

Labor combined with SOCIALIST FIGHT  
**MILITANT**

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

Volume 4, Number 4, June 1984

**Stop  
uranium  
mining  
now!**

Fighting the Right  
Victorian Branch

Hawke/Keating  
economic strategy  
Restructuring capitalism

Independent unions  
in South Africa  
Black workers organise

**PER**



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# Labor MILITANT

At the beginning of this year Labor Militant amalgamated with Socialist Fight.

Both these journals have been circulating in the Party for about three years. And they have both had the same basic aim: to promote the discussion of socialist ideas and to contribute towards the construction of a broad, socialist current.

While the amalgamation of our journals may be viewed as a modest step towards the creation of such a current, we believe it is a significant one for the following reasons:

1) Our combined publication will be the only one in the Party with a national scope and distribution. It will draw together information and ideas from a wide range of sources.

2) By combining our resources we can improve the quality of our articles, the range of issues covered, and the distribution of the finished product.

3) This amalgamation demonstrates that we are serious about building a strong Left current.

An important aspect of the new Labor Militant is the opening up of a number of pages for debates. In these pages we hope to reflect discussion that is taking place in the Party around key issues. We invite contributions from those in the Left who have different viewpoints to those expressed by supporters of Labor Militant and Socialist Fight.

We also encourage contributions in the form of letters and reviews to make our journal more lively and stimulating.

We also want Labor Militant to be a useful guide for activists in the ALP. For that reason we will continue to carry contributions by organisations and committees that are campaigning around particular issues, and we will focus on what we think can be done within the Party.

The new Labor Militant will continue to campaign against the Prices and Incomes Accord. This has already resulted in cuts to wages and living standards and it will not give workers a share of the limited economic recovery now evident. We believe capitalism remains in a deep economic and social crisis and that socialist measures are necessary to confront a crisis of this depth. This crisis is not caused by wage rises and wage cuts will not help resolve the crisis in the interests of the working class.

We also devote a lot of attention to the threat of war and

## Leave it in the ground, or have it delivered?

We are definitely in favour of leaving uranium in the ground, but we think you should have Labor Militant delivered.

If you want to find out what is going on in the Party around the country, if you want to know what the debates are, and what the politicians are saying on our behalf, you could do a lot worse than subscribe to

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the wars that are already going on. From Central America to the Middle East, the United States and its allies are determined to block progressive movements in order to protect their economic interests. This drive to war by Ronald Reagan increases the danger of nuclear war and Australia's participation as part of the U.S. war machine must cease. The Australian Government is in a position to make a significant contribution towards world disarmament by removing the U.S. military bases and by withdrawing from the aggressive ANZUS military pact.

We also insist that progressive policies must be advanced by Labor on the liberation struggle in El Salvador, on the defence of Nicaragua against U.S. aggression, on Solidarity's fight for socialist democracy in Poland, against the Israeli aggression in the Middle East and in favour of the rights of the Palestinian people, against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, in support of the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines and on the need to make reparations to Vietnam.

Labor is in Government in four States and federally. Yet never before has there been a bigger gap between stated Labor policy and Government performance, let alone the gap between performance and working class interests. This gap is reflected in the important debate and discussion within the Party Branches and at Party Conferences. We seek to develop a broad coverage of this process.

We believe that the most free and open debate within the Party and affiliated unions on Party policy and practice is necessary to develop positions and actions that can represent working people from whom Labor draws its strength.

But the current structures of the Party and new undemocratic rules and practices prevent this. So we support moves to democratise these structures — in particular, to make the Parliamentarians and Party officers truly accountable to the ranks of the unions and Branches.

If you agree with these aims we encourage you to help finance and distribute Labor Militant. You can get each issue sent by mail at a cost of \$6 for 10 issues. We can also make arrangements to have a bundle of any size mailed or delivered for your branch or for you to sell. There are high costs involved in the production of a publication like Labor Militant so any financial contribution will help to ensure its continued regular appearance.

For subscriptions or any further information please fill in the clip-off below or write to any of the addresses on the following page.

LM for the modest fee of \$6 for 10 issues.

LM is the only internal Party journal with a national scope and distribution and it is a good way to keep informed. And if you subscribe you can help us achieve the aim of leaving it in the ground — uranium, that is.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion

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**Fabian Society**

Dear Editor(s),  
In the April edition of Labor Militant (Vol 4, No 2), an article revolving around the Young Fabians Seminar, "Unions and the A.L.P." accused that seminar of being a "forum for Hawke supporters". The article criticised the organisers of the seminar for holding such a forum during a period of heated discussion on the possible re-entry of the FCU, ASC&J, FIA and SDA to the ALP, and accused the Australian Fabian Society of being a "front group for Hawke's faction." I write now, in order to get the record straight and to remove any doubts your readers may be formed after reading Paul White's article.

Paul White writes that "Fabians are supposed to be in favour of democratic socialism", and indeed they are. The Australian Fabian Society (AFS) is one of the oldest existing democratic socialist organisations in the history of this State. In 1885, with the help of well-known socialist Harry Champion, the "Melbourne Fabians" were holding meetings and contributing to the political thinking of the time. In 1908, a name change saw the "Fabian Society" again with Harry Champion (this time together with Vida Goldstein, a prominent feminist of the time) at the forefront of socialist discussion. Over the years, the AFS has grown from strength to strength working towards the goals first identified by its mother organisation the British Fabian Society 100 years ago in 1884 and now adopted in the AFS Constitution:

"(a) To establish, by means of political democracy, a society in which equality of opportunity will be assured and the economic power and privileges of individuals and classes abolished

through the collective ownership and democratic control of the economic resources of the community.

"(b) To further socialism and the education of the public in socialist principles by the holding of lectures, discussion groups, conferences and summer schools, the promotion of research into political, economic and social problems, the publication of books, pamphlets and periodicals and by any other appropriate means."

The Australian Fabian Society is no one's "front group". As a democratic socialist organisation, the AFS remains one of the few existing forums for political discussion — whoever you support.

The Young Fabians similarly developed from a need to broaden political discussion among younger members of the community. The aims of the Young Fabians are simply an extension of its parent group. The Young Fabians is one level of the AFS's work. It aims to add to the development of an educative system that will aid in the explanation of politics, political philosophy and political processes while also developing skills in politics and related fields and accelerating the march toward democratic socialism. With this in mind, we make no excuses for the "educational talk" nature of our seminar "Unions and the A.L.P."

Paul White asks why the Young Fabian seminar included a speaker who, on the issue of the re-affiliation of the four large unions to the ALP, remained non-committal. The answer is that the seminar, while touching on the re-affiliation issue, was not aimed at the question of re-affiliation. Its intent was to throw greater light on the relationship between the Trade Union Movement and the ALP: an often relationship, but a relationship wherein lies the future success (or

failure) of the labour movement in Australia.

The Seminar was not timed or aimed at supporting or rejecting the application of any individual union or unions to the Labor Party. Originally planned and advertised for November 27th, 1983, the seminar had to be cancelled due to the holding of the special conference in Victoria on uranium.

In short, the accusations that appeared in Paul White's article are ill-founded. The AFS has, through various name changes, added to democratic socialist thought and discussion in Australia for over 79 years; and will continue to do so for many years to come. Its aims are clear and certainly separate the Society from the tenor of comments surrounding Paul White's article.

It is, I think, appropriate to conclude here on a note of unity with a quote from G.D.H. Cole, one of the founding members of the British Fabian Society:

"I am neither a Communist nor a Social Democrat, because I regard both as creeds of centralisation and bureaucracy, whereas I feel sure that a Socialist society that is to be true to its egalitarian principles of human brotherhood must rest on the wisest possible diffusion of power and responsibility, so as to enlist the active participation of as many as possible of its citizens in the tasks of democratic self-government."

Yours fraternally,  
Nicholas Gold,  
Secretary, Young Fabians,  
Executive Member,  
Australian Fabian Society.

NB  
Petersham

**Social Rights Conference**

I read with interest the coverage in Labor Militant of the social rights conference in Melbourne. I heard about the conference before it was on but could

not make the trip to Melbourne. It sounds as though I missed something important.

I believe the issues raised at the conference deserve a lot of attention in the Labor Party. It seems to me that we need a much more thorough discussion of what the Government's strategy is and what it should be. We often just take issues as they come and ignore the general approach.

JS  
Sydney

**Repression in Sri Lanka**

In late March Sri Lankan air force personnel were responsible for the murder of nine Tamil citizens in the northern city of Jaffna. In the weeks that followed about 40 Tamils were killed in a rampage by the armed forces similar to the pogroms carried out in July last year.

These latest attacks confirm the fact that the Sri Lankan Government is prepared to use genocide to prevent the Tamil people struggling for self-determination.

The Australian Government should condemn the attacks and demand that the Sri Lankan Government repeal the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Regulations which enable authorities to bury or cremate bodies without witnesses. These provisions are used in the war on the Tamils.

**Uranium debate  
Left's compromise helps Right**

A national Left position paper on uranium policy is being circulated in preparation for the debate at the July National Conference.

It proposes to close some of the loopholes incorporated in the policy at the 1982 Conference, but it falls a long way short of the clear anti-uranium policy initially adopted in 1977.

**Paul White**  
Secretary Flemington (Vic) ALP Branch. Sub-branch secretary ACOA.

Obviously the Left parliamentarians hope that this compromise can prevent the adoption of the pro-uranium policy prepared by Minister for Resources and Energy Senator Walsh. But, in backing down on a policy, for which they have massive rank-and-file support, the Left is only succeeding in putting wind in the sails of the pro-uranium lobby.

The Left's draft concedes the right of existing mines to continue in order to fill existing contracts. But, if some of those contracts may take 12 years or more to fill. And who knows what will happen in the meantime.

On May 24 the ACTU leaders also announced that they were prepared to "soften" their anti-uranium stance in order to recognise existing mines.

This means both the Left parliamentarians and ACTU leaders have openly demonstrated their willingness to compromise even before the debate takes place on the floor of Conference. They have given ground without a fight. And that makes it far more difficult to organise any strong anti-uranium lobby.

The ALP Right, which is unashamedly pro-uranium, must be feeling very confident.

The scenario is similar to what happened in the lead-up to the 1982 Conference when Bob Hogg — at the time a leader of the Socialist Left faction in Victoria — did Hawke's dirty work in drafting pro-uranium amendments to the policy.

When he put his amendments to the Conference, he claimed, among other things, that he thought his stand was necessary to prevent a "worse" policy getting up.

The rest of the Victorian SL delegation to Conference stayed solid, but Hogg's defection was the excuse the Victorian Centre Unity delegates needed in order to elude their clear mandate from the Victorian Branch.

Realising that an attempt to water

down the old policy was on, a Victorian Conference adopted a motion binding all Victorian delegates to the old policy. Hogg's treachery allowed them to cop out.

Hogg has subsequently completed his political journey by taking up a position on Hawke's staff. This time around, Hawke may not need a Hogg to do his dirty work. For he has already succeeded in bluffing the Left parliamentarians into compromising their stand.

It is worth going back to the 1977 policy to see how much ground has been lost. This policy had the merit of being unambiguous. Its most important section read:

"Accordingly, a Labor government will —

a) declare a moratorium on uranium mining and treatment in Australia;

b) repudiate any commitment of a non-Labor government of the mining, processing or exporting of Australia's uranium; and

c) not permit the mining, processing or export of uranium pursuant to agreements entered into contrary to ALP policy."

It noted two particular problems that have to be taken into account in the uranium debate:

● "The proven contribution of the nuclear power industry to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the increased risk of nuclear war"; and

● "the absence of procedures for the storage and disposal of radioactive wastes to ensure that any danger posed by such wastes to human life and the environment is eliminated."

Therefore, "no commitment of Australia's uranium deposits to the world's nuclear fuel cycle" was to be made until these problems had been solved.

Now, even Blind Freddy can see that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the danger of nuclear war have not declined. The nuclear non-proliferation treaty has clearly failed to contain the arms race and yet the new Left draft policy suggests that it provides some sort of safeguard that can allow the continuation of uranium exports.

The draft notes that "unresolved economic, social, biological, genetic, environmental, and technical problems" continue to be associated with uranium mining and the development of nuclear power in general. But it does not draw from this the conclusion that it is imperative to stop uranium mining immediately.

Some of the phrases incorporated in the draft are simply rhetorical. For example: "Labor believes that there should have been no commitment of Australia's uranium resources to the world nuclear fuel cycle." But the Left

Continued on page 6



Bob Hogg moving his inamous amendments to uranium policy at the 1982 Conference. Is the Left 'doing a Hogg' with its compromised position?

## nuclear power

# Party ranks demand anti-uranium stand

Tony Mulcahy

Member of Balclutha (WA) ALP Branch and State President Federated Rubbers and Allied Workers Union

At its April meeting, the WA Left faction, Socialist Caucus, refused to back calls for a special State Conference to clarify the State Branch's position on uranium.

