

Labor

combined with **SOCIALIST FIGHT**

MILITANT

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

13 DEC 1994 Volume 4, Number 9, November-December 1984

What now
for the Left?

The second Hawke Government

Retreat on
land rights

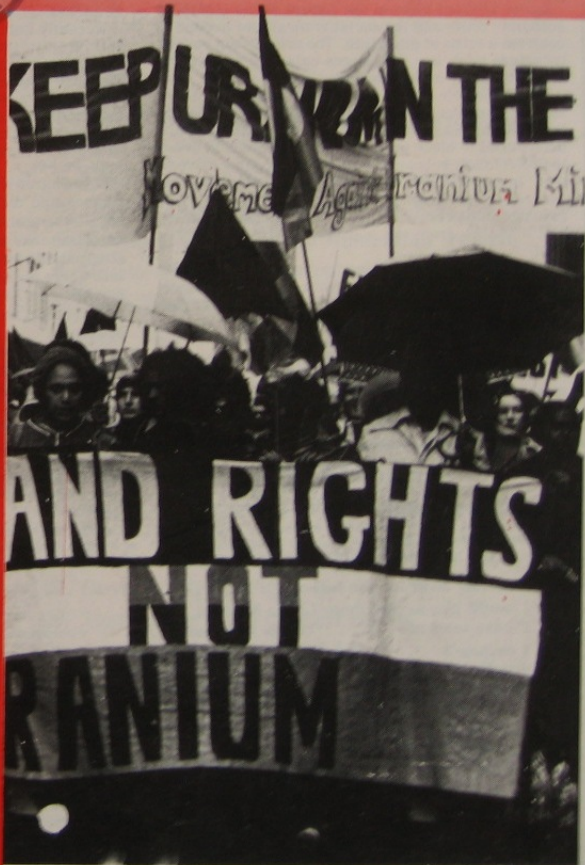
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Labor MILITANT

Labor Militant is a national, monthly, Internal Party journal which promotes socialist policies for the Labor Party. Each issue carries news and analysis from a socialist viewpoint of events and issues of particular interest to Party members.

We have devoted a lot of space over the past few years to discussing the Prices and Incomes Policy. In our view the Accord signed with the ACTU in February 1983 is no different to the social contract that proved so disastrous for British workers under Labour Governments in the 1970s. The experience of the Accord to date has resulted in cuts to wages and living standards and it will not give workers a share of the limited economic recovery now evident.

Labor Militant looks at the nature of the capitalist economic crisis and the socialist measures needed to confront a crisis of this depth. The crisis is not caused by wages rises, nor will wages cuts help resolve the crisis in favour of the working class.

We also devote a lot of attention to the threat of war and the wars 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. Reagan's drive to war increases the danger of nuclear war and Australia's participation as part of the U.S. war machine must cease. We must remove the U.S. bases and withdraw from the aggressive ANZUS military pact.

Labor Militant campaigns for progressive policies for liberation struggles world wide — in El Salvador, for Solidarity's struggle for socialist democracy in Poland, for the rights of the Palestinian people and against Israeli aggression in the Middle East, for the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines and against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, and for 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 important debate and discussion within Party branches and at Conference. We believe that the most free and open debate within the Party and affiliated unions on policy and practice is necessary to develop positions and actions that can represent the working class from whom Labor draws its strength.

But current structures of the Party and new democratic 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, unions and Branches.

Recently Labor Militant amalgamated with another left Party journal, Socialist Fight. This has strengthened our national coverage and distribution. We have now opened up the pages of the combined journal to a wider debate and we have invited contributions from those in the Left who have viewpoints which differ to those expressed in Labor Militant. We also encourage debate through letters and reviews.

If you agree with our 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.

'Put workers first'

The Party's Federal election slogan, "Put Australia first," expresses the aims of the Hawke Government — "consensus," nationalism, and reconciling the interests of big business and working people. In fact, a truer slogan would be: "Put bosses

first"

But the real job of a Labor Government is to put the interests of workers and the poor first. If you want to read about the ongoing fight for such policies, then subscribe to Labor Militant.

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letters to L.M.

Lange 'crumbling'

Your readers may be interested to know that David Lange, the New Zealand Prime Minister, has just started to 'crumble' the no-nukes policy the Labour Party went to the nation on.

He has now begun to say, "If it can be shown that nuclear-propelled warships are safe, then the Labour Party Government will let them use our harbour."

This flies in the face of an absolutely specific, cast-iron pledge to refuse entry to nuclear-propelled ships.

This "crumbling" occurred with 24-hours of a so-called opinion showing that only 28% of New Zealanders wanted nuclear-propelled ships kept out.

An earlier opinion poll showed 76% of New Zealanders opposed to nuclear-armed ships being allowed in.

All the best to you. Keep up the good work with Labor Militant.

Fraternally yours,
Hector MacNeill,
Wellington,
New Zealand

'Zionist terror in Sri Lanka'

More than fifty agents of MOSSAD described as a "terrorist Israeli institution" by the PLO Ambassador in Colombo arrived in Sri Lanka's capital recently to set up a sophisticated intelligence network from a "Special Interests" section of the U.S. Embassy there. Already, there is a group of former SAS mercenaries from Britain building a paramilitary force for the ruling right-wing regime's armed forces, who are well-known for their atrocities against the Tamil people in the North and East of the island.

This latest overt Zionist connection with the ruling Sri Lankan regime is a further strengthening of the latter's linkage with the imperialist War policies. Since gaining power in 1977, this regime under J.R. Jayawardena has systematically dismantled the country's democratic processes. They have violated civil

and political rights, implementing draconian Emergency Laws which have been widely condemned by human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. Through sheer brutal force of the armed services, police and drug squads, as Regan continues the repression of the struggle of the Tamil people for self-determination and of the progressive forces including Trade Unions, political parties, women's organisations, religious groups, and students.

The move towards Israel is a part of this regime's larger move away from Sri Lanka's non-alignment policy, towards alignment with U.S. imperialism in the Asian region especially. It is now getting well entrenched in its subvertent role as Regan's watchdog in the Indian Ocean — as the recent visit by Jayawardena to his master in the White House and earlier visits to the island by U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger and senior advisers revealed.

