the offender, criminal justice, and the economic and social consequences. The delegates also dealt with torture.

Hancock mentioned some of the comments made by the various countries concerning crime. Russia, East Germany, and Cuba claimed that it is not a big problem in their country, whereas Jamaica stated that they give it top priority. Great Britain came to the conclusion that there is so much crime today because there is much more opportunity.

Drugs were discussed at great length at the conference and it became aware that different attitudes exist throughout the world. Whereas Canada considers drugs to be a serious problem, Turkey bragged that they have the best source in the world. For them,

making it a cash crop would be most profitable. Columbia could provide them with competition as they claimed to have the world's best marijuana. India admitted that their people are drug users but said that opium worth three hundred and fifty dollars in their country could sell for two and one half million on a street in New York.

An Egyptian lecturer at the conference spoke on what he termed as the 'disintegration of society'. He finds that barred windows and locked doors are becoming symbols of our time. The loss of family leadership, new ethics replacing old, and the tolerance of sex and drugs all have contributed to this problem.

When speaking about torture, Mr. Hancock discovered that it is a matter of interpretation. Some countries whose techniques would appall Canadians do not consider what they do as being wrong.

The Geneva Congress brought a lot of opinions out into the open, but it was found that only the smaller sessions created any real value. In the main sessions, accusations were too general. The 'cocktail party circuit' provided the most knowledgeable discussions.

Amnesty International whose main concern is torture, played a small role in the meetings since that topic was not the main priority of the congress.

Glen Hancock stated that Canada provided poor media coverage for the sessions, and that more was heard about it before it took place rather than afterwards.

**ATTENTION: Elections for the Executive of the Political Science Society will be held at a general meeting on Thursday March 18th at 11:30 A.M., Room 217 A&A. It is important that all interested political science students attend.**