Such a conference has been made necessary by the fact that there have

been widely different interpretations of the policy adopted at a State Conference on April 1.

State Premier Brian Burke, leaders of the national Centre-Left faction and the media have insisted that it specifically allows for the continuation of the giant Roxby Downs mine in South Australia. However, the clear intention of the majority of those who voted for the policy was to insist on the phasing out of all mines.

The WA Branch has maintained a strong anti-uranium policy for many

years. A motion from the Administrative Committee to the April 1 Conference would have weakened this position, but those who supported a successful amendment argued that such a change was not necessary.

The pro-uranium interpretation of the loosely-worded amendment has angered many Party members and supporters. The Fremantle Electorate Council and the Maritime Workers Union have passed motions calling for a reconvening of the Conference.

Labor Militant supporters initiated a petition to back these moves. And, although it was only in circulation for a short time, it attracted many signatures — including those of seven politicians, members of the Administrative Committee and over 40 delegates to Conference. The fact that petitions were sent in from all parts of the State indicates how widespread is the anger at the cynical moves to misrepresent the Branch's position.

In view of this support, it was reasonable to assume that the SC would back the campaign. But no. Jim McKiernan — convener of SC and an Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union official — adopted a hostile attitude towards the petition. He was the only member of the union's delegation at the April 1 Conference who refused to sign it. He poured scorn on the idea of calling a special Conference and called the petition "childish and immature."

McKiernan used his influence with SC members to have the faction endorse a resolution submitted to the State Executive by the Administrative Committee. This read:

"State Executive, which has the right to interpret policy between conferences, declares its interpretation of state branch policy on uranium to be opposed to mining and export of uranium and calls for a phasing out of all existing mines without any escalation of activity at any existing mine."

The fact that the Administrative Committee has moved towards this strong stand indicates the pressure put on it by the Party ranks. But this course of action still leaves a contradictory motion on the books and does not give members the opportunity to demonstrate their support for a clear stand.

The Socialist Caucus's failure to follow through the anti-uranium campaign capped off a disappointing performance by that faction at the April 1 Conference.

It had not prepared a clear resolution on uranium, and was poorly prepared for many other policy debates. It took few initiatives. It will have to smarten up its act if it wants to be taken seriously.

stand on this because they want to preserve various other deals with the Right. They have been totally sucked into Hawke's phoney "consensus" which simply means that they give in all along the line.

As a result, the Left draft has been prepared without consultation with the ranks of the various Left factions and anti-uranium committees.

In the past two years the national leaders of the ALP Left have failed dismally in not mounting a concerted campaign to restore the 1977 anti-uranium policy. Even now there is no serious attempt to organise meetings and petition campaigns to put pressure on National Conference delegates on this vital issue.

Just two months before the Conference, a weak anti-uranium policy is dumped on the table and we are expected to cop it.

It's time some of the Left parliamentarians put their heads outside what is going on in the ranks of the Party. They just might discover that their rotten compromises do not win them any supporters.

The unequalled stand maintained by the Victorian Branch indicates what is possible.

The national Left draft should not be taken as the last word. There is still time for some serious lobbying of the National Conference delegates who might be prepared to make a stronger stand. This stand should incorporate the following key points:

1) immediate repudiation of all existing uranium contracts immediately.

2) rejection of any moral, legal or political obligation to compensate the mining companies.

3) adequate compensation for workers employed in the uranium industry who are disadvantaged by the implementation of this policy.

Continued from page 5

draft would ensure that Australia would continue to contribute to that fuel cycle. It is hypocrisy to pretend otherwise.

Why has the Left decided to back down on uranium?

It can hardly say that it is because of public opinion. The massive antiwar marches that took place on April 15 took up the slogan of No uranium mining. And this demonstrates how deep feelings run on this question. Who can deny that a strong stand against uranium mining could attract massive support?

It is not because nuclear power has suddenly become safer. The draft policy doesn't try to suggest that.

In fact, the nuclear power industry is in serious decline. This should make it easier to argue for a policy that would end Australia's participation in this industry and find alternative work for all those currently employed by it.

The decline of the nuclear power industry also suggests that the only real future for Australian uranium might be in the development of nuclear weaponry.

In the United States, for example, no plants have been lodged since 1978. Since 1980, over 20 nuclear power stations have been abandoned in varying stages of construction, and some 14 other power plants deferred indefinitely.

The same trend is apparent throughout Western Europe. Only the nuclear arms industry is growing. Since even civilian nuclear fuel generation produces fissionable material capable of being used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the labour movement in this country must insist on uranium being kept in the ground for good.

It is obvious the Left parliamentarians do not want to make a strong

n.s.w.

NO  
STANDING

adelaide

## Labor Against Uranium formed

Anti-uranium activists in the Labor Party in Adelaide have formed a new Labor Against Uranium committee. The following was sent out as a press release:

"On the 7th of May 1984, concerned members of the Australian Labor Party formed a Labor Against Uranium committee. It is calling for a return to the ALP's anti-uranium policy prior to its amendment at the 1982 federal conference. That policy called on a Labor Government to:

- (1) declare a moratorium on uranium mining and treatment in Australia
- (2) repudiate any commitment of a non-labor government to the mining, processing or export of Australia's uranium;
- (3) not permit the mining, processing, or export of uranium pursuant to agreements entered into contrary to ALP policy.

The committee is also supporting a call for an enquiry into the effect of atomic testing at Maralinga. Labor Against Uranium is planning to hold activities aimed at reaching all members of the Labor Party and the general public. A lunch-time rally will be held at the state conference on June 9. A public meeting will be held on July 4 at Trades Hall. Speakers from federal and state parliament will be among those present.

For further information contact Heather Orr on 272 6881."

Senator Jean Melzer from Victoria has accepted an invitation to address the July 4 meeting and it will be chaired by South Australian parliamentarian Peter Duncan. The Nuclear Veterans' Association and the Kokatha Aboriginal people (from the Roxby Downs area) have been invited to provide speakers.

# Right limits homosexual law reform

strong.

The influence of the Catholic Church in the right wing of the NSW ALP is well known. No doubt Wran's threat to propose abolition of the conscience vote at ALP State Conference would have accented these forces.

A proposal to abolish the conscience vote on homosexual and abortion law would have opened up vehement debate in the ALP State Conference. And, if successful, would have undermined the power of the Right.

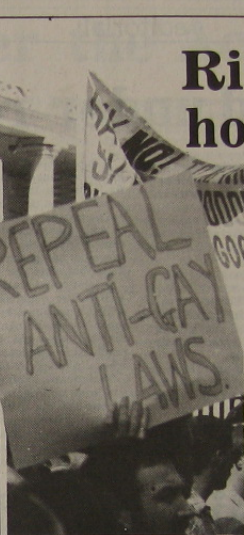
But Sydney's Roman Catholic Archbishop Clancy came to the rescue of Wran's Catholic ministers, by not opposing the bill outright. He suggested "the Catholic Church does not insist that all morality be enforced by positive law. The role of positive law in Catholic jurisprudence, is to promote the common good. . . ."

He then raised a number of questions for the members of Parliament to consider in judging the bill, without answering these questions himself. For example, "Will the proposed legislation be designed to help homosexuals assume a proper place in society without declaring their way of life to be an acceptable lifestyle. . . ."

Wran made extensive concessions to the Right. The final bill contained the following weaknesses: an age of consent for gay men of 18, compared to 16 for heterosexuals; "reasonable belief" that the other person was of consenting age is not grounds for defence in cases of homosexual acts with minors, although it is for heterosexual acts; two years goal for "soliciting, procuring, enticing and advising" a male person under the age of 18 years to have homosexual intercourse.

Labor members George Petersen and Peter Crawford moved amendments to try to prevent such anomalies and restrictions becoming law, but they did not succeed.

While the reforms are welcome they are certainly inadequate, and within the ALP there is still an urgent need to fight the conscience vote on both abortion and homosexual law reform. ALP members should continue to support



## Accord under review

There is growing evidence to support the view that both government and ACTU leaders are in favour of drafting a new, and worse, version of the Prices and Incomes Accord. Treasurer Paul Keating has circulated a draft economic policy for consideration at the July ALP National Conference which makes it clear he wants to tighten up the terms of the Accord and remove some of its contradictions (see article on pages 12 and 13).

And the ACTU executive held a week-long meeting in March to review the Accord and came up with a 68-page "special report." This openly revised ACTU policy on a number of the key sections of the Accord. In particular, it weakened its stand in regard to taxation and pensions and opened the door for a "restructuring" of Australian industry and for the deregulation of the finance sector.

The ACTU document gives ground to the Hawke/Keating economic strategy and there can be no doubt that a second Accord would make even less commitments to the union movement.

Sensitising this, various employer organisations are openly calling for a "more flexible" wage fixing system that would allow for an even more rapid reduction in labour costs (ie real wages).

## Campaign needed to defeat Right

The Victorian State ALP Conference on June 9 to 11 will consider the report of a special 10-member committee set up to examine the affiliation applications of four right-wing unions.

The unions — the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), Federated Clerks Union (FCU), Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and members of the National Civic Council or its splinter groups, Organisation.

Over 60 submissions have been made to the committee and about 140 Branches have sent in motions opposing the affiliations. Some Branches have suggested that if the committee is unable (for lack of evidence) to resolve its doubts about the links any of the unions may have with the favour of the far Right, then it should decide "in pliation."

If not for the fear of Federal intervention into the Branch, there would be little doubt that the Conference would reject all four affiliations. The leaders of the unions and their political associates will never be forgiven for splitting the Victorian Branch in the 1950s and for carrying out vicious attacks on the labour movement ever since.

However, most Party members in Victoria believe that Federal intervention is inevitable if all four applications are rejected. Those who hold the balance of power on the

It is possible the second Accord could be sprung on the union movement on the eve of Federal elections in December. As in March 1983, the approach of the elections would be used to insist that the unions back the Labor Government.

The prospect of a second Accord is worrying but it would be a big mistake to draw the conclusion that the first Accord must be defended. The first Accord has already led to a fall in wages and general living standards and will continue to have that effect for the rest of the year.

A joint press statement released by the Government and ACTU after negotiations on May 16 made it clear that the ACTU is prepared to accept a minimal wage rise at the October National Wage Case (when the CPI will be discounted) and will abandon its call for a 9.1 per cent catch-up for the loss in real wages resulting from the wage freeze initiated by the Fraser Government.

This means, in effect, that the ACTU is prepared to accept two large reductions in real wages in return for a tax cut of around \$10. The tax cut is part of ALP policy and should not be used to secure a wage cut.

The implementation of the first Accord is preparing the way for a worse version. Rejection of the first would automatically destroy the second.

National Executive have made it clear they expect Conference to vote for some kind of compromise. In view of this a compromise deal, probably involving the acceptance of two of the four unions, is likely.

The National Executive's attempt to blackmail the Victorian Branch is outrageous. It further underlines the fact that the right-wing push is being orchestrated by Hawke's supporters on a national basis.

But there is nothing to be gained by giving in to this threat. manoeuvres; in fact it would only encourage them. The Victorian affiliation moves should be seen in the context of influence in both wings of right-wing forces to increase their in-line the movement up behind Hawke's pro-capitalist fervently.

Leaders of the Socialist Left have already put themselves in a weak position by relying heavily on the committee and ranks have made their feelings clear and the campaign to defeat the Right is becoming clear and would support a supporters that an attack on the Branch would be ill-advised.

The defence of Party democracy is essential if Party members are to have any influence at all on the policies and practices of Labor governments.

## union struggles

# Life under the Accord

When the ACTU and the ALP signed the Accord in February 1983 a new era opened up for the labour movement. Never before, even during the restrictions imposed throughout World War II, had the union movement committed itself to such a range of wage and conditions restrictions, nor pledged itself to the polling role necessary to ensure that these restrictions were actually carried out.

### Pat Brewer

Member of Forest Lodge (NSW) ALP Branch and AMFSU

The success of this commitment is now evident in figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Award pay rates are increasing closely in line with national wage decisions. That means that sectional claims have been held down and the only movement is that of the centralised wage indexation. There is no talk of a catch-up of the 9.1 per cent lost due to the wage pause except some wild rhetoric by a few left unionists.

The ABS figures released on May 22 show that the wage rate index for March showed no increase. Between September last year, when centralised wage fixing was introduced with a 4.3 per cent rise, and March this year, the index has increased by 4.4 per cent. This demonstrates that even the very limited award movements allowed outside indexation by the National Wage Case guidelines have not been effectively pursued.

These claims fall within the category of anomaly claims allowed mainly for catch-up to the metal industry pay standard since the end of the previous indexation system in mid-1981. The main area where these catch-up claims have been made is in the wholesale and retail trades where award rates have increased by 4.9 per cent.