The Zionists are well-known to the U.S. imperialists in countering progressive forces in countries with pro-U.S. puppet regimes. Israeli intelligence agents have collaborated extensively with fascist regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Paraguay and

operating in their repressive nature and giving them the much experience, especially in learning Israeli interrogation (torture) methods.

It is by no means accidental that the forces behind the notorious Sabra and Chatilla massacres of August '82 in Lebanon, and those who planned and executed the latter, Tamil violence of murder and arson in July '83 in Sri Lanka have linked hands. With the backing of Washington, being Israel's "protecting power" in Colombo, it is part of the U.S. imperialist plans for the Asian region as a whole. With the setback in Lebanon and the growing situation in the Philippines, U.S. military interests are now linking in forces to project its power in

● To prevent the further massacre of Tamil people.

● To protect the democratic rights of the progressive

forces, organizations and individuals in Sri Lanka.

It is imperative that all well-meaning individuals and progressive organizations strongly protest at the Sri Lankan regime's linkage with Zionist terrorism and U.S. Imperialism.

Protest at the Sri Lankan regime's links with Zionist terrorism: Write to the High Commission of Sri Lanka, 35 Empire Circuit, Forrest, Canberra, A.C.T. 2603.

Endorsed by —
Sri Lanka Solidarity Group
Palestine Human Rights Committee

United Palestinian Workers
Tamil Eelam Association

Support Faris Glubb

Thank you for endorsing and supporting the public statement "Let Faris Glubb be heard," which was published in the "National Times" on Friday 6 July, 1984.

As you will be aware, Faris Glubb was denied entry to Australia ostensibly because he is a member of a PLO-affiliated organisation, the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists. The Federal Labor Government's refusal to admit Faris Glubb amounts to a prohibition against all Palestinians, as the overwhelming majority of Palestinians belong to PLO-affiliated bodies.

This refusal to grant an entry visa is an attempt to prevent the Australian public from exercising its right to make an informed judgement on the Middle East conflict.

There have been many Israeli acts, both official and unofficial, who have had the freedom to attack Palestinian rights, most often with completely spurious arguments, while Palestinian visitors have consistently been denied the right to counter these attacks. The Government's stance on this issue — to effectively exclude Palestinians as a whole from entering the

country — especially when all liberation movements except the PLO enjoy the right to be heard in Australia, must be seen as being both racist in character and untenable in a democracy, where the right of "free speech" prevails.

The Palestinian cause has gained much support from the Australian public over the past two years and, with this support, the need for the Palestinian people to present their position directly, rather than wholly through non-Palestinian supporters, has consequently also grown.

Within the Government and the Labor Party, many people are not happy with the decision to refuse entry to Faris Glubb. The Parliamentary Labor Party caucus established a special sub-committee to review the criteria for the granting of visas. In its submission to the caucus, the sub-committee recommended that Faris Glubb be granted the visa.

Originally, we had planned to reschedule Mr. Glubb's tour for early September 1984, but the Government's position precluded this possibility. We now hope to organize a tour for March 1985. However, as the Government's inconsistent, so-called "even handed" approach to the Middle East conflict has proved in the past, the right of the Palestinians to be heard in this country is not guaranteed and cannot be taken for granted, regardless of the recommendations of the caucus sub-committee. For this reason, we hope that you may be able to extend your support expressed in the public statement by writing to Mr Bill Hayden, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Parliament House, Canberra.

We thank you for your support and look forward to your continued participation in the Faris Glubb campaign, reassured in the knowledge that the Australian public is becoming increasingly aware of the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Yours in solidarity,
David Sprait,
National Co-ordinator,
Melbourne

Letters to L.M. should be sent to Labor Militant PO Box 372 Broadway, NSW 2007. Please keep them reasonably short so we can print as many as possible.

What now for the Left? The second Hawke Govt.

The Government is heading towards a big election victory on December 1 — the only question at this stage is by what kind of margin it will be.

While Labor was ahead at one point by 55% to the Liberals' 37%, as the campaign has got under way the margin has narrowed to give the Party about 50% of the preferences. This is still quite enough to win two-party preferred terms for a sizeable swing of seats to the Party.

The probable political annihilation of Andrew Peacock is very welcome, as is the prospect of the Coalition parties getting their worst drubbing since the days of Curtin.

But the main question facing the Left of the Party now is: Where do we go from here?

To begin with, we have to take a very realistic look at what has happened during the first Hawke Government — so that we can orient ourselves toward our tasks during Hawke's second term.

editorial

The fact is that we now have the most conservative Labor Government since the last Scullin period. This Government has consolidated itself as a firm friend of big business — accepting the doctrine that private profits come first, with any major benefits to working people put off for "better" economic times, if they ever come.

What Hawke/Hayden/Keating have essentially offered to the ruling class is their ability, because of their special relationship with the unions, to control by "consensus" the struggles of workers and other sectors for economic and social gains — a job which Fraser eventually failed to achieve by threats and more direct attacks.

The linchpin of the Hawke Government's strategy is the Prices-and-Incomes Accord, which imposes wage cuts on the unions "by consent" — of the union leaderships at least.

Under the Accord, we now are in the middle of another 12-month wage freeze — from April 1984 to April 1985 — to follow on Fraser's year-long "wage pause" in 1982-83. The promised 9.1% wage pause has now been shelved indefinitely.

Unions such as the Builders Labourers, the Furnishing Trades, and the Food Preservers have been threatened with disciplinary action for stepping outside the commission guidelines to defend their members' interests. Now State and Federal Labor Governments are combining to prepare to deregister the BLF — in a ruthless fashion which even Fraser didn't dare attempt.

The Budget implemented short-term "tax cuts" — but meanwhile held down spending on job-creating public works, on education, housing, health, transport, and social welfare generally.

On foreign policy, the National Conference majority systematically went through and erased any embarrassing radical planks which went against the pro-war and pro-imperialist line of the Government.

On East Timor, Central America, the Philippines, Vietnam and Kampuchea, the Government is now free to act to carry out the reactionary interests of Australian imperialism in preserving the social status quo.

On the hot issues of nuclear war, uranium mining, the U.S. bases, and AZUIS the Party is fast losing support because of the betrayals of the Conference and the Government on questions which have brought hundreds of thousands out into the streets of our cities.

Aboriginal people around the country are outraged by the

Government's sell-out of their right to vote mining on their land. There are even protests coming from actors and others over cuts in funding to professional theatre.

