

Sitting Ducks in Congress: Afraid of Rockefeller, Afraid of Stopping Him

Sept. 18 (IPS) — Congressional response to Rockefeller's latest political offensive — his drive to the White House and the simultaneous Watergating of Ford around the issue of Nixon's pardon — parallels precisely the reactions of prisoners in Hitler's concentration camps. While Rockefeller and his Congressional agents are busily dismembering parliamentary government, the rest of the country's law-makers either are dissolving into helpless apathy or scrambling to save their own necks doing Rocky's bidding.

Congressmen and their aides approached by Labor Party organizers have exhibited variations of the victim psychology. Some insist they hate Rockefeller, but refuse to face the fact that he is not just an unpalatable plutocrat but an outright fascist. Others throw up their hands in despair: "How do you expect us to stop him all by ourselves?" And the worst, like Rockefeller's Congresslady Bella Abzug, are begging Rockefeller: "Please, let me be the first to get Jerry Ford for you!"

So — as the CIA press creates the new Watergating of the new President, dragging in secondary figures and manufacturing a phony "controlled-leak" expose of the CIA — the Congress is being marched doubletime to its own demise, as it reduces itself to a rubber-stamp for Rockefeller's fascist policies.

Obviously enjoying the spectacle of poor confused Jerry Ford fumbling through the stage-managed Sept. 16 press conference, Nelson Rockefeller is accelerating his timetable while simultaneously extending Ford's agony. Former FBI agent Representative Don Edmunds, now chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee charged with setting the procedures for the Rockefeller confirmation hearings, predicted after meeting with Rockefeller himself that the hearings would not be completed before the mid-October recess. This will give Ford plenty of time to put his foot in his mouth again and again — as he has already done on the CIA-in-Chile question. Ford is the perfect foil, easily used completely to destroy what little credibility remains to bourgeois democracy. And the various victims in Congress are jumping to be of service. Late word from Washington indicates that no fewer than *seven* separate resolutions will be before the Senate Judiciary Committee to chew up Ford for pardoning Nixon.

Bella Primps Herself

Labor Party organizers cornered the leader of one of the slimiest Rockefeller cliques, Bella Abzug, in the halls of Congress and asked her about her resolution to force Ford to declare whether his presidency was obtained in exchange for the pardon. She replied that the first try had not garnered enough support, but that she was "going to fix it up." When the Labor Party spokesmen asked her if Rocky had given her the order to "fix it up," Abzug became hysterical. "Rocky? Who's Rocky? You must be the Labor Party! What are you doing here? Who said you could be here?" When told that the U.S. Labor Party poster exposing Bella as a Rockefeller prostitute, was circulating among Congressmen and Congressional men's rooms, Abzug screamed, "That's obscene. You people should be arrested!" (The poster later was posted on the wall of the Congressional cafeteria, where Congressmen examined it intently — and did not tear it down!) Abzug ran for the nearest elevator, stopping only to insist that she was "the only member of the New York delegation who will vote against Rocky." Then she begged the elevator man to get her out of there fast, and shrieked as the doors closed, "You're CIA! You're fascists!"

But Bella and her colleagues are discovering that their bootlicking is being monitored by an angry working class whose hatred of Rockefeller is coalescing into a fighting political movement. The lies of panicking Congressmen contradict each other: for example, an hysterical aide to New York Representative Herman Badillo, like his soul-mate Bella, is planning to take a "*solitary*" stand against Rockefeller. Who's lying?

Conservative Mush

Meanwhile the weak-kneed conservative members, nominally Rockefeller's main opposition, are turning into mush. An aide to Illinois conservative Philip Crane, devastated and infuriated when confronted with the *sameness* of liberals and conservatives, could only moan, "I know, I know Oh, I know. It's terrible." Then the swan song of the "fighting" conservatives: "Crane can't lead a fight. There's no one to lead."

Others wouldn't even admit there was anything to fight about. When shown the *New Solidarity* poster

about Rockefeller's food program — cannibalism — an aide to Congressman George Danielson (D-Calif.) broke into giggles, then feebly explained, "sometimes I laugh at things I don't understand." Congressman John Ashbrook of Ohio's aide responded to the poster *by blub-bering*. "*But that's not Rockefeller's food program.*"

Faced with the moral bankruptcy of the Congressional swamp, yet unwilling to fight, some are jumping ship or simply waiting for fate or the Labor Party to overtake them. After a Labor Party briefing at the Republican National Committee meeting Sept. 12, an aide to George Bush said, "Yes, I know; you're right. Rockefeller is out to destroy the Congress. I just quit two hours ago."

Pennsylvania's Representative William Barrett, Labor Party Bernie Salera's opponent, is wilting under the heat of the Labor Party's Stop Rockefeller drive. His aide yapped angrily when approached by Labor Party organizers, but quickly crumbled and whined, "If you want to vote him out, go ahead and vote him out."

These moral cretins are paralyzed with fear of Rockefeller on the one hand and of the Labor Party's organizing of the anti-Rockefeller anger of their constituents on the other. Philip Crane's aide pointed out that there was no point in Crane's collaborating with the likes of Ashbrook, Steven Symms of Idaho and David Brown of Mississippi. "Crane's not going to waste his time," said the aide, "talking to someone who might not be back after November." !