But there are many areas where claims within these guidelines are outstanding. For example rural workers have been knocked back time and time again on an "inability to pay" claim by the employers; first on the basis of the drought, then generally on the depressed state of the industry when the drought broke. The cockies went so far as to apply for indexation increases not to flow on to the rural sector. And there are other examples of sectors whose claims have never been pressed.

One major sector with an outstanding anomaly is the Commonwealth Public Service, where the ACOA and the Australian PSA are seeking an 8.3 per cent rise to restore relativities. To date this claim, though lodged in December

1983, has been successfully stalled.

The purpose of the rigidity of the ALP wages policy has been made quite explicit. Prime Minister Hawke stated in Parliament on May 2 that there would be "virtually no wage movement" due to the discounting of the Medicare levy at the October National Wage Case.

He stated that: "Very importantly . . . it will mean that real unit labor costs . . . will go back to what they were in the late 1960s and 1970s after having been way out of line in the period intervening."

Not only does the profit led recovery policy benefit from the driving back of real unit wages costs, but the two year no strike clauses attached to the National Wage Case agreements are really beginning to pay off.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports a drop of 12 per cent in the number of days lost due to industrial action in the 12 months to February, 1,562,600 days were lost to February 1984, compared to 1,772,100 days to February 1983, compared to 4,377,300 days lost to February 1982 before the one year no strike agreement was brought in under the December 1981 Metal Trades Agreement.

While these statistics herald greater profits for the employers, they also spell out the way the unions have been prepared to police their own members and other unions who dared rebel against the restrictions. The Food Preservers Union came in for massive abuse, not only from the Government, but also from other unions.

The spectacle of Bill Kelly, Charlie Fitzgibbon and Laurie Carmichael combined in their vitriolic attack on FPU organiser Gall Colton at the ACTU Congress last year is but one example. Now the pressure is being put on the Federated Furnishing Trades to give back the \$11.90 allowance they won after a three week strike to bring them in line with other workers in the industry.

Even more alarming are the examples where workers in struggle have been deliberately isolated by their unions and forced back to work with little or no gain. The political effects of loss of confidence in their unions will be one of the long term consequences.

The rationale for wage restraint on the part of the unions has been to save jobs and reduce unemployment. But after one year of operation there has been virtually no change in the rate of unemployment. In fact Ralph Willis estimates that 9.5 per cent will be the official rate for some time to come.

While profitability has improved over this year, investment has not resulted. On May 3 the ABS issued corrected



figures for the December quarter. Private investment fell by 4 per cent and capital goods investment fell by 8.1 per cent.

This is reflected in the changes in employment levels during the same period. Increases have occurred in such areas as Government (25,000), finance and property (57,000), community services (47,000) and recreation and personal services (10,900).

But in the basic productive sectors of the economy there has been a loss of jobs. In agriculture 11,300 jobs were lost; in manufacturing 15,700; in construction 8,400 and in the already depressed mining sector a further 900. And further job losses are already in the pipeline in the vehicle industry, the coal industry, the shipbuilding industry and the steel industry.

The labour movement has already copped a minimum 9.1 per cent wage cut during the wages pause. A further 12 months effective freeze is now looming due to the Medicare discounting. To offset this a tax cut has been promised but tax indexation which used to be the demand of the unions is not even mentioned any more.

Less jobs, less wages, worse conditions all spell a pretty grim life under the Accord — for the working class.

## Queensland Senate ticket row

Federal intervention in the Queensland Branch has prevented a special State Council meeting on May 26 determining the Senate ticket — the matter for which it was convened.

**Helen Russell**  
Member Banyo/Northgate East (Qld)  
ALP Branch

A resolution adopted by a vote of 15 to 12 at the State Administrative Committee meeting on May 8 called on the National Executive to endorse current Senators Gerry Jones and Margaret Reynolds as the number 1 and 2 candidates respectively. Jones is part of the Old Guard faction while Reynolds, from Townsville, is not aligned.

The motion also urged that State Council be allowed to fill the other two positions by proportional representation in accordance with Rule 27.01.

An amendment to that motion, calling on the National Executive to endorse John Black and Bryant Burns, in

the number 3 and 4 positions respectively was lost. Black, from the Australian Workers Union, is supported by the Right and Burns, from the AMFSU, is associated with Socialist Left.

The National Executive ignored the resolution of the Administrative Committee and selected the full Senate team, along the lines of the defeated amendment.

A heated debate occurred at State Council over the National Executive decision. State Administrative Committee and National Executive member Ian McLean, strongly rejected it, saying it was factionally motivated, and raised serious implications for the future. He suggested the National Executive had set itself up as a selection panel for Queensland.

He also said that State secretary Peter Beattie had not presented the Branch's position fairly at the National Executive and had encouraged the taking of the decision out of the Branch's hands because of his own factional allegiance.

## Practice for future parliamentarians

Any new members of the Young Labor Association who attended the NSW quarterly conference in Sydney on May 20 must have been disappointed. It was hardly inspiring.

**Nelum Buddhadasa**  
Member Livingstone (NSW) ALP  
Branch and Sydney YLA

Tight factional control ensured that there was little room for real discussion. The motions were carefully selected by the Agenda Committee and speakers had been lined up. The Left faction controlled the floor.

Although there were plenty of women present few took part in discussion.

The first motion dealt with was on the Prices and Incomes Accord. It simply called on the Federal Government to fully implement the Accord by freezing prices and Government charges. But, in contrast to previous YLA conferences, there was no discussion about the chance to put forward the view that the Accord should be rejected. There was very little discussion about how to promote struggles against the wage freeze and unemployment.

Another motion condemned Treasurer Keating for his support for deregulation of the financial sector.

The motion also criticised Keating for floating the Australian dollar, a move seen as putting its value beyond the control of "democratically elected" bodies and into the hands of multinational banking corporations. Conference was angry at the group for trampling on Party policies. But there was little discussion about this group's pro-capitalist strategy.

In the first part of the Conference a motion was passed condemning the violence. It called on the NSW Government to investigate the activities of this group. It also condemned the racist views of the leaders of the Liberal Party.

But in the afternoon the Left supported a motion calling on the Australian Government to begin negotiations with the Japanese Government and steel and power producers to carry coal and iron ore to Japan.

In discussion on this a number of people made sneering and racist remarks about the "Japs." And no one made the point that it is exactly this sort of attitude to blame "foreigners" for the Australian Government to solve the problems of this country that is the basis of the anti-Asian campaign

promoted by the Liberals. We shouldn't be supporting our capitalist class against the Japanese capitalist class. We should be talking about how to promote solidarity between Australian and Japanese workers.

In the foreign policy area, a motion condemning the leaked Cabinet "security" document was passed. There was also fruitful debate about the war drive and a motion calling on the Australian Government to condemn the sifting of the Pershing II missiles in Europe was adopted.

A right-wing amendment, seeking to place equal blame on the US and USSR for the arms race, was defeated.

Unfortunately, a number of very important foreign policy motions were not put on the agenda. There were a lot of good motions on Central America sent in but none of them were debated. Motions on the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines and on aid to Vietnam were also left out.

Some time was spent considering the right-wing push in the unions and Labor Party. This resulted in the adoption of a strong motion criticising Hawke's association with a right-wing pamphlet issued during the recent elections for a national organiser's position in the AMFSU. The motion called on Hawke to publicly dissociate himself from any union election material.



Peter Beattie

## Trivial factionalism blurs debate

"We must stop the factional infighting and get on with the job of defeating the Liberals. We have an obligation to get the best candidates for State and Federal elections, not our best friends or people from our factions but the best candidates," said Bob McMullan, ALP National Secretary in his opening address to the Tasmanian State Council meeting held on the May 18 and 19.

**Lou-Anne Barker**  
Member Emu Bay (1as) ALP Branch

But the conference was rife with factionalism and much of it trivial. For example, a great deal of time was taken up discussing whether 63-year-old Senator John Hearn should be eligible as a candidate at the next elections. The Left supported the renomination of Hearn and claimed that the right-wing faction Labor Unity wanted to replace him with one of their own.

But this debate completely failed to address the problem of what policies and strategy Labor would need for an improved performance in Tasmania. Such a discussion is certainly called for in view of the massive swing against Labor in the last State elections.

None of the major factions managed to define their political basis and there appeared little difference between the Democratic Socialists and Centre Left.

The Left faction failed to cut through the trivia and the Right faction, Labor Unity, showed that it is making ground in organisational terms.

Very little effort was made by Left delegates to take up the economic and foreign policy strategies of the Hawke Government. There was no discussion of the Accord even though Tasmania is witnessing a rise of workers' struggles that threaten the Accord's framework.

What attitude should the ALP adopt to such workers' struggles? No one attempted to answer that vital question.

There was one point on which all factions united. That was the endorsement of a "severe reprimand" for former State secretary, Kath Venn, delivered by a tribunal investigating her support for the election campaign of Senator Brian Harradine — a right-wing renegade associated with the National Civic Council. The tribunal found her guilty of disloyalty but refused to recommend her expulsion because she had been a Party member for 30 years.

As a result of the Venn case, Council adopted a rule which will mean

automatic expulsion for anyone who "supports by any form of electioneering publicity, any candidate or candidate standing against an endorsed candidate or candidates of the Party."

But such a rule does not discriminate in any way between those who support progressive candidates and those who support reactionaries like Harradine. For example, what might have happened to an ALP member handing out leaflets for Bob Brown of the Wilderness Society? Could they expect the same leniency shown to Kath Venn? Some of those who oppose ALP candidates are outright enemies of the labour movement. Others represent views supported by the majority of the movement. Harradine is certainly in the former category.

There were, however, some progressive decisions taken by Council.

There was unanimous support for a motion reaffirming present ALP policy on uranium — opposing the opening of any new mines and calling for the phasing out of existing ones.

Council also condemned the arrest of miners picketing the Burnie wharves during the Que River dispute. They called on the Federal Government to remove the secondary boycott legislation by repealing sections 45D and 45E of the Trade Practices Act.

Mike Grey, State Organiser of the FEDFA, pointed out that under these anti-union laws introduced by Fraser, individual union members could face fines up to \$50,000 and unions up to \$250,000. He attacked Hawke for not repealing these laws as he had promised in the election campaign.

A motion, from the AMFSU, calling for the establishment of a National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety was adopted.

The report of the Economic and Development Policy Committee criticised Fraser's attempts to water down existing commitments. But no attempt was made to analyse the inadequacies of existing policy.

Similarly, the report from the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Disarmament Committee did not go far enough.

For example, instead of calling for the removal of the U.S. bases from Australia, it supported their retention on five conditions. These included a "dual key" system for North-West Cape; two days' warning for the Australian Government for any external use of the bases; the provision of the same information on the function of the bases to the Australian public as is



Kath Venn, open supporter of Labor renegade Brian Harradine. Let off with reprimand

available to the U.S. public; and free access to the bases for parliamentarians.

None of these measures can prevent the U.S. making secret use of its sophisticated monitoring and transmitting equipment. The bases are an integral part of the U.S. military network and the only way to change that is to close them down.

A motion on the ANZUS was similarly inadequate in that it simply called for a "renegotiation" of the treaty. This treaty has nothing to do with Australia's defence. It is an aggressive military pact and should be broken.

A good motion condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada and another condemned Australian military aid to the Philippines. But there was no mention of the current dangerous situation in Central America.

The Education, Science, Media and the Arts Policy Committee called for the establishment of a Tasmanian Branch ALP newspaper to help counter the lies spread in the capitalist-owned press.

The fact that over 100 copies of Labor Militant were sold to the 200 delegates showed that many of them would prefer to see more political discussion. Dissatisfaction with trivial factionalism was also picked up by Hobart Mercury correspondent who wrote:

"There were rumblings of discontent among some left-wing delegates at the Council, with talk of establishing a Tasmanian version of the Victorian far left-wing faction, the Socialist Left." Moves to establish a more political left current in the Tasmanian Branch are urgently needed.

# The Hawke/Keating economic strategy

This is the fourth in a series of articles leading up to the National Conference. Each article in the series examines a major area to be debated at Conference.

It is obvious that leaders of the Hawke Government intend to launch a major assault on ALP economic policy at the forthcoming conference.

Treasurer Paul Keating has had the draft of an alternative program circulating for some months. This seeks to bring the Party platform into line with the government's practice by purging it of most of its references to Government intervention in the economy.

## Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) ALP Branch

Keating's draft removes the previous commitment to expand public enterprise. It opens the door for the reduction of tariff protection of inefficient industries. And it clears the way for the implementation of the Martin Report on deregulating banking and other financial institutions.

It seeks to give the government more flexibility in its budgeting strategy by reducing the commitment to reduce indirect taxes with a vague commitment to review the whole taxation system.

It eliminates the promise to "adopt selective stimulatory budgetary and monetary policies" and in place of the term "control inflation" it inserts "reduce inflation." Keating's approach is to control budget deficits by cutting some of Labor's welfare programs.