And now we look like entering 1985 with a Government intent on moving even further to the Right than at present.

Already we have noises about an Accord Mark II, including possible extra concessions from the ACTU on indirect taxation — traditionally anathema to the labour movement as being a particularly anti-worker form of tax.

With signs internationally of a slowdown in economic activity, the probability of a harsh mini-Budget and Budget next year is now growing.

This deepening trend to the Right by the Government is being accompanied by increasing steps to restrict democratic rights within the Party — to muzzle opposition to the leadership's reactionary policies and establish a dictatorship of the Hawke faction and the National Executive over the membership.

The restriction on membership preselection and the decision by the NE to admit the four extreme-right unions in Victoria are just the latest examples of the general move to crush the power of the Left in the Party.

What these measures mean overall is that the Right is determined not to allow a British situation to develop in the Australian Party — that is, the growth of a strong and militant Left with genuine links to workers in open struggle against the system, like the miners.

For the Left to keep to what has essentially been its recent strategy and concentrate mainly on the numbers game, at the expense of getting out and taking on the Right politically in all arenas — the Branches, unions, and publicly — only plays into Hawke's hands.

There is no solution in merely working toward getting more Left MPs into Parliament. Unless they are prepared to stand up and challenge the Hawke Government's betrayals of the interests of Party members and supporters, then they become mere apologists for these policies.

There is a point, we need to come out openly and challenge the premises of the accord. If the Left continues to accept this class-collaborationist scheme — whatever "adjustments" may be made to pretty it up in the coming year — we are only providing Left-sounding camouflage for the pro-business program of Hawke and Co.

This also means supporting militant unions like the BLF — which are fighting for wages, jobs, and improved conditions in a way which directly challenges the Accord and the guidelines.

Secondly, we have to openly link up with all the progressive movements in the labour movement and society generally — especially the mass peace movement which is the biggest single issue drawing vast numbers of people into political activism right now.

The lesson of the past is that it was precisely these mass upheavals, such as the Anti-Conscription Fight of World War I and the anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s and early 1970s, which have forced the Labor leadership to take up progressive stands — not getting the numbers on Party committees and preselection panels, etc.

The Left faces a major crisis as we enter the era of the second Hawke Government. Unless we organise and fight in a way we have not until now, we will be increasingly irrelevant to the course of the Party.

A serious reassessment is needed, now. The alternative is disaster for the Left, the Party, and the Australian working class — as the Liberals reorganise to mount a Thatcher-style offensive as the Accord falls apart under the impact of a new world economic crisis.

unions

Vic anger at NE unions' ruling

ALP National Executive's decision to admit the four right-wing unions came as a shock to most of the Victorian Left. Great hopes had been raised that the Centre-Left would agree to defer the issue for up to 12 months to allow a full discussion in the Party.

Richard Lane

Member Flemington (Vic) ALP Branch

Many on the Left, however, seem to have accepted the decision as a fait accompli. No campaigning to reject and reverse the decision has been undertaken since the NE met: no leaflets have been produced; there has been no special State Conference as earlier promised; few if any rank-and-file or women's meetings have been held; and now October Conference has been cancelled. This is a standard pre-election ploy; but we are not in a standard situation.

WA workers demand: 'Drop O'Connor charges'

More than 3000 workers gathered outside the Western Australian Central Law Courts in Perth on October 3 to protest against the extortion charges laid against Transport Workers Union State Secretary John O'Connor.

Matthew Power

Member Marylands (WA) Branch and Administrative and Clerical Officers Association

Leaflets distributed by the WA Trades and Labor Council made it clear O'Connor was simply trying to recover money owed to a TWU member by an unscrupulous millionaire employer.

O'Connor did not receive any money personally, nor is this claimed.

A black ban which was placed on the employer is now being called extortion. O'Connor was only doing what all union officials do almost daily. The act of charging him is therefore a blatant attack on the whole trade union movement.

In addition to the rally held during O'Connor's first court appearance, more

than 20,000 workers throughout Western Australia stopped work that day. The campaign around the O'Connor case is steadily gaining momentum, with job-site meetings, posters, leaflets, and car stickers being used to get the facts around to workers. One of the major problems with this campaign has been laws as a pretext to largely black out the campaign and the facts of the case.

Coming on top of the slanders against the Builders Labourers Federation and the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, the charge of extortion conlures up the impression in people's minds of something bad doing his duty as a union official.

The principle here is that criminal law should not be used in industrial matters.

If O'Connor is convicted, he faces a 14-year gaol term. Moreover, union officials members' rights without the prospect of a long prison sentence.

The Burke Labor Government's handling of this issue has been shameful. Burke has stated that he will not get involved, and that 'justice' must be done via the courts.

Now that October Conference is gone,

it is likely that the next one will not be un-til June 1985! That would mean no discussion of policy for 15 months, let alone any chance to affect it before the State elections. And by June next year, the affiliations issue may well be as good as dead.

But the Left can still revitalise the campaign by building rank-and-file, Branch, and Federal Electorate Assembly opposition, and by pushing for a December or January Conference. For, in spite of a certain demoralisation, the rank and file (not only in the Socialist Left) are still angry and prepared to fight if shown a way forward.

There is also still considerable opposition from the Left unions, eg, the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association has carried resolutions opposing the National Executive decision at the union's Federal and State levels.

If the Left as a body does not start organising that rank-and-file feeling, then those who are prepared to do so, must do so.

However, the Burke Government is already involved. It sent the police around to the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Hassell, after his allegations were made in Parliament. The Government has the power to drop the charges, but has refused to do so.

O'Connor has received broad support from the whole trade union movement — and the Burke government has received well-earned criticism.

O'Connor returns to court on December 20 and 21 from the preliminary hearing. Further industrial action has been proposed then. In the meantime, a further 150,000 leaflets are being produced by the TLC.

The unions have been well-organised in their campaign to have the charges dropped. But this is a campaign we need to take deep into the Party itself.

It is a Labor Government which allowed these charges to be heard. We now have to force the Government to act to make sure no court in WA will hear these charges.

The Government is now faced with the prospect of national industrial action if it does not move to quash the O'Connor charges.

