

incidents has revealed the hand of an organised group of leftist terrorists.

What is noticeable, then, in the history of terrorist activity in Australia has been the existence of organised right-wing terrorism, though even this has been of relatively minor significance. It certainly did not provoke official or media campaigns for military involvement, massive security measures or expanded political police forces.

Fraser took advantage of the Hilton bombing for precedent-setting military histrionics which even security commentators attacked. He announced a new emphasis on security which will soon be seen to be at the expense of rights. Finally, a general attempt was made to exploit the deaths to take the heat off political police under attack after the South Australian investigations of the Special Branch. Calls were made for a strengthening of their organisations.

Despite all this in sections of the press and especially in letters to the editor and street interviews (notably at Bowral) evidence existed that many people were keeping things in proportion. Overseas experience has shown that the most powerful weapon in the hands of those trying to use the existence of terrorism as an excuse to weaken democratic rights has been the creation by the media, police, and politicians of an atmosphere of hysteria. Then the real impact of terrorism can no longer be sensibly gauged. But more than this will be required if people are to stand up to the pressure to acquiesce in a gradual growth of repression. For example, justifying political police activity by invoking the fear of subversion was not really questioned in the 1978 South Australian inquiry into that state's Special Branch.

Subversive activities, according to Liberal-National governments, have not been those of Ustasha and other extreme right-wing groups but those of all leftist, unionist and reform groups and even those of the ALP. This was spelled out by sacked South Australian Police Commissioner Salisbury, who said at a press conference that, before the Second World War, an ASIO equivalent organisation would have concentrated on the right wing, but that, since the war, the left has definitely become the chief object of concern for intelligence services. We have already pointed out that since the war it is the right that has dominated the few incidents of terrorism that have occurred. The current balance of forces within the Liberal

Party has resulted in police attention to Croatian rightists. This has not changed the function of political police, which is to limit political debate not to prevent violence. Subversion for today's political police is not merely questioning the status quo — it is questioning the Liberal-National status quo which makes the connection of the ALP with the setting up of the political police all the more reprehensible. It seems that Dunstan's will remain an isolated act in Australian social-democracy. Despite Attorney-General Murphry's raid on ASIO headquarters during the Whitlam government's term of office, the ALP's main concern regarding the political police was not to question their function but merely to make them more efficient. What really upset some people about the South Australian revelations was that judges and other upright citizens were being watched. "What a waste of time", they say, "when the police should be concentrating on those weird folk who think that capitalism should be reformed or done away with." If these people cannot be awakened to a concern for basic rights, they should at least be reminded that one thing leads to another and that it might be their rights endangered tomorrow. Subversion is in the eye of the beholder and the beholder is the ruling class.

Furthermore, the recent past has shown that democracies will use the opportunity created by political violence to disrupt or repress the left as a whole. They will even incite or conspire in terrorism to justify their own actions. An ex-member of a German terrorist group, now living incognito, has written a book critically appraising the guerrilla experience [*How It All Began — Baumann*]. In it he tells how their first bombs and weapons were supplied by a police agent. "Unwittingly, we were a very specific element of the bulls' (police) strategy." (p. 37) Stupidly he does not follow the obvious implications of this. "It isn't clear to me even today what role one plays in that game." (p.85)

The famous American Sacco and Vanzetti case of the 1920's is an archetypal case of the preparedness of the police to frame dissenters on charges of political violence. They were charged with robbery and murder. It is now generally accepted that these charges were trumped up. It is officially admitted that the anarchists did not get a fair trial. Despite massive international campaigns over a period of years for their release they were