Keating has also made it clear he wants a new draft of the Prices and Incomes Accord in order to eliminate some of its contradictions and ambiguities. That is, he wants to remove those clauses that stand in the way of the Accord's principal objective of stimulating a profit recovery through real wage cuts.

Keating's policy should not come as a surprise to anyone. He and Hawke have been primarily responsible for devising the Government's strategy aimed at creating the best possible climate from Australia's leading corporations and banks.

The first phase of their strategy involved securing the Accord so that the bosses could gain maximum benefit from the worldwide recovery that reached Australia in mid-1983.

The second phase involves a "restructuring" of Australian industry and financial institutions so that the leading enterprises will become more competitive internationally.

Hawke outlined this strategy to an international audience on his trip to Asia in February. He made it clear that he thought that Australian companies should specialise in the production of goods and services for which there would be a market in the region.

He advocated a non-aggression pact between Australian producers and their more powerful rivals in Japan. And he suggested his Government would aim to help the leading corporations introduce labour-saving technology.

In these circumstances, he speculated, Australia's tariff barriers could be phased out and two-way trade with Japan and other countries increased.

He advised Australian workers to take all of this philosophically by "being concerned not for today's jobs but for tomorrow's children."

There is nothing new in this approach. It has been clear that Australia's economy is very vulnerable ever since the current deep economic downturn began in 1973/74. But the Fraser Government stopped short of the drastic measures needed for such a "restructuring" because it feared a powerful political backlash.

The Labor leaders seem to believe they are in a better position to push through such measures. For the past two years they have carried out an intensive campaign aimed at convincing workers that they must endure considerable sacrifice in order to help the capitalist system back onto the rails. And they have gone out of their way to develop close working relations with the most influential bosses.

As a result, the Hawke Government has already had more success than its predecessor in promoting a capitalist success to the present crisis. It has reduced real wages more rapidly. Keating's first budget increased subsidies to large corporations and provided a stimulus for the construction industry. His decision to float the dollar was praised as a bold initiative.

Hawke and Keating have welcomed the proposals of the Martin report on deregulating the banking industry. The aim of these proposals is to give the leading banks a competitive advantage by allowing them to offer more attractive terms to potential clients.

Australia's three leading banks are among the most profitable in the world and Keating obviously believes they can thrive on competition with domestic rivals and the foreign banks that will be given licenses.

The plan to deregulate the banking industry is similar to the plan to restructure the manufacturing industry. Both make them more internationally competitive.

Hawke and Keating have claimed that their strategy is already working and that the economy has turned the corner.

However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the business community does not share their confidence. Manufacturing output and investment in machinery and raw materials for future production are still declining. The recovery has largely been restricted to agriculture, construction and service industries. The breaking of the long economic growth after a long period of decline.

Now there are signs that a new recession is brewing in the US and this is making Australian capitalists very nervous. Some of them want to go further and faster than the Hawke Government.

Leading industrialists — like Bruce Watson of Mt Isa Mines, Charles Copeman president of the Australian Mines and Metals Association, and David Nolan from the Confederation of Australian Industry — have recently suggested that labour costs (ie real wages) could be reduced even further without the centralised wage fixing system.

In response to this sentiment the Liberal, National Party, opposition has begun preparing an alternative program. It features proposals for breaking up some of the more powerful trade unions and introducing more laws to restrict their activities; plans to allow bosses to pay less than award rates; and plans to sell off public enterprises, like Telecom, and TAA, to private enterprise.

The Liberals' policies are modelled on those of the Thatcher Government in Britain and it is clear they want to present themselves as a clear right-wing alternative to

Hawke's "consensus" politics.

Hawke and Keating are also having difficulty reaching a consensus with some sections of the trade union movement over some aspects of their economic policies.

The leaders of the large and influential Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union are firm supporters of the Accord but they are unhappy with Keating's draft economic policy. A national council meeting of the union in April released a criticism of the draft which, it said, "softens Labor's commitment to reduce reliance on indirect taxation, and retreats from the ALP's commitment to fostering democratic participation and decision-making in the public and private sectors of the economy."

It also criticised the draft on the grounds that it "opens the way for foreign entry into banking and other strategic sectors of the economy."

The attitude taken by the AMFSU leaders is similar to that adopted by members of the left faction of the ALP caucus in Federal Parliament. They too have strongly objected to proposals to allow the entry of foreign banks and to reduce Government control of the economy in general.

The left parliamentarians on caucus economic policy committees have rejected Keating's draft and it is unlikely to win the unanimous support of the national ALP economic policy committee.

This should ensure that there will be debate at the National Conference on this. However, the alternatives will be falsely posed.

Keating's arguments are obvious. He will argue that his is the only pragmatic approach. If the Government is to be committed to restoring profit levels it must adopt the kind of consistent pro-capitalist measures he has advocated. These have already helped boost profits and have the support of business leaders and ACTU leaders represented on the Economic Planning Advisory Council.

He will also argue that the only alternative to his approach is that of the Liberals and he will suggest that those who op-

pose him are indirectly helping the Liberals to return to power with their program of savage attacks. He will use the fact that there is nervousness about the recovery to argue that Labor must present a united front behind his plan for "broadening" it.

The Left, on the other hand, will argue that Labor should maintain the existing policies that seek to increase "democratic" control of the economy. They will suggest that multinational corporations and foreign banks represent a threat to Australia's national interests and that a Labor Government can only protect the interests of all sectors of the society by maintaining its direct involvement in economic planning.

The problem with this approach is that it ignores the fact that, in a period of deep crisis, there can be no consensus about what to do and there is no "national" interest as such. The bosses can only maintain their profits by slashing the wages and living standards of their workers.

A Labor Government that is committed to the restoration of capitalism must govern on behalf of the capitalist class. Keating's policies cannot resolve the inherent weaknesses of capitalism, but they do seek to improve the efficiency of Australian capitalism so that it can take advantage of the upturns that come along.

Existing Government controls do nothing to allow "democratic" control of the economy. Take the banking controls as an example.

It is argued that Government controls of interest rates can ensure that the banks make money available for housing and other loans. But if the interest rates for housing loans are less than what the banks can get from other kinds of loans, then they will not allocate funds for home loans. In effect the Government has no alternative but to set the interest rate at the level determined by the market.

As long as the capitalists maintain full control over what they do with their capital the Government cannot force them to make it available for socially useful projects, even if it wanted to. They will always use it where they can make a maximum profit.

The wealth of Australian corporations and banks is no more under the control of ordinary Australians than that of multinational companies.

In what ways will foreign banks be worse than Australian banks? They may even offer better services.

The Left will also defend the protection of Australian manufacturing industries. But what good has this done? It has increased domestic prices and maintained inefficient producers but it has not saved jobs in a time of recession.

The Hawke Government's restructuring proposal would certainly cost a lot of jobs. But the alternative to that is not to defend protectionism because it has also failed to protect workers.

BHP is a good example of an Australian company that has gained from tariff protection. It has built up enormous assets and monopolised the steel industry. When the recession hit in 1982, it laid off hundreds of steelworkers and then went on to register record half-yearly profit in its steel division and to buy out the US-based Utah corporation.

The real alternative to the Hawke/Keating strategy is to promote socialist, anti-capitalist solutions.

Wealthy companies like BHP and GMH — that sack workers — should be nationalised and operated to full capacity. The economic crisis has left many factories and plants under-utilised and over a million people out of work. The problem could easily be overcome if production was planned according to society's needs rather than the creation of profit for the already wealthy.

Rather than helping Australian banks to accumulate even more massive reserves, Labor should nationalise them so those reserves could be put to good use.

Unfortunately, the socialist alternative is not likely to be put forward at the National Conference. In its absence, Keating's "pragmatism" will triumph over the contradictory approach of the Left.

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## Around the Branches

### Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Conference on June 16 and 17 could see further moves towards the establishment of a national Centre Left faction. Maureen Horder, leader of the ALP in the territory's House of Assembly, has suggested that the controlling Left grouping in the ACT may be challenged at the Conference.

Horder has been prominent in promoting the push against the Left. "Historically... if any group tries to dominate there is a reaction against it," she told the Canberra Times recently. "The ACT broke away from NSW about 10 years ago because of the domination of NSW by the right wing."

The opening for this challenge to the Left's dominance came when its candidate for preselection for the Federal seat of Fraser, Marc Robinson, was defeated.

Currently the Left has the numbers on machinery bodies like the Branch Council and the Administrative Council. The June Conference will elect the positions of ACT president, secretary, and treasurer, as well as delegates to National Conference and National Executive.

### Northern Territory

A review of the Northern Territory Branch structure is underway following Labor's big defeat at the December 1983 Territory elections.

The ALP won only six of the 23 Lower House seats and suffered significant swings against it in Aboriginal areas. It lost all but one of the urban seats.

The review will be conducted by Kate Moore of the ALP National Secretariat; John Reeves, Federal Member for the Northern Territory; and Jamie Robertson, Secretary of the Territory Trades and Labor Council.

Bob Collins, the ALP parliamentary leader who became famous for describing those supporters of existing ALP policy on uranium as

"left-wing fascists," has said that the review should look at the current rule which stipulated that members can nominate for Party preselection only after two years of continuous membership.

Recently the Party has established an Aboriginal Branch at Alice Springs in an attempt to rebuild its traditional support in the bush. About 83 Aborigines attended the Inaugural Meeting, and it is now planned to establish other Aboriginal Branches at Yirrkala, Galiwinku, and Hooker Creek.

### Queensland

The stalemate in Queensland over the selection of the Senate ticket indicates that no faction has managed to establish dominance in the Branch (see article page 10).

Three factions have emerged since Federal intervention in 1980 overturned the rigid control of the Old Guard.

They are: the Socialist Left, with 30 to 35 per cent support; the Old Guard, with 15 to 20 per cent; and the Centre Majority, with about 45 per cent. Hayden is also trying to carve out a base for his national Centre Left faction in his home State.

The Centre Majority was formed last year by an alliance of the Centre Left and the powerful Australian Workers Union, the largest union in Queensland. In an attempt to prevent the Centre Majority from winning control of the party the Old Guard and the Socialist Left, bitter enemies in pre-intervention days, have made something of a marriage of convenience.

The Old Guard hates the Centre Majority for deposing it through Federal intervention, which was organised when Hayden was ALP leader. It also has close links with Centre Unity in NSW and Labor Unity in Victoria and is intent on blocking Hayden's power base in Queensland. Graham Richardson, Hawke's numbers man in Parliament and former NSW ALP secretary has been a regular visitor to Queensland as advisor to the Old Guard.

Federal intervention on behalf of Senator Reynolds has caused problems for Centre Majority. Part of its deal with the AWU involved support for John Black as number 1 on the ticket. The move to dump Reynolds has cost Centre Majority

support in the north of the State. Reynolds home town, Townsville, is a Labor stronghold. It will be interesting to see what attitude the delegates from the north to State Conference in June take.

Socialist Left and Old Guard spokespersons claim that their collaboration has delivered a big blow to Hayden's national factional plans.

### Wollongong

Wollongong Branches have been the scene of feverish lobbying over the past month as Rex Connor prepares to nominate for Federal preselection. Connor, the son of the late Rex Connor (Minister for Minerals and Energy in the Whitlam Government), and defeated candidate for the seat of Wollongong in the recent State elections is being encouraged by the Right to oppose Minister for Immigration Stewart West in the seat of Cunningham.

The manoeuvring climaxed at recent Branch elections in the Wollongong Branch. Seventy four of the 200 members of the Cunningham Federal electorate belong to the Wollongong Branch. A record number of nominations were received for the 35 available positions — 18 nominations for the positions of alternate delegates to the State Electorate Council.

Connor nominated for President and his wife Shirley for Secretary. Both were defeated by 36-23. Defeats followed closely the defeat of Connor's campaign manager at the state election, Arthur Sinclair, in the Coniston Branch elections the week before.

The National Executive has now intervened and made it clear it will not tolerate anyone nominating against a sitting minister. However, the Federal boundary redistribution, due before the next Federal elections, still give Connor some hope.

The NSW branch submission to the electoral commissioners calls for the creation of a new neighbouring seat to replace Macarthur, currently held by Colin Hollis. Connor is almost certain to nominate for this seat.

However, as Hollis points out, "Many people thought I couldn't win Macarthur and I did and in the eyes of the party I'm a winner. Many people thought Mr Connor couldn't lose Wollongong and he did and in the eyes of the party he is perceived as a loser."

## central america

### What policy for ALP on Central America?

Submitted by the Committees In Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean.

Among many important issues facing National Conference, the situation in Central America is one that deserves priority.

This year the Government took the important step of establishing diplomatic relations with the Government of Nicaragua. At the same time, however, parallel relations were opened with the military dictatorship in El Salvador, which Amnesty International now confirms is responsible for murdering 40,000 civilians in the last four years.