No to deregistration Unholy alliance against BLF

The continuing campaign against the Builders Labourers Federation — culminating in moves to deregister the union Federally, in Victoria, and most recently in NSW — is the single biggest scandal in the labour movement today.

Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

The fact that building employers, Labor Governments, the ACTU, the NSW Labor Council, and the Building Trades Group of tradesmen's unions in NSW are united in an unholy alliance against the BLF represents the worst anti-union attack mounted for many years — not excluding the period of the Fraser regime.

Why is everyone ganging up on the BLF?

The fundamental answer lies in the fact the BLF is today the greatest obstacle to the "industrial peace" required to maintain the ALP-ACTU Accord — the key to the Hawke Government's strategy of holding down struggles for improved wages and conditions in the interests of higher corporate profits.

A feature in the October 15 Financial Review hit the nail on the head about the reason for the drive against the BLF.

The lead paragraph explained: "You have got to go back a long time to find such drastic steps by a Government against a trade union as the Hawke Government's threat to run out the Builders Labourers Federation. As Michael Stutchbury reports, it has to do with policing the all-important prices and incomes accord; the Government is the jaller, the ACTU the police force."

"The BLF's crime has been brazenly to challenge the restrictions of the ALP-ACTU prices and incomes accord and the Arbitration Commission pay guidelines," the article continued.

"The Federal and Victorian Governments' strong stand will probably work in the short term by keeping the BLF in line. But few in the industry are anywhere near confident that this will produce a lasting peace. If the current wages system cannot cope with such a maverick union, then a confrontation seems certain to loom again if the system is to continue for several years," the article concluded.

This drive to deregister the BLF comes on top of the continuing moves to exclude the union from its traditional work in the



Sydney builders labourers march for safety on the job. Attacks on BLF are against interests of all unions in the en-

struction industry. In favor of the tame-cat, right-wing controlled Federated Ironworkers Association and Australian Workers Union.

Major disputes have broken out over the Kurri Kurri aluminium smelter in the NSW Hunter Valley, the MCG light towers issue, and the Alcoa aluminium project at Portland, Victoria. In all cases, employers, Governments, the Arbitration Commission, and unions have collaborated to attempt to push the BLF out.

Most recently, the focus has been on the long-running strike by BLF at the Police Centre site in Sydney. The dispute, which began over violence against a BLF delegate and includes safety and other issues, is now being artificially prolonged as an excuse to get at the BLF.

The demand by the BLF that all 14 workers sacked from the site be reinstated has been rejected by the company, the ACTU, and tradesmen's unions, because of alleged threats and violence by some BLF members against tradesmen, who continued to work while the builders labourers were on strike — as well as breaking the BLF's picket line.

Allegations of violence and corruption have been rejected by the BLF. Instead the union has countered with charges of violations of safety regulations at the Police Centre and other city sites.

The union has charged that Department of Industry Inspectors are corrupt, and that safety violations were responsible for the death of three builders labourers on Sydney jobs in the space of a month.

The NSW BLF held a militant march of 2500 through city streets on October 17 to

protest lack of safety in the industry. This mobilisation also served to counter a mass meeting of tradesmen, sponsored by the Labor Council and the Building Trades Group, later the same day.

This meeting, and the march which followed, was much smaller than the BLF one. Moreover, it was chaired by that arch "friend of the worker," right-wing Labor Council Secretary John McBean. It called for a Government inquiry to witch-hunt the BLF, and the possible expulsion of the federation from the ACTU.

The irony of this campaign against the BLF by other building unions, including the calls for Government inquiries into alleged corruption and support for deregistration, is that runs directly against the long-term interests of all building workers. And it sets an extremely dangerous precedent for the legislative destruction of any "troublesome" union in the future.

Once again, we can see that Labor Governments can get away with anti-union measures which prove impossible for the Liberals. Yet, by backing up these moves against the BLF, the majority of the trade union movement is cutting its own throat.

Imagine what the next Thatcherite Liberal-National Government would do with the weapon of legislative deregistration!

This scandalous attack on the BLF must be made a big issue in the Party. We must begin a campaign to defend the BLF — and in particular to demand an immediate halt to all moves for deregistration of the most militant union in the country.

Blainey's 'All Australian' racism

All for Australia
By Geoffrey Blainey
Methuen Haynes
176 pages
\$5.95 paperback
ISBN 0 454 00828 7

Geoffrey Blainey's "All for Australia" has been highlighted in the media for its strange assertion that there is a pro-Asian "Secret Room" in the Immigration Department, and for its reliance on letters from "ordinary Australians" — who supposedly complain of the smell of goat meat cooking and the sight of noodles drying on clothes lines.

Leon Fariss
Member Camperdown (NSW) Branch
and Municipal Employees Union

While focusing on the strangeness of some of his evidence and some of his claims, a stress on these factors undercuts the use by Blainey of a series of standard racist arguments, which are actually more important in his thinking. Certainly, in the fight against racism, debunking an idea such as "Asians are taking Australians' jobs" is crucial.

As well, Blainey implicitly supports the notion that an influx of Asians will devalue property.

He claims that there is no tiny minority "out there" who physically attack Asians (what about the fascist National Action?), while declaring that the "Asians out" graffiti represents a groundswell of opinion in the working-class suburbs.

Blainey extols "old-time Australian virtues" such as cultural homogeneity and the backyard barbecue, while declaring that "the chief weakness of the White Australia Policy in that very different era [pre-World War 2], was that it expressed itself in offensive language."

The media and Blainey's academic colleagues lamely concentrate their fire on his "yearning for some kind of Anglo-Saxon Australia which existed 40 years ago," as does Associate Professor John Ingles in the Sydney Morning Herald, for example.

But our problem as socialists is to raise the real issues of racism in Australia — its causes and the solutions.

Of course, we would be foolish indeed to rely on the capitalist media for consistent anti-racism. Their interests are in line with the interests of other bosses in dividing worker against worker at every possible opportunity in order that profit-making remains an unassailable virtue in this society.

I suspect that it is for this sort of reason that there has been no challenge to Blainey's use of evidence from the Sydney Mail Exchange employment lists.

It is a well-known fact on the Left that the bosses at Sydney Mail Exchange employ mostly Vietnamese (or Turks or Armenians) at different times, specifically in order to have a workforce divided against itself.