This highlights a contradiction in Government policy that the Conference can take steps towards overcoming.

Already it is Government policy to support the process which has developed around the Contadora peace proposals put forward by Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia.

Nicaragua has worked to implement these proposals, as has the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front/Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador. But the U.S.-backed Salvadoran dictatorship and the Reagan Administration itself have rejected these proposals in favour of a military solution.

In June and July last year both Hawke and Hayden expressed their support for the "legitimate rights" of the U.S. to intervene in Central America, and in November the government failed in the United Nations to condemn the US invasion of Grenada. But these actions are in contradiction to the need to tighten ALP policy on Central America and to pull the Government into line around Conference decisions.

Already the ACT Foreign Affairs and Defence Policy Committee has put forward motions which call for the condemnation of U.S. policy in the region

and for strong opposition to any possible U.S. invasion. Similar motions will be presented from other Party bodies and from many States. Policy adopted at National Conference should include the following major points:

- the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Central America and an end to all U.S. military aid

- active opposition to any U.S. invasion

- support for the electoral process in Nicaragua

- support for the broad government proposals put forward by the FMLN/FDR

It has already been established by the progressive forces in Central America that they are independent in outlook and action and will tolerate no outside interference in the region whatsoever. An end to U.S. intervention in the region will open the way for this possibility to become the reality.

### Socialist International resolution on Central America

The following resolution was adopted by the Socialist International at its conference in Brussels in November 1983

The Socialist International reiterates its deep concern about the situation in Central America and demands that the US administration adopt a positive attitude towards a negotiated settlement in the region.

In particular the Socialist International is very disturbed about a possible military intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua that would seriously aggravate the already explosive situation in the region and could have devastating effects not only in inter-American but also in international relations as well.

The Socialist International welcomes the efforts of the Salvadoran opposition, in particular the fundamental role of its member party, the MNR, in the search for a negotiated settlement. The Socialist International urges the US administration and the US-backed Salvadoran regime to respond seriously and in good faith to these initiatives.

The Socialist International welcomes the positive initiatives recently proposed by the Nicaraguan government as efforts to find negotiated political solutions to the conflicts of the region.

A negotiation process involves com-

promise, and is therefore more time-consuming and complex than the use of force as a means of seeking solutions. The Socialist International therefore suggests to those who have expressed impatience at the pace of negotiations to consider this reality and to examine the extent and sincerity of their commitment to the success of such a process. In this context the Socialist International supports the efforts of the Contadora group for peace, negotiations and stability in Central America.

The Socialist International condemns the role being played by the Honduran government and demands an end to the military manoeuvres that have only increased existing tensions.

The Socialist International expresses its great concern at the revival of the so-called Central America Defence Council (CONDECA) by the armies of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and views this development as against a pursuit of a negotiated solution to the regional crisis.

### Join the Committee In Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean!

Clip and mail to: CISCAC, PO Box A431 Sydney South 2000.

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# Union affiliation row Inquiry 'not a very good move'

The following is the text of a talk given at the Easter social rights conference in Melbourne by Ralph Edwards, a former State organiser of the Miscellaneous Workers Union and long-time member of the Labor Party. It has been abbreviated for space reasons.

The Victorian Branch of the Labor Party, compared to most Branches, is still radical. . . . So it's possible to use the Victorian Branch of the Labor Party as a launching place for a whole lot of political initiatives. . . .

Now we find ourselves in a situation where Hawke's faction of the labour movement feels a complete allegiance to him. Never let it be said that he was essential within the Party. But he feels the allegiance from his backers and they're not very fussy about what they do to get their objectives.

Now Hawke gave his people in Labor Unity very specific instructions: to destroy the present factional balance and, because we have proportional representation in the Party, there tends to be a fairly consistent balance. The Left has improved its position over the years but there is still a balance. . . .

Those of us who were in the Labor Party in 1970 were told that there is one thing you have got to do if you are going to recreate the legend of the left-wing Victorian Branch and that was to stop Hawke. And we failed. And that has had an effect on the capacity to fight of many people. . . .

We have a second problem and that is, with Hawke being extremely popular with the electorate, many of the Left candidates who stood for marginal seats have now become Members of Parliament. And that has, whether people want to recognise it or not, had a conservatising effect.

So we've got two initial problems. One — a deflected Left; and two — a Left which has been increasingly compromised by its very success within the structures of the Party and in the parliamentary sphere. . . .

Now we've got to the stage where Labor Unity has decided to put the screws on. They've done it with no great finesse, they're not capable of finesse. And, unfortunately for them, they've done it in a way which has caused them some problems with their own people because a lot of people in Labor Unity are people who in fact suffered a lot from the movement led by the National Civic Council and various

sub-bodies like the Industrial Action Front and so on. . . .

So, it's not a situation where Labor Unity lifts its finger and everyone falls into line. At their own factional meetings they couldn't even get a resolution carried which said that they wanted those four unions to affiliate. The SDA, the FCU, ASC&J and the FIA between them would have a considerable impact on the State Conference of the Party because of the set number of union delegates attending the State Conference. The more unions that join, the more the pie is divided up into smaller and smaller pieces. . . . There'll be a much smaller pie for some of the Labor Unity supported unions. . . .

At Trades Hall you find all sorts of alliances — people shifting from a Labor Unity position in the Party to a broad Left position in the Trades Hall. People seem to float around at a great pace. . . .

So there was the potential for the Left, if it was combative enough in its inclinations, to in fact get together a commanding position as far as a Conference vote was concerned. People came out of the woodwork to express their concern about these developments. . . .

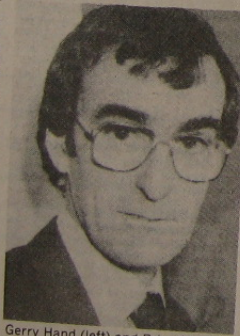
We've had all these things coming together but unfortunately we've also had a few other developments interstate which have placed considerable

pressure on the Left in Victoria. . . . I think a factor that has not been noted very widely within the movement is the development of the Centre Left in the parliamentary Party. I personally don't believe that the Centre Left faction within that parliamentary Party is anything other than a palace politics concern. It's influence is very largely concerned with. . . getting people into cabinet and so on. However it does, I think, display a possibility for a number of points. . . .

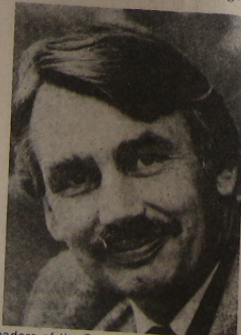
The first, and primary, concern by the person in Labor Unity or in the Hawke kitchen Cabinet would be to ensure that the Left is not simply outdone in relation to the NCC affiliations but also permanently destroyed. Now there's a simple way of doing that and that is to expel everyone from the Party. These days it's a lot more difficult, far more difficult than it was. . . .

Far more effective a method, in my opinion, would be for the people in Labor Unity to in fact create a right-wing opposition within the Victorian Branch of the Labor Party to get rid of a few of their own more rightist colleagues and create what has been done within the parliamentary Party; an effective Centre Left coalition. . . .

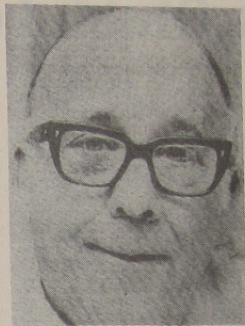
Now that can be done very easily because with proportional representation you've only got to have a presence at State Conference to in fact get



Gerry Hand (left) and Brian Howe: two leaders of the Socialist Left who have become parliamentarians



National Civic Council leader B.A. Santamaria (left) and his political associate John Maynes from the Clerks Union



yourself onto the various structural committees of the Party, get on to the Administrative Committee and all the others. And therefore realignments are a lot more easily achieved than perhaps was the case in the past where there were simply winners and losers. In the old days you had to destroy the Branch to realign it. Now, you've got the option of realignment within the structures. And I think the effective way for the Party to realign itself would be for a right-wing opposition to be created. . . .

You therefore have the possibility of people in Labor Unity coming to terms with the Independents and with some sections of the Socialist Left. In fact there is a possibility of the Socialist Left being reduced to a small left-wing opposition. The end result might a right-wing group, a left-wing group and a great big mass in the centre. . . .

Our concern from the Left must be to ensure that we take up a position which will stop the affiliation of those right-wing unions. . . . (But) what we have done, believe it or not, is to create an inquiry. Now inquiries are very good things. If you've got no muscle, if you've got no bargaining position whatsoever, then you have an inquiry and you work like buggy and you hope you'll get something even if it's a few scraps off the table. . . .

But when you're in a senior position, when you're over 45 per cent at the State Conference. . . . and when you've got the capacity to screw the Independents to get them to stay in line with you, to have an inquiry is not a very good move, I would have thought. . . . Instead of the Party (majority) taking it upon themselves to run with the inquiry, it would have been much better

to have some kind of campaign, some kind of organised campaign, a mass campaign which involves the members, a campaign to politise the Party around this issue and educate and agitate and do all the other things we are fairly good at doing in other areas. . . .

Instead of doing that we have come to rely quite heavily on the inquiry. And when you help create the inquiry and when you've done nothing else to offer alternatives, to apply pressure, and do all the other things you're supposed to be good at you end up getting an inquiry which is uncertain. . . .

It's very difficult for people in any sort of closed judicial situation to look outside and get support from outside. . . . (Now) we are going to get an inquiry which is going to come up with a result which the Left is going to have to accept because it's going to be said its our inquiry, we participated in it, we made submissions to it, and at the end, whatever that inquiry comes up with, we're going to have to accept it. . . .

The recent dissolution of the Communist Party of this State was another aspect to the confusion, the lack of direction that the Left in the Labor Party is going to feel. . . . What they (those who left the Communist Party) are talking about is to bring together people who are in the Labor Party and the socialist left outside the Labor Party. . . .

Now that possibility of creating other centres of activity is also going to have a marked effect on the capacity, the willingness of people in the Socialist Left — not all the people, but some of them — to concentrate on the issue which seems to me to be paramount at this point in time. That is the affiliation of those unions. The life and death struggle of the Socialist Left faction

within the Party to survive and have an impact. . . .

(So the situation is) the Left will be operating in a vacuum, in a political vacuum, they will be going through a judicial process. They might go through it honestly, they might go in a way which is beyond reproach, but in the end when you come down to the report, they have to make a choice under pressure. . . .

Now, we've got a choice. . . . It's not too late for the movement as a whole to campaign vigorously on this particular issue and I would suggest that it is vital that the Left as a whole campaign on this issue, and campaign vigorously. . . .

I'll probably get into trouble from John Cain or somebody because I've come out and spoken about this issue in public though I haven't exactly said anything startling. . . . But that's life in the Labor Party. It doesn't particularly worry me, but it worries a lot of people in the Party and what they have to be shown is that — within the union movement, within the left political movement and in the Party — people consider it crucial to provide an opposition to the Hawke Government. . . .

(An historic position in the Labor Party is) the lowest common denominator centre group which provides hope for the aspirations, parliamentary or otherwise, of a lot of people of all different political perspectives. It provides a parliamentary Party with a non controversial base, it provides a person like Hawke as an example to the whole Party of how you don't rock the boat and you achieve success. . . .

We now have the problem of a Centre Left developing and a right-wing opposition being introduced into the Victorian Branch.

## Back copies

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# Let Faris Glubb be heard!

The following is the text of a letter sent to Immigration Minister Stewart West by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign. It has been abbreviated for space reasons.

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of our affiliated State organizations to request that the Government reconsider its decision not to grant a visa to Faris Glubb, who has been invited by the PHRC (Australia) to engage in a speaking tour.

We are concerned that Mr Glubb received no reply to his visa application for six months, despite repeated correspondence to your office on his behalf. We are also concerned that the decision to refuse him entry was leaked to the media before either Mr Glubb or the PHRC was informed.

As a result of these delays, we have now rescheduled Mr Glubb's tour for 3-8 September 1983, and urge that reconsideration of his case be given priority, so that sufficient time will still be available to our organization to ensure that his tour is effective and well planned.

We understand that Mr Glubb has been denied the right to enter Australia because the Government believes that Mr Glubb is a "member" of the PLO. The PLO refuses to recognize Israel, and that the PLO and/or Mr Glubb are "terrorists". We wish to address these propositions in some detail.

Firstly, Mr Glubb is not a representative, a diplomat, nor an official of the PLO. His relationship to the PLO is the same as that of a rank-and-file worker whose union is affiliated to the ALP; Mr Glubb is a member of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, an affiliated organization of the PLO. To say he is a representative of the PLO is to say that an Australian trade unionist is a representative of the Australian Labor Party.

Furthermore, since the vast majority of the four million Palestinians dispersed around the world are members of organizations affiliated to the PLO — from women's, teachers', doctors' and workers' unions to the Palestine Red Crescent Society — the Government's stand means that the Palestinian people as a whole have been excluded from entering Australia. Such a view is both racist in character and untenable in a country where, supposedly, all peoples have the right to speak and be heard.

The Australian Government's stand on the Glubb issue has highlighted a glaring contradiction in the Government's Middle East policy: the attempt to separate the question of Palestinian

rights from the question of the status of the PLO. We urge the Government to clarify its view on the PLO, and exactly who it considers to be "members" of the PLO.

For serious scholars of the Middle East there is no question of "splitting" the Palestinian people from the PLO, as the Australian Government attempts to do. As Ralph Jacob remarked to Parliament on 7 May, "The political basis of the PLO is the predicament of the Palestinian people." Time and time again the Palestinian people have expressed their overwhelming support for the PLO and the leadership of Yasser Arafat, as the public opinion surveys conducted by Time magazine (24 May 1982), some Israeli institutions and the West Bank Arab press have documented. Nobody can arbitrarily split the Palestinian aspirations. . . .

Already, some 117 countries recognize the PLO, and the PLO has official representation in over 90 of these countries. Australia, if it persists with its present policy, will not only suffer in its relations with the Arab world, but will be seen as remote and antiquated in its world view. We call on the Australian Government to overcome the present contradictions in its policy by recognizing the PLO.

Secondly, Government policy is not to

recognize the PLO until the PLO recognizes Israel. This policy is apparently based on a statement made by the Prime Minister on 6 March 1983, the day after Labor took power, before any ministers had been sworn in, and before any Caucus or Cabinet meeting had considered the issue. . . .

Given that neither side presently recognizes the other, how can the Australian Government "even handedly" recognize one party and not the other, and then proceed to allow an endless flow of Israeli speakers, politicians and publicists to visit Australia, when it denies almost any Palestinian the same right? Moreover, these visitors have included Yitzhak Shamir, presently prime minister and formerly a member of the Zionist groups, the Irgun Zvai Leumi and Stern Gang, whose terrorist activities against the British and the Arabs is well documented. . . .

Thirdly, the Palestinians and the PLO have been declared "terrorist" and on this basis excluded from organization, and neither is Faris Glubb, a writer and intellectual who has toured and spoken widely on the Middle East.

After waiting in vain for twenty years for a peaceful return to their homeland,

## Newspaper advertisement

The PHRC will be placing an advertisement in a major national newspaper, probably The National Times, to put further pressure on the Government over the denial of a visa for Faris Glubb. Those who wish to put their name to this advertisement should write to the PHRC, PO Box 278, Carlton South Vic 3053 by Wednesday June 23. It costs \$20. The following is the text that will appear in the advertisement

"The decision of the Australian Government to prevent British-Palestinian journalist Faris Glubb visiting Australia for a lecture tour during 1984 is a blatant denial of free speech.

"The decision not to issue a visitor visa to Faris Glubb, or to any member of a Palestinian union or organization affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization, denies the Australian public the right to hear the Palestinian point of view.

"At a time when all liberation movements except the PLO enjoy the right to be heard in Australia, and when Israel

publicists two week by week, the visa denial undermines the Australian Government's claim to an "even handed" Middle East policy.

"As Israel continues to occupy south Lebanon and Syria's Golan Heights, West Bank, and denies basic human rights to the Palestinian people living under Israeli rule, Australia's actions in barring Faris Glubb can only be interpreted as support for Israel policy and opposition to Palestinian aspirations for national self-determination.

"The Palestinian people have overwhelmingly and unequivocally expressed their support for the PLO as their sole, legitimate representative. We believe there can be no peace in the Middle East without self-determination for the Palestinians in their own state. We believe also that there can be no meaningful negotiations or treaties without PLO participation, and we call on the Australian Government to recognize the PLO, a step that has already been taken by 118 national Governments."

the Palestinians commenced an armed struggle in 1967 to further their cause. There is no doubt that this action has brought their plight to the centre of international opinion and concern, and formed many Israelis to recognize that, sooner or later, they will have to make peace with the Palestinians and the PLO.

It is Israel that was born, and thrives, on terrorism. The Palestinians were driven out by Jewish-Zionist terror groups, who massacred Palestinian civilians as well as assassinating and bombing the British military forces. It is Israel, now the world's fourth ranked military power, that conducted its war of terror against civilian Palestinians and Lebanese in 1982, and supervised the massacres of Sabra and Shatila.

## secret police

# Gareth Evans and ASIO

Tony Brown

Member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP Branch and NSW Public Service Association

Everyone in the labour movement knows that ASIO and ASIS are used to spy on the labour movement. Unfortunately some of ASIO's strongest supporters have come from the ALP, starting with Ben Chifley who set up the organisation in 1949. Gareth Evans can also add his name to the list.

On May 9 he tabled the 1982-83 ASIO Report in Parliament. In this report he has gone to great lengths to undercut criticism from within the Party that ASIO is anti-labour.

Instead of moving to disband ASIO he has claimed that the regular "monitoring" of its activities will make it more accountable to the Australian people. Of course nothing could be further from the truth. What really lies behind the first public report of ASIO is an attempt to legitimise ASIO's activities at a time when the spy forces credibility is at an all time low.

The abortive raid on the Sheraton Hotel, the unbridled attacks on former ALP national secretary David Combe; the illegal phone tapping of NSW Labor Ministers and former ALP Senator and now High Court Judge Lionel Murphy; Australian intelligence agencies aided and abetted the Indonesian invasion of East Timor and was also in a position to prevent the murder of the five Australian journalists by Indonesian troops in 1975; and the increasing public belief that ASIO was behind the bombing of the Hilton Hotel have all left ASIO and ASIS with little public sup-

The "terrorism threat" is a desperate retreat for those who have no other argument left. It is a dangerous inversion of the real history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and must be rejected as such.

Finally, the PHRC believes that the denial of a visa is a denial of fundamental democratic rights. Mr Glubb has toured and spoken in the USA and around Europe on several occasions. His writings and broadcasts are distributed regularly within Australia. Around the world, PLO official representatives are received warmly. In the last three years, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi have been welcomed in most "developed" nations, including the USA, UK, France, Japan, Italy,

Greece and Sweden. This year PLO UN representative Terzi visited Canada, which like Australia has always adopted a very pro-Israeli stance. . . .

When even the Queen has toured Jordan this year and referred to the "Palestinian people's tragedy" at a state dinner in Arman, it is a sad comment on Australian policy that a visa should be refused to a well-known and respected journalist whose father has been such a key figure in Arab-British relations, and whose own career has been no less honourable.

We urge you to reconsider Faris Glubb's case, and we are of course willing to meet with you at any time to discuss any points we have raised. 18 May 1984



port. The report to Parliament will do nothing to change this. The paucity of evidence and argument behind ASIO's claims would be a joke if it was not so serious. It lists the "violent elements in the Australian community" as being: Armenian groups; pro-Palestinian groups; and those groups in opposition to the Yugoslav Government.

The report exposes ASIO's racist premises. Supporters of the Palestinians come from throughout the Middle East and incorporate a wealth of cultural and racial differences. It would be like lumping all of Europe together and ignoring the range of differences present there. For ASIO, anyone from the Middle East who supports the just

rights of the Palestinian people to their homeland is a potential terrorist. The same is true for the other categories of ASIO's violent elements.

Evans hopes that by tabling the ASIO report he will be able to prevent the Left from calling for ASIO's abolition at the July National Conference. Yet Evans himself should have grave doubts about ASIO's attitude to his Government. In 1983 the agency's director, Harvey Barnett, refused to let him see the transcript of a conversation involving David Combe.

The Initial report to Parliament confirms that ASIO does not consider itself accountable to anyone; especially not to a Labor Government, not even one as right wing as Hawke's.

# The thoughts of Laurie Carmichael

To most people Laurie Carmichael is an enigma. His reputation as a fiery and articulate militant lingers on, and yet he is closely identified with the right-wing Hawke Labor Government. He has not renounced his membership of the Communist Party and yet he sits alongside the bosses on bodies like the Australian Manufacturing Council.

## Andrew Honey

Member Fremantle (WA) ALP Branch. Treasurer Federated Rubber and Allied Workers' Union. Delegate to WA ALP State Executive

When he spoke at a meeting of the Labor Party's Socialist Caucus in Perth on March 25, 60 people turned out to hear him. But most remained puzzled by his combination of militant rhetoric and enthusiastic endorsement for many aspects of the Hawke Government's policies.

He began timidly enough by saying that the Prices and Incomes Accord is "an agreed framework" in relation to economic, industrial, and social wage matters. It doesn't seek to go beyond those matters.

But he soon shifted into second gear by saying that the "agreed framework" is in fact a "strategy" that is highly significant because "it is the first time, in effect, that we can say that there's in fact a strategy that the labour movement in this country is generally following."

And by the time he got to the discussion period he had reached overdrive and was saying: "We are working for dual power. No shilly shallying about it. We are arguing for increased strength, increased rights, in practical terms."

Along the way he failed to dispense with the evidence that the strategy of the social contract, both in Australia and other countries, has produced exactly the opposite result — it has reduced the strength and rights of the union movement and consolidated the exclusive political power of the capitalist class.

Early in his talk he said the Accord "did have to take into account the problems that had arisen out of the social contract experience in Britain." But he did not elaborate on what those problems had been or how the Australian Accord could avoid them.

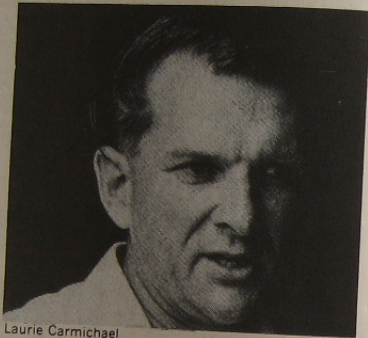
This was something of an oversight since he admitted that he had started advocating an incomes policy for Australia Wilson Labor Government, when the social contract in Britain was administering its

The essential features of the Wilson policy were the same as the Accord. It established centralised wage fixing and promoted national consultations between government, employers and union leaders. It also set up a body that had no power to control prices — the Prices and Incomes Board. The government renamed its taxation policy "tax reform" and offered this in exchange for "wage restraint."

The result of the British incomes policy was that the share of total wealth owned by the wealthiest 1 per cent rose from 22.5 per cent in 1974 to 25 per cent in 1976. The share of the wealthiest 10 per cent rose from 37.5 per cent to 60.6 per cent. And at the other end of the scale, the share of the poorest 50 per cent fell from 7.1 per cent to 5.6 per cent.

The rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Workers' wages fell steadily behind the rising cost of living. No wonder the social contract became known as the social contract.

Carmichael would do well to remember that the im-



Laurie Carmichael

plementation of the policy also led to the demise of the Labour Government and the election of Thatcher. And it enabled the Right to gain control of a number of key unions.

However, after ignoring the British experience, Carmichael went on to outline other international developments that he considered made the social contract strategy imperative.

He listed: the technological revolution; the growth of multinational corporations; the "democratic struggles" of the monetarism; and the re-emergence of mass unemployment. In the advanced industrialised countries.

From this he drew the conclusion that the "labour movement is faced with the need to develop strategies that are different to those that we developed in the 1950s."

Essentially Carmichael's approach boils down to the view that the enemies of labour have become more powerful and open class confrontation.

But he leaves out of his analysis of historic conditions the most important factor of all: the health of the capitalist economy.

"I might say," he boasted, "that the metal unions, in the period of the 1950s and 1960s, following a strategy around and so on, and so on, did achieve a number of things."

He neglected to mention that it was relatively easy for unions to win such struggles in that period, because the economy was still growing. But this all changed in the 1970s and "militants" like him quickly fell in behind the Whitlam Government's phoney Indexation scheme.

The Indexation scheme was used by the Whitlam and had loopholes. It was still possible to campaign for flow-ons, for comparative wage justice and for anomalies.

The Accord, however, has welded up those loopholes and is taking the movement back to the era of Curtin and Chifley, when wage control, pure and simple, was imposed.

This is hardly the historic progress Carmichael claims it is. There is no denying the fact that it is harder in a period like this to conduct successful industrial struggles. They may take weeks where they once took days.

But that doesn't mean that struggle has become obsolete. Indeed the attacks will get more savage as the capitalist crisis continues and the Accord is eroding the fighting power of the workers' defensive organisations — the unions.

Carmichael turned his attention to the "social wage." He tried to present an argument that, in focussing attention on the social wage, the Accord is helping to protect the interests of the lowest-paid workers.

He began by presenting figures intended to show that, in concentrating on winning gains in their industrial wages in the period since 1974, workers had in fact made a net loss through the erosion of the social wage.

He presented the following figures: tradesmen's wages increased by \$63 per week between 1975 and 1981 (offset by an \$84 a week loss in the social wage); at the same time non-tradesmen's wages increased by \$45 per week (with a \$69 loss in the social wage). From this he concludes that workers should have paid more attention to the social wage.