Blainey unjustifiably uses the same "fact" of Asian bias to support his "Secret Room" theory. This distortion has gone unchallenged so far in the media.

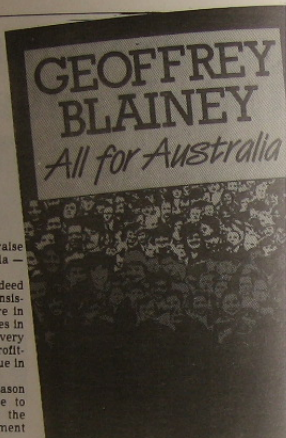
Blainey claims that for the "middle-class pro-Asian lobby," "Racism is seen as an infection that suddenly can run wild." That Australians "can't be trusted."

Later he writes: "If it is true that the neighbourhood is more important for the unskilled man, then the disruption of that neighbourhood by newcomers must strongly affect his daily life and his sense of security."

Blainey's evocation of the homogeneous working-class community is a fantasy designed to steeple the central problem of what could stimulate a wave of mass racism. That central problem is of course the state of the economy and unemployment — and the use right-wing forces make of it.

If it is good enough for migrants to be utilised as factory fodder in good times, then the real problem of racism is not race, but jobs. Migrants don't cause unemployment, the bosses do.

If there aren't enough jobs to go around, then unemployment is the problem — not migration. To cut the migrant intake or take whites only won't produce any more jobs.



When BHP keeps making record profits (such as an 150% increase to \$922 million in 1984) after sacking thousands from its steel plants, and then buys into non-job-creating industries such as open-pit coal mines (Utah), then it can be seen that Blainey is missing the point entirely in blaming Asian migrants.

It is dishonest for Blainey to claim that in initiating the current migration debate, he didn't see it as a future prop to the Liberals' thus far bottled-up racism. Blainey knew as well as anyone else in the country that there would be an early election.

His claim to the contrary is absurd. Now we see that the Liberals in their desperation have unleashed Michael (The Mouth) Hodgman upon migrant communities and have formally abandoned the previous bipartisan migration policy.

But that was to be expected. However, it was unfortunate that the NSW Labor Council has bowed to the pressure of the racists to the extent of calling for the dispersal of migrant communities.

This kind of argument only undercuts the good work done by groups like the Combined Trade Unions Against Racism, which was formed after the fascist National Action began a campaign of violence and harassment against migrant groups and others they disagreed with earlier this year.

Certainly, it is only through a big campaign carried through by Party, union, and community groups, such as CTAAR, that racism can be effectively combated.

Aboriginal affairs

Hawke retreats on land rights

The statement by Bob Hawke that the Federal Government's planned land rights legislation will not allow Aboriginals to directly or indirectly veto mining or exploration on their tribal land is a stab in the back to the Aboriginal people.

Coral Wynter

Member Darlington (NSW) Branch

The joint statement by Hawke and WA Premier Brian Burke on October 19 also stated that Federal land rights legislation would not be allowed to override State laws. This in effect means that the Federal law will be ineffective — and will let the Premiers, including Burke and Queensland's Joh Bjelke-Petersen, off the hook.

Aboriginal representatives have slammed the move by Hawke as a sell-out of the land rights struggle.

It seems that the Federal will do no more than present general principles to apply to land rights, with limited practical application.

Apparently, Hawke's proposed law would allow the WA Government to restrict applications for land from Aboriginals to vacant Crown land for



which no public purpose had been allocated.

The joint statement goes against promises given by Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Clyde Holding that Aboriginal rights to inalienable freehold title would be upheld; that sacred sites would be protected; that Aboriginal control of mining would be maintained; and that negotiations would occur over mining royalties and compensation.

The statement also clearly ignores ALP policy, which states: "Aboriginal and Islander people shall have the right to refuse permission for mining on their land or to impose conditions under which mining may proceed."

This retreat by the Federal Government on its obligations comes after a major campaign by the Liberal and National Parties, and mining and pastoral interests against the land rights movement. It is yet another example of the Labor Government's rightward course on virtually every major issue today.

It presents Party members with a challenge to begin a campaign within and outside the Party to force the Government to live up to its basic responsibilities — to provide real land rights and compensation for the destruction imposed on Aboriginal society over 200 years.

Burke rejects Seaman report

The Seaman Land Inquiry was published in September. It was conceived as an Aboriginal land inquiry, took more than one year to compile, considered 233 written submissions, heard evidence from 1046 people, and travelled more than 50,000 kilometres.

Leon Harrison

Member Cottesloe/Mosman Park (WA) Branch

Seaman is possibly the most extensive inquiry ever conducted into Aboriginal people's perception of land, their relationship to it and their desperate need for the return of their land.

Such an inquiry represented the first real opportunity Aboriginal people have ever had to contribute meaningfully to formulating adequate and effective land rights legislation. Legislation like this would do much to give Aboriginal people identity and independence, after 150 years of alien European control.

However, the Burke Labor Govern-

ment has refused to implement important aspects of Seaman's report. The mining companies, the WA Chamber of Commerce, and the Primary Industry Association, however, have been pleased. Aboriginal communities throughout WA have been angered and disillusioned by Burke's response.

While the Government has agreed to hand over reserve land, and mission land where churches have agreed, references to Crown Land have been so vague as to dilute the Reserve land also has still to be handed over.

The Seaman Inquiry continually stressed that control of mining on Aboriginal land should be left to Aboriginal people, and that they should have the right to veto if they so choose.

"I have recommended systems of tenure and organisation which place decision-making about mining issues firmly in the hands of the Incorporated communities which own the land concerned."

"My assessment is that there is no compelling economic reason why, in the interest of the broader community,

Aboriginal communities should not be afforded control over mining or petroleum activity on Aboriginal land."

However, the Burke Government came out opposed to a veto on mining and exploration when Aboriginal people have been given secure title to Crown Land. But, without this right, Aboriginal people have no genuine control over their land.

Typical consequences of mining were seen in Bob Brotho's film Munda Nyurtingu, in a scene where Western Mining had totally destroyed vegetation and topsoil in mining areas of northern WA.

There has to be pressure by activists to ensure the legitimate aspirations of Aboriginal communities are met. The Burke Government is supporting the mining companies, and using the argument that the "right to veto" was defeated in the Senate if implemented.

Only with the implementation of Justice Seaman's recommendations will the Labor Government win credibility with the Aboriginal community. Only when this happens will Burke's promises of land rights given before Labor won of land rights in WA, be seen as genuine.

NSW Labor Women affirm Left policies

The latest Annual Conference of NSW Labor Women saw the reaffirmation of its stand on a wide range of progressive issues. The Conference, however, was considerably smaller than in past years, with only about half the 800 eligible delegates attending.

This low turnout appears to be a response to the scorn with which the official Party machine in the State treats the decisions of Labor Women's Conferences.

Val Edwards

Member North Auburn (NSW) Branch, NSW Labor Women's Committee and Printing and Kindred Industries Union

Year after year, the organisation has held the reputation of being the most left-wing body within the State Party. The policies which Labor Women forwards to State Conference, however, generally don't even get on to the Conference agenda.

Despite this disillusionment, the September Conference took a series of important policy decisions which reject the right-wing course of the Federal Party leadership.

One of the first events of the weekend was a talk by Robynne Murphy, an activist in the Jobs For Women campaign which is currently using BHP for discrimination in employment practices. Labor Women has been instrumental in gaining the campaign \$10,000 in government funding before legal aid became available.

One feature of contributions throughout the weekend was a strong undercurrent of opposition to the Prices-and-Incomes Accord. While not the majority sentiment, a sizeable minority recognised the fraudulent character of this agreement. One resolution passed stated:

"We support the principle of equal pay for women. We note that average weekly earnings for women are approximately 2/3 average weekly earnings for men.

"As one measure to combat this inequality, we give full support to any claims made for re-evaluation of women's work, even though such a claim would be outside current National Wage Guidelines.

"We reject the ACTU's failure to support submissions made to the 1983 National Wage case by the National Council of Women, the Union of Australian Women and the Women's Electoral Lobby."

At another point, the Conference resolved to support the Social Rights Campaign, which has taken up the social and economic issues which the Accord is trying to put clamps on.

The motion passed read: "That this Conference supports the aims of the Social Rights Campaign."

As always at Women's Conference, there was strong agreement with calls for the abolition of ASIO and State Special Branches. In the light of their attack on civil liberties of Australian citizens and the way they are used to attack the Left, Conference also called for the repeal of Item 4(d) of the Law Reform Policy within current NSW Branch policy, which allows for "non-party attitude and vote according to conscience" on abortion and homosexual law reform.

Labor Women, which has an active sub-committee working on Aboriginal issues, was firm on demanding the immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aborigines on the question of protection of sacred sites.

Land rights were recognised as the single most important concern for Aboriginal people, but a workshop at the Conference also passed resolutions concerning Aboriginal health and education, which were approved by the Conference.

The refusal of the NSW Head Office to call for rank-and-file preselection for the coming Federal elections was condemned by the Conference.

In the Foreign Affairs debate, a motion was passed calling for the removal of U.S. bases from Australian soil, and to ban nuclear-powered and armed ships and flights from Australian ports and airfields. Conference clearly recognised that these bases tied us into the American war machine.

Congratulations were given to the New Zealand Labor Party for its stand on nuclear-powered ships.

Another resolution called for the immediate end of all development and military aid to the Philippines Government until human rights are fully restored in that country. The Pol Pot

regime was condemned and the Australian Government called on to recognise the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

Support was given to the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador. Conference called on the U.S. Government to immediately withdraw all of its military personnel in Central America, and supported the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua.

The withholding of a visa from journalist Faris Glubb was viewed as "an infringement of the democratic right of free speech and also representing discrimination against the Palestinian people and their rights which have been recognised in ALP policy on the Middle East."

Following the sell-out on uranium policy by the recent National Conference, which has caused a lot of disillusionment within the ranks of the ALP, conference passed a strongly worded motion on uranium, which read:

"We oppose any policy which is intended to extend uranium mining in this country and we support the anti-uranium policies passed by the Victorian Branch of the ALP early in 1984. They are:

- No new mines.
- No new contracts from existing uranium mines, or mines with multi-ore bodies.
- Strict controls on existing contracts from existing mines, including prohibition of exports to any country either producing or developing nuclear weapons or reprocessing spent fuel.
- Cancellation of all exploration licences.
- Strict conditions on Aboriginal land rights, environmental and health issues.
- Creation of a uranium enforcement policy."

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Wide support gained BHP 'Jobs for Women' case continues

After winning legal aid for their anti-discrimination court case against Australian Iron and Steel, the Jobs for Women campaign has been through three sets of hearings in the NSW Equal Opportunity Tribunal, with a total of seven days already having been spent in court. A further four days will be spent in Wollongong courts from November 6-9. The Tribunal is not expected to come to any decisions on liability before the end of this year.

Robynne Murphy

Member Wollongong (NSW) Branch

The women claim that Australian Iron & Steel, a subsidiary of BHP, discriminated against them when hiring. As a result, the women lost years of wages and seniority. And, in the job-slashing campaign of 1982, many of the women who had won jobs only two years previously during their first campaign to "Open the Gates A&S - Jobs for Women," lost their jobs.

Much of the hearing up until this point has contained evidence from Chloe Refshaug, the principal researcher in a case study on the effects of weight-limited jobs on the employment and promotion prospects of women at A&S. The study originated from the initial complaints made by some of the women in 1980.

In response to Counselor for Equal Opportunity Carmel Niland's initial enquiries, A&S cited Section 36 of the NSW Factories, Shops and Industries Act as a reason for limiting their employment of women in terms of recruitment, and in terms of women's eligibility for both the full range of jobs and for promotion.

Refshaug has claimed in the Tribunal that her report is conservative. Including the figure of the job classifications that could be done by women. Refshaug used a figure of 30% as an average of women in the workforce in the Illawarra.

Under cross examination from Jim Spigelman, appearing for A&S,

Refshaug said that any divergence from that 30% figure would be a "social indicator of the state of employment of women in industry and an indication of a segregated workforce."

She told the Tribunal that sex segregation in the workforce was "an undesirable feature of a democratic society which where people have the freedom to choose." In the report, a figure of 5% was used to indicate the percentage of women working at A&S during the survey in 1981, before the retrenchments.

During the days of the Tribunal, the women have received numerous telegrams, from as far away as the WA Trades and Labor Council, to APTU members at Rushcutters Bay Mall Centre.

Included as observers during the Tribunal have been representatives from Port Kembla FIA, the South Coast Labor Council, South Coast Miners Federation, the Wollongong Women's Centre, NOW from TAFE in Wollongong, members of

the APTU, including their Acting Federal President, Alan Jarman, and many other supporters of the Jobs for Women campaign.

Meanwhile, in Melbourne the ACTU called a special Women's Conference on Affirmative Action, where a motion from the Australian Teachers Federation supporting the Jobs for Women campaign was passed unanimously. The conference was held to look at the government's "Green Paper."

The motion read: "The Conference extends its support to the women involved in the case before the Equal Opportunities Tribunal in NSW concerning the discrimination faced by women who sought employment in the steelworks in Wollongong."

Louise Casson, member of the Jobs for Women campaign and endorsed by the South Coast Labor Council as an official observer, was able to point out the contradiction of BHP being chosen recently as one of the 28 companies to participate in a voluntary Federal Government pilot program on affirmative action, which they will probably implement in Whyalla while in Wollongong. 47 women are fighting in the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal against the company's alleged discriminatory hiring policy.

WA Budget friendly to business

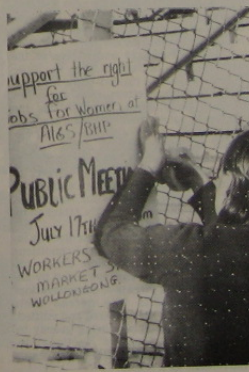
The Burke Government's Budget, delivered on October 9, was, surprisingly, geared to aiding big business. The Confederation of WA Industry welcomed the reduction in payroll tax, FID as well as providing more assistance to companies to train more apprentices. Executive Director Basil Atkinson said these proposals had been contained in his organisation's Budget submission.

Stephen Robson

Member Fremantle (WA) Branch

Last year's Budget had seen steep increases in taxes. This year the Government avoided any new tax increases, instead relying on the fact that taxation revenue will automatically continue to rise rather steeply. The Budget estimates put this at 13.2%.

Some concessions the Government meted out are to provide for an extra 485 staff in schools, contained in a 10.8% increase in education spending, and an increase of 157% in funds allocated to housing.



Weakening the labour movement Political effects of the Accord

In the previous issue of *Labor Militant* we ran one of two talks on *The Accord — Its Meaning for Women*, given at a session at the Women and Labour Conference held in Brisbane over the weekend of July 13-15 this year. Below is the companion talk presented by Pat Brewer.

There has been a certain level of assessment of the economic effects of the Accord between the ALP and the ACTU over the period of the Hawke Government. But there is the other aspect of the Accord — its political effects — which have to be recognised as well. In the long term these effects are even more damaging to the working class in Australia.

The Accord is a political strategy of class collaboration. The very notions of consensus and reconciliation are attempts to provide a view of common class interests which will unite workers and bosses, upper and lower classes, the oppressors and the oppressed, against some unspecified enemy.

This not only politically disarms and confuses the working class and all the oppressed groups within society, but it also breeds the kind of xenophobic racism and nationalism which have led to the major wars of this century for control of markets and resources.

Yet, if you examine the notion of "common good" at the level of daily experience, no activist is likely to be fooled. If your boss came to you wanting to discuss something of mutual benefit you would be suspicious that some ulterior motive lurked behind such an offer — one that was not to your advantage.

Years of experience have taught workers the hard way that threats to profits determine the actions of bosses, no matter how nice the boss may be as an individual. In fact, it is recognition of this very fact that has led to workers winning all their gains in wages and conditions in the past. The threat of industrial action, which at its heart is a threat to stop or slow down profits, has been the only way any gains have been won by the working class.

There is no "common interest" about profits. The quest for the highest level for a tiny elite is the motivating force of capitalism.

This elite is getting smaller and smaller — and yet their share of the wealth produced by the labour of the majority of the population is increasing. At the same time unemployment and poverty are growing at alarming rates. Yet this is the

"common good" we are being asked to sacrifice for.

Instead, the Accord increases the ideological hold of capital during a period where the cracks in the system are becoming clearer and clearer.

A recession strips back the thin veneer of equality and democracy that obscures the rapacious greed of the capitalist system. Rising unemployment, falling living standards, massive increases in poverty, and escalating threats of war show very clearly which class has to pay for the crisis of capitalism as an international economic system.

In such a period there is a political credibility crisis for capital. So the ideological message of the Accord is crucial to obscure the increasingly naked class divisions in society.

And the message of the Accord is not just the question of "common interest." It is also contained in the layers who are pushing it.

It is the leaderships of the traditional working class organisations who are selling the message of class collaboration to the working class. The ALP and trade union leaderships are acting to protect profits at the expense of the conditions of the working class. That is what is so politically dangerous.

No conservative government could have inflicted the cuts in wages and conditions and imposed the two year no-strike agreement of the September 1983 National Wage case, without carrying out a massive fight and defeat of the working class movement.

Just think of the rigidity of the National Wage case guidelines. No anomalies clauses are allowed. The fight for the shorter working week has been stopped. No productivity case is possible for the life of the agreement.

These leaderships not only agreed to these provisions, but they agreed to police them as well. Workers and unions who have won struggles for wages and conditions have been openly attacked by other union leaderships.

The Labor Government has directly intervened to prevent wage and conditions catch-up claims allowable under the guidelines. Any independent action by unions is met with threats of deregulation.

Union officials who defend their workers' rights are attacked and vilified. They are told they are being greedy by putting their members' sectional interests above those of the trade union movement as a whole.

The classic example of the lengths that the trade union leaderships are prepared to go was at the ACTU Congress in 1983 when Gall Cotton, an organiser for the Food Preservers Union, was attacked in such a way for daring to defend her members' right to fight and win wage catch-ups — her members being those greedy female, migrant workers in the food processing industry.

And the way these attacks have been mounted has been to use all the traditional weapons of the bosses. They foster the divisions in the working class to break the unity in action won during the course of many common struggles.

Strong, well-organised, more conscious sections of the workforce are told not to be greedy if they want to defend their wages and conditions. They are told they should sacrifice in the interest of the weaker, less-organised, more politically backward sectors. That is, they are told to sacrifice for the sections which are predominantly migrant, women, etc.

It turns the notion of unity on its head. It becomes unity in weakness, not unity in strength.

This sort of unity turns worker against worker and reinforces the historical divisions that capital has fostered in the working class. It bolsters and builds in the long term the racism and sexism that exist today — which progressive forces in the union movement are struggling to overcome.

This is a ghastly parody of unity. It makes it a crime to be well-organised and prepared to fight. It disarms the working class by making the weakest sectors the example to be followed and it is exactly the opposite of what's needed to build and strengthen the weaker sections.

It goes against the living experience of how gains have been won in the past. The necessity of being well organised and united in action have been learnt with great sacrifices. And the stronger sections have led the way, broken the grounds for the weaker sections to follow. This has been the way that gains have been won for the whole union movement.

This has been the experience that oppressed sectors like women have looked to in their fight for greater equality. They have learnt in the trade unions, in the labour movement, and in the Women's Liberation Movement that you win by organisation.

You fight to get the broadest unity to advance and win gains. You get male

trade unionists to take up the struggle to achieve equality, not to share the inequality further.

And by reinforcing divisions in the working class and oppressed by saying, "He earns more than me, make him suffer," or "She earns less than you, so don't be greedy," you divert attention from the common source of the problem — the profiteering of the capitalist class.

But there is the long-term effect from the role that the ALP and trade union leaderships are playing by their "divide and rule" methods.

Their own members will become cynical, demoralised, and disillusioned with their leaderships, and this paves the way for future right-wing victories.

This is how Thatcher swept to power in Britain. After years of a social contract

like the Accord, the Labour government was defeated.

But there is a further confusion concerning the Accord. Some of the most ardent advocates and supporters are those who have traditionally been identified as the Left.

They may have different reasons for their support, but they actively support and defend the Accord. They may say that it could and should be made to work in a way that would benefit workers — but they ignore how it has been used and continues to be used.

They brush aside the test of experience and substitute their own wishes and intentions for hard facts.

The experience of the Accord has been wage cuts. In fact, the cost of labour has been driven back to the 1969 level. Conditions have been eroded. Direct and indirect taxes have increased.

There have been greater handouts to big business. There has been the crippling of the public health and public education systems to the benefit of the private systems. All this and more has already eroded, and will continue to erode, the standard of living of the working class.

This economic reality, coupled with the political consequences of demobilisation and demoralisation, means that the Accord is a barrier to the development of a socialist movement in Australia.

It prevents the growth of independent activity of the working class and the oppressed sectors of society, and instead encourages passivity.

It promotes the view that social change comes from deals worked out at the top and handed down "to the masses." It promotes the view that any program for action should be confined to reliance on "the leaders."

But socialism can only be won, especially in advanced capitalist countries like Australia, by a program of action in which working people and all layers of the oppressed, themselves, act to change their social, economic, and political conditions.

Any socialist government in Australia will have to rely on, and actually evolve out of, a politicised and actively involved population. Self activity, not passivity, is essential to this. You only have to look at the gains women have made in the past years to realise this.

By being involved in a political fight on a day-by-day basis, the exploited and oppressed can break through the ideological barriers which currently prevent them from taking up socialist solutions.

It is for this reason that any socialist strategy must reject the Accord. By its very nature it is a barrier to the development of a socialist movement.

It heads the movement in exactly the wrong direction. Instead we must fight to defend and extend the social, economic, and political needs of the working class.



Accord calls on strong sections of union movement to sacrifice for less-organised sections: a parody of unity, and no advantage to women.

Lessons of the French SP/CP Government

The Mitterrand experience



The new French SP Government. President Mitterrand (front right), Prime Minister Fabius (front left).

The 1981 election of Socialist Party candidate François Mitterrand to the Presidency of France, and of a Socialist/ Communist majority to the National Assembly undoubtedly expressed the aspirations of millions of French working people for a Government that truly represented their interests.

But three years later, support for Mitterrand has fragmented and dissipated. The June 17 European Parliament elections saw this "Government of the Left" suffer its worst defeat since the unprecedented success of 1981.

Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

Between them, Mitterrand's Socialist Party and the Communist Party won only one-third of the votes.

At this rate, Mitterrand will face a right-wing majority in the Assembly after the 1986 elections. He himself may well lose office in 1988.

What has happened?

Initially the Mitterrand Administration introduced a number of major reforms.

Substantial sectors of industry such as the banks, steel, and metal manufacturing were nationalised. Steps were also taken to strengthen the rights of trade unions, and there were promises of political and social liberties, especially for women.

But Mitterrand's program did not take into account the onset of a severe economic downturn in 1981.

At first, Mitterrand tried to spend his way out of the recession; increased consumption would stimulate production and employment, it was thought. It didn't, and out the window went Mitterrand's reforms.

The employers wanted increased rates of profit, and reduced wages and social services.

Mitterrand could have taken the offensive against the employers, making them pay for the crisis of their own capitalist system. He could have radically reduced the working week as an antidote to rising unemployment (another promise he had made but forgotten) and extended nationalisation to the firms threatening lay-offs.

But Mitterrand chose instead to retreat, forcing those who had put him into office, the working people, to pay for the economic crisis.

The SP-CP Coalition headed by Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy imposed austerity from mid-1982 onwards with the adoption of the Delors Plan, the so-called "rigorous plan" for the restructuring of industry.

This meant unemployment and wage cuts. For the first time in 37 years, a wage freeze was imposed, despite inflation of more than 8%.

Unemployment now stands at around 2.5 million, the result of thousands of plants closing under restructuring.

Workers in the steel, shipbuilding, coal-mining, and vehicle industries have been particularly hard hit by unemployment.

But they have not taken it lying down. In December 1983, 17,000 workers at the Talbot car plant struck against plans to cut their numbers by 3000.

The strike was sabotaged by the Communist Party-led General Labor Federation (CGT). The union leaders, in alliance with a Government that included four CP ministers, signed a deal with Talbot permitting the sacking of 1900 workers — mainly immigrants.

The fact that immigrant workers were the scapegoat for the crisis is a measure of the degree to which the SP-CP Government had retreated from its original perspectives.

The Talbot clash was repeated more heatedly in the heavy-industrial Lorraine region. With the threat of 30,000 jobs being lost, steelworkers clashed with police. The workers' disillusionment with the Government's performance was vented by burning down a local Socialist