But it should be remembered that he is talking about the period when the Fraser Government used the indexation system to erode wage levels and at the same time slashed away at social security payments and other components of the social wage.

It is hard to work out how Carmichael estimated the social wage, but even if his figures are accurate they simply demonstrate that living standards declined under Fraser. No one would dispute that, but the truth is they would have declined even further if unions had not paid attention to winning improvements in the industrial wage.

Carmichael also argued that wage rises for highly paid workers had made things worse for low-paid workers. He said:

"I for one, along with a lot of others, have put in decades of work trying to do something about the living standards of low-paid workers. I have celebrated my 40th year of activity, and in that time what I have seen, by practical experience, is that the relativity of the low-paid worker has

suffered a continual decline over that period of time." He went on to say that any attempt to change the relativity of low-paid workers "immediately becomes very questionable (sic) and material for all those that are higher up the scale, and they use it for the purpose of furthering their own advantage."

There is no denying that higher paid workers are often better organised and have the industrial muscle to win further improvements. That may increase the gap between the higher and lower paid workers but it does not mean the lower paid workers are worse off in absolute terms as a result.

Nothing is achieved by preventing higher paid workers from winning improvements. In fact, in freezing existing relativities, the Accord prevents low-paid workers from using flow-on or comparative wage justice arguments for improving their position.

The position of low-paid workers will only be improved if unions organise them and ensure that wage campaigns are carried out in a united fashion.

Carmichael's position boils down to blaming the better organised workers for the worse position of the less well organised. This is dangerous nonsense that can only undermine working class unity.

One of the examples used by Carmichael to indicate that the Accord is working was Medicare, yet the tax levy associated with this discriminates against . . . low-paid workers.

Carmichael remains enthusiastic about the Accord. But he does have some criticisms of the way it is being implemented.

He put forward the theory that there are two wings of the Hawke Government — one, presumably the Left, is in favour of implementing the Accord; the other, he suggested, is not. He blamed the latter for blocking an effective price control mechanism and for putting forward measures like the deregulation of the finance sector.

Obviously Carmichael believes Keating's economic policies pose a threat to the Accord. In reality they are entirely consistent with the Accord's central aim: to boost profits in a time of capitalist crisis.

## Misrepresented

### Now children . . .

In his contribution to the National Conference registration pamphlet, Party national secretary Bob McMullan, has told delegates to behave themselves.

In his view, the fact that the Hawke Government is popular "demands that delegates to conference act with discipline and responsibility." Graciously, he conceded that:

"This is not to say the approach to conference debates should be without adventure or questioning of the present and past." But, he warned, delegates must have "at the forefront of their minds the objective of the conference: to provide the ALP with meaningful and relevant policies. . . ."

Not too many delegates go to National Conference in order to promote meaningless and irrelevant policies. So what is the real purpose of McMullen's chiding?

It can only be interpreted as an

attempt to intimidate delegates out of opposing the policies and practices of the Hawke Government.

### Pull the other leg, Bill

When he arrived in London on May 13, Bill Hayden told the press that he considered those who oppose the mining and export of Australian uranium are weakening the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

He argued that if Australia does not continue to deliver uranium for peaceful purposes, it will "deliver a very savage body-blow against the prospects of a successful renegotiation of the treaty."

If you can follow the logic of that you deserve an award for perseverance. What he would have us believe is that by proliferating the world's uranium supplies we can make an effective contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. "But," cries the voice of reason, "wouldn't we make a much better contribution

by leaving our uranium in the ground."

### Blood money rejected

On a May 24 ABC television program, Attorney-General Senator Evans called David Combe a "damn fool" who was "ill-advised by his journalist mates" in rejecting a recent offer by the Federal Government.

Evans, who was one of the ministers primarily responsible for backslapping Combe and turning his life into a living hell, also suggested that the victim had been "the architect of his own misfortune."

What a hide! Evans and Hawke are the ones with egg on their faces out of the infamous Combe-Ivanov affair as far as most people in the labour movement are concerned. They were the ones who were prepared to destroy a person's reputation on the basis of an ASIO report and illegal phone taps.

## Victorian Branch Activist's guide to ALP

Victorian ALP members would generally assume that their Branch structures are much more democratic than those of NSW.

However, the main difference is not so much the formal structure but the very different relationship of forces between left and right factions. In Victoria, the Socialist Left regularly gets support for its motions at State Conference — especially those on foreign affairs, uranium and ASIO. It is also able to dominate elections for Party positions through its alliance with the "Independents" faction.

**Richard Lane**  
Member Kensington (Vic) ALP Branch, ATEA delegate to ALP State Conference.

The Victorian Left has more support in the Branches and from trade union leaders than the Steering Committee faction in NSW. In Victoria the NCC forces quit the Party in the 1950s, whereas they continue to poison the atmosphere in the NSW Branch.

The NSW Steering Committee has obviously adopted the mentality of a secret society in a hostile world. It remains a tightly organised numbers machine. By contrast, the Socialist Left, for all its problems, is broad and politically diverse.

But the advantages of being in the Victorian Branch should not be overestimated. Because here, too, rank-and-file members of the Party Branches and affiliated unions have little real influence over policy formation, and no control at all over policy implementation.

Victorian ALP rules were recently amended and a provisional version of the new rules was published in Labor Star, the official Branch publication. However, the changes were essentially designed to entrench existing factions, not to open up opportunities for rank-and-file participation.

For example, policy committees will now be elected entirely by State Conferences. Previously a component of each conference was elected at an assembly open to all members. Young Labor was formally abolished. It had been effectively dismantled some years earlier.

The following are some specific points on opportunities for activity within the Victorian Branch.

1) **Branches.** You can join any Branch in your federal electorate and any 10 members can form a new

Branch, subject to approval from the Administrative Committee and the executive of the Federal Electorate Assembly (the electorate council). This makes it possible to get out of dead-end Branches.

5) **Electorate Assemblies.** Federal Electorate Assemblies are held at least once a year. They are open to all members within the relevant Federal electorate, and elect an executive, State Conference delegates and Public Office Selection Committee representatives. State Electorate Assemblies also elect representatives to POSCs to choose State parliamentary candidates and councillors. However, they do little else.

FEAs can be useful bodies for considering particular issues and some FEA executives distribute newsletters.

2) **Preselections.** These are conducted through a complicated system of panels. The electorate assemblies elect their representatives to the Public Office Selection Committee — 35 for a Federal Electorate, 25 for a State electorate, and 10 for a municipality.

These committees are matched by a central POSC which has 100 delegates elected by State Conference. That body elects two panels of 10 for local council preselections. Each POSC member has 0.25 of a vote for the State parliamentary candidates and 0.35 of a vote for Federal candidates. The central POSC also preselects candidates for the Senate and the State upper house.

This system means there is some input, via State Conference, from affiliated unions in the selection of ALP candidates. However, it enables faction leaders to do deals to ensure the election of particular candidates.

3) **Youth.** There are no separate Young Labor Associations in Victoria. The only organisation specifically for youth is the annual State Youth Conference, which elects a delegate of the Youth Policy Committee (the other nine are elected by State Conference). This conference provides a good opportunity for discussion of policy and is open to delegates from all Party Branches and affiliated unions.

When the YLAs little attention by the Left paid them little attention and so they were often dominated by the Right. Instead of trying to reverse this and turn the associations into attractive forums for debate and for organising action, the Left had them closed down. In some areas the Right has set up FEA youth sub-committees.

## SOCIALIST OBJECTIVE NEW ERA FOR AUSTRALIA? VICTORY Labor Star



Two papers in the Victorian Branch: Labor Star, the official Branch publication and Socialist Objective

4) **Labor Women.** There is no special Labor Women's Conference as in NSW. The only specific women's body is the Status of Women Policy Committee.

6) **Affiliated Unions, Delegations to State Conferences.** Delegations to unions are usually filled by union executives or equivalent bodies. Most delegations then operate as a disciplined voting bloc.

It is very hard to get the floor at Conference unless you are a leading light in one of the factions.

Rank-and-file election of union delegates to State Conference is obviously desirable. But that, alone, will not be enough. Some years ago a court-controlled ballot was conducted in the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union for its Conference delegation. A right-winger with suspected connections with the NCC, Frank Troja, was elected and the union leadership refused to issue him with credentials.

It would not be hard for unrepresentative right-wingers to win election as delegate to Conference because most union members are not interested in internal operations of the ALP. It might be different if union leaders made a conscious effort to involve members in campaigns to improve Party policies and Labor government practices.

The campaign for Labor Party democracy must be combined with a implementation of those policies. It must also be combined with a campaign for democratic practices within the unions.

## AWU Rank-and-File Campaigning for union democracy

**Jim Rule** is a member of the Australian Workers Union, working as a rigger for the NSW State Rail Authority. He is active in an AWU rank-and-file group. He was interviewed for Labor Militant by Martin Tuck

**Question: Can you describe the industries covered by the AWU?**

**Answer:** The AWU covers a conglomerate of industries. It is active in the construction industry in the country areas and in the city where the State Government is the employer such as the SRA, the Maritime Services Board and the Department of Main Roads. We cover a large number of factories now in the city — chemical factories like ICI, detergent and soap manufacturers like Colgate Palmolive and Unilever. Also Edible Oil Products, a subsidiary of Unilever. Veg oils at Mascot. The union recently amalgamated with the hairdressers' union which was a run-down union of about 800 members. The racing industry — the stablehands and others. Other assorted jobs.

**Question: Are there sub-branches for different industries?**

**Answer:** Only for the oil industry, and this is a result of the militancy of the members in that area. They successfully formed themselves into a sub-branch and generally now look after themselves.

**Question: What sort of rank-and-file groups have existed in the union before your group began?**

**Answer:** There was a big movement in the 70's around the Committee for Union Democracy. This committee fought two union elections and was successful in the ballots but defeated in the courts.

After the demise of that group things were quiet for a while. A new rank-and-file formed in the 70's with Bob Pringle (former BLF State secretary) as one of the main activists. This was mainly among members working on the railways and in the construction branch.

Bob helped to win a lot of things for the members and was popular, but he always found he had to fight the employers and the union at the same time.

**Question: How did your group begin?**

**Answer:** In about 1981 we formed the group to campaign against increases in union dues and general inefficiency of the union.

Since then we have successfully challenged rules, especially in regard to members who are on part payment, ie

on weekly deduction of their dues from their wages. They were never considered as full members and had no voting rights at all. Now they will get a vote if they can produce last year's ticket.

We challenged the rule on part payment at the Annual General Meeting in 1982. That was the first AGM held in seven years because they had not raised a quorum for six years before that. The quorum is only 15 people.

We are continuing to educate workers in the city — to tell them the struggle is not really over the comb. It's over the breaking down of the award and the comb is an incidental product of that. We hope to do a lot more in the next few months.

**Question: The AWU is officially locked in a very serious demarcation fight with the BLF. What does your group think about this?**

**Answer:** First, I want to make it quite clear that the Rank-and-File opposes action in the courts against another union and the AWU is guilty of that offence. They are trying to have the BLF deregistered.

We believe the present situation could be solved through negotiation with the BLF.

**Question: You believe the AWU in NSW should be affiliated with the ALP. Why?**

**Answer:** Well, historically the Labor Party formed from the AWU in Queensland. And in NSW it is an integral part of the labour movement.

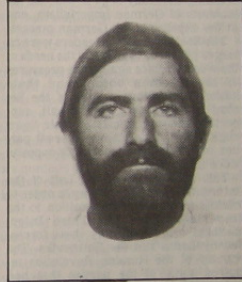
We believe the AWU should be supporting progressive forces in the Labor Party and in the labour movement in this State.

**Question: What are the main aims of the Rank-and-File now?**

**Answer:** The main aim is to have democratic elections in which we will run a ticket. We want to see the election of all organisers. We want to see a greater participation by members in the union.

The union needs reorganisation to set up branches in areas like construction, factories, agriculture. We need a greater drive by the officials of the union to educate the members about the issues they face.

When we contest the elections, whenever they are held, we want to put forward a broadly-based ticket. There are quite a lot of Aboriginal workers in the union and we want them represented. We want migrant workers, construction workers, factory workers, agricultural workers represented. We want a greater say for the country workers.



Jim Rule

**Question: How has the union been run and what effect has this had?**

**Answer:** Over recent years the union has become run down in size. Since the middle 70's the membership in NSW has dropped from over 30,000 to the present level of about 20,000.

The union executive has full control over the appointment of organisers. None of them are elected.

Whenever the incumbents are challenged, the executive takes it upon itself to change the rules. For example, recently they extended the term of the executive from four years to five years in mid-term.

There are 11 people on the executive and seven of them must be rank-and-file members.

**Question: Can you explain what the rank-and-file group did to support the recent struggles by shearer's?**

**Answer:** The shearers have been fighting a battle for a couple of years now. It's wrongly called the wide comb dispute because the dispute is basically over the use of non-union labour. These labourers break down the award by working long hours and by not taking the required number of cooks and general hands with them.

# Socialist International Journal

Socialist Affairs, incorporating Socialist International Women Bulletin  
 Quarterly magazine of the Socialist International  
 Published in Britain

One hundred and twenty years on, the Socialist International continues. It is the international movement of political organisations to which the ALP is affiliated. And it publishes a quarterly magazine, Socialist Affairs, which Labor Militant readers may find useful as a source of information, particularly on international affairs, and on overseas parties similar to the ALP.

Janet Burstall  
 Member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP Branch and Municipal Employees Union

The first issue for 1984 is a revamped version of the magazine and marks the incorporation of the Socialist International Women Bulletin.

It contains a couple of short reports from Australia, including one headed "Hawke's consensus winning". The article claims that the agreement at the 1983 summit enabled the Government to create 300,000 jobs in the Government. And it hails the "ALP Government's Pacific nuclear-free zone" as a "major foreign policy initiative."

Those who know that Hawke's job-creation scheme has been largely phoney and that he is aiming to expand will, on the mining and export of uranium will, on the basis of that article, take Socialist Affairs with a grain of salt.

Like the ALP, other parties of the Socialist International, to varying degrees, have some very radical sounding policies and sentiments and some of these find expression in the pages of Socialist Affairs. But in government they bring only minor social changes or benefits to their working class supporters. Why?

The answer lies in the history of the Socialist International which is descended from the Second International. The Second International was a revolutionary socialist grouping, based mainly in Europe. In 1914 the

German Social Democrats voted war credits to the German Government, enabling Germany to go to war, for the interests of German imperialism, and at the expense of the German masses. The Social Democrat leaders were no longer prepared to stand by the needs of the working class against the pressures of the German bosses and their nationalism. Other parties of the Second International followed suit, supporting the war efforts of their "own capitalists." This meant different parties of the International took opposite sides in the war.

This debacle led to the Left of the International splitting away in order to maintain unqualified opposition to the imperialist war. The Third International was founded by these forces, led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The victory of the Russian Revolution inspired some of the parties that had originated in the Second International to continue the fight for independent working class action to achieve socialist change.

The parties that remained in the Socialist International have demonstrated, by and large, that whenever they must choose between the interests of the workers and bosses they almost always choose the bosses. Nevertheless, they retain varying degrees of reformism and this creates progressive reforms and this creates terrible contradictions within the parties. Hawke trying to eliminate the nuclear commitments as his way of resolving the contradiction.

Bearing the nature of the Socialist International in mind, and the critical Socialist Affairs is unlikely to be at all useful source of information. The editorial of the first issue for 1984 claims that "the magazine remains one of the few places where virtually every election in the democratic world and its detailed results and implications are reported."

This issue is divided into sections which include: • News — containing a letter from Guenter Grass, to Willy Brandt on his 70th birthday. It also has a report of the November 1983 meeting



of the Bureau of the Second International, including resolutions and a list of attendants. You may not find out anywhere else that the ALP's representative was Chris Schacht, secretary of the South Australian Branch;

• Focus: World in Crisis — in which leaders of a number of member parties discuss their views on various problems. Neil Kinnock on Britain on the EEC; Olaf Palme of Sweden on the role of international organisations in an interdependent world; Michael Manley of Jamaica presenting a "minimum programme of action"; Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela in favour of international solidarity; and Lionel Jospin of France on the rise of the "hard right."

• Horizons 8 containing extracts from a socialist manifesto for the European Parliament elections; an article on the rise of independent black trade unions in South Africa (reprinted in this issue of Labor Militant); an article by former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky why the world needs a new Marshall plan; and articles on Grenada, Turkey, the Middle-East and the effect of satellite communications on the Third World.

One article brings to light a rather surprising snippet of history. It describes the "International Friends of Nature as a 'green' movement within the family of democratic socialist parties," founded in Vienna in 1895.

• The Socialist International Women Bulletin — including reports on a women's seminar in Ecuador; the growth of feminism in Latin America; and a diary of a visit to Nicaragua by 14 Swedish women.

• The final section is called Socialist Notebook and contains short round-up reports from all over the world, under headings: People, Parties, Politics and Elections.

Subscriptions are available through Subscription (Journals) Department, Longman Group, Fourth Avenue, Harlow, Essex CM19 5AA, England. The overseas rate is US\$25 annually (for 4 issues).

# NSW 'egg war' raises serious questions

When the NSW Egg Corporation cracked down on "rebel" egg producers in Sydney recently it sparked an "egg war" that was given extensive coverage in the media.

The media played up the battles between the producers and police and took up the cruelty to animals theme. And it inevitably produced a round of terrible puns about chooks and eggs.

Debra Stewart

Member Marrickville East (NSW) ALP Branch. Member Australian Railways Union

In this way the seriousness of the issue was somewhat clouded. But the events themselves raise a number of questions that need to be addressed by the Labor Party in formulating its rural policy.

Government intervention in agricultural production and marketing has increased markedly in Australia since World War II, although the level of intervention differs from sector to sector. The political parties have, by and large, developed the same approach. Despite the National Party's rhetoric about the need for "free enterprise" in agriculture, it too has accepted a high degree of government intervention.

The role of government intervention has a number of purposes but two major ones are: the need to have centralised bodies through which to gain export markets, and the need to control the level of production.

Strange as it may seem when large sections of the world suffer from a lack of food, the world market for agriculture has a continuing crisis of over-supply. That is, all the produce cannot be sold at a profit. As a result, most of the major agricultural exporting countries have some system of controlling production to maintain prices.

In the U.S., for example, this means that in any one year up to a third of agricultural land lies fallow and large stockpiles of produce are hoarded by the U.S. Government to prevent the world market being flooded and hence causing prices to fall.

In the case of Australia, with its small domestic market, the problem becomes even more critical. Hence we have bodies like the NSW Egg Corporation whose role is to limit production through the selling of hen quotas to producers. In return the corporation acts as a central marketing body maintaining a monopoly price for eggs.

Even so a surplus of about 14 million dozen eggs is produced in NSW yearly, a surplus which is mainly sold to the Japanese as egg pulp at a price below the NSW domestic price. Egg producers are levied to make up the difference.

It is both the issues of the levy and the quota system that the rebel producers are objecting to. If they are able to increase their number of hens without paying for quotas and

avoid paying the levy then they have a margin to sell their eggs cheaper than the Egg Corporation does on behalf of the other producers.

Public reaction to the "egg war" largely seemed to focus of the issue of cruelty to animals, both in the manner in which the hens were removed from the rebel producers' farms and the broader issue of free range versus caged hens. This problem, however, cannot be tackled rationally until a more equitable production and marketing system is developed. To the extent that the present system provides some guarantee of income to producers it has their support. But it is a system that perpetuates the differences between the large and small producers as well as bringing about considerable rationalisation in the industry.

The number of poultry farms in NSW has dropped from over 5000 to below 700 over the past decade while the size of the average flock has increased from under 900 to over 6000. And to maintain the system, it has been estimated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics that consumers contribute up to 40 cents a dozen in price subsidy.

Of that price subsidy, however, some 37 per cent goes to the top 90 producers while 3 per cent goes to the smallest 1200 farms.

So the "big" producers remain big while the smaller producers remain small or simply quit the industry, selling their quotas to a larger producer. In the meantime, the consumer is effectively subsidising the dumping of egg pulp on the Japanese market.

The answer to this, however, is not deregulation of the market as the rebel farmers claim. In the short term it may mean lower prices for consumers as the producers are forced into more intense competition. But in the longer term, it would mean that the biggest egg producers remaining in the industry would be able to institute their own pricing monopoly.

There is no simple answer to this problem and the many other problems that beset our agricultural marketing and production schemes. But it is an area where we need to have a hard look at our policy.

We need to look at ways that will ensure a guaranteed income for the smaller producer and a reasonable price for consumers. In particular we need to get away from the concept that there is a problem with over-supply. While some consumers have no doubt cut their egg consumption for health reasons, there are plenty of others both in Australia and the region who could well do with some additional protein.

It's time we started worrying about those people and the smaller producers struggling to stay in the industry rather than perpetuating a system that really only benefits a handful of large producers.

## Continued from page 28

The NSW Teachers Federation has calculated that redirection of the projected 1988 \$1 billion windfall from private to public education could be used to build 190 new state schools, or to provide an extra four teachers to every school in Australia or to reduce class sizes by 20 per cent.

To counter the report, teachers are preparing a national campaign including television advertisements, lob-

bying of MPs and protest meetings.

It is clear that the future of public education is at stake: Either a free education system that is open to all students regardless of religion, race or social and educational background; or highly discriminatory, selective and elitist public schools prospering amid a public education wasteland.

Already, unfortunately, Hawke and Education Minister Senator Susan Ryan have been criticised by the Caucus Education Sub-Committee for

consulting on the report recommendations before the sub-committee has even digested the recommendations.

It is vital therefore that ALP Branches throw themselves behind the proposed teachers' and parents' campaign, and initiate action themselves. Even forcing the Government to adhere to its election promises can only be seen as a start. The issue of state aid must once more become a central part of ALP politics, despite Hawke's wishes.

## Schools Commission report Privatisation trend encouraged

"State aid will not be allowed to become an issue under my Government." This statement was made by Bob Hawke while opening extensions to Marist Brothers school, Kogarah NSW, on March 12, 1984.

Unfortunately for Hawke, and for the teachers, parents and pupils dependent on Government schooling, the Commonwealth Schools Commission report has made state aid a crucial question for the future public education in Australia.

Val Edwards

Member North Auburn (NSW) ALP Branch, Labor Women's Committee.

The report, *Funding Policies for Australian Schools*, recommends three options for the funding of public schools and a "preferred option" that could siphon a billion dollars of public money to private schools by 1988.

The implications of the recommendations are disastrous for Government schooling yet they merely accelerate the "privatisation" of education that has been proceeding apace for the last decade.

The figures here speak for themselves:

- Funding to private schools increased by 106 per cent between 1976 and 1983, up from \$279 million to \$574 million.

- By 1984 private schools catering for 24 per cent of pupils received \$585 million, while state schools catering for 76 per cent of students, received a paltry \$317 million.

- More than two thirds of the running costs of private schools are now borne by Government.

- As a consequence, the real level of private school fees has plummeted to 30 per cent of their 1968-69 levels.

- As a result, enrolments in private schools are increasing at two per cent per annum.

This increased Government subsidising of private schooling has become a self-perpetuating process. Because funding is on a per capita basis the drift of enrolments to private schools leads to a further infusion of public moneys into private school coffers.

At the same time real private expenditure on private schools is actually decreasing. Furthermore, Government subsidies have tended to be used to expand the overall private education system, rather than upgrading existing



"poor" private schools, which thereby remain "poor" enough to attract further government assistance.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission has already come under fire from the Federal Government Caucus Education Sub-Committee for the so-called "community standard" which is the basis of the funding allocation recommendations.

According to this standard it costs \$2305 per annum to educate a primary student and \$3402 for a secondary student.

Such a standard completely ignores the special needs of public school students and variations in school sizes (especially in country areas) that affect operating costs. The Commission is proposing that funding for private schools would range from 45 per cent down to a minimum of 12 per cent. As a result all private schools, no matter how wealthy, will continue to be funded.

The retrograde thinking that underlies the notion of a "community standard" places the needs and costs of educating disadvantaged or isolated students in the state school system on the same plane as the cost of educating well-beeled students in larger, and long-established, private schools.

Little wonder that the Caucus Education Sub-committee has criticised the funding formula as a "blank cheque to private schools at the expense of government schools."

When the Commission was established under the Whitlam Government to boost education resources, particularly through the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Commonwealth

was providing state schools with 10 per cent of their recurrent funds (ie to meet running costs).

Seven years of Fraser have whittled this down to seven per cent, while State Governments escalated their funding to private schools by an average 100 per cent!

One of the Federal ALP's major election promises in 1983 was to restore the pre-1975 level of Federal funding to state schools over three years at a (1983) cost of \$220 million.

However, the best proposal from the Commission is to postpone the restoration of this funding level by another two years. The other two options put forward would lop up to \$100 million off the target.

So devastating for public education are the recommendations that, for the first time in the Commission's history, minority reports — criticising the majority recommendations — were presented by two Commission members.

These were Joan Brown, ex-president of the Australian Council of State Schools Organisations representing the parents of the two and a half million state schools' students and Van Davey, president of the Australian Teachers Federation representing 164,000 teachers.

Writing in the May 21 issue of the NSW Teachers Federation journal, *Education*, Davey correctly pointed out that "private schools interests will use public funds to advance their private interests, not the public interest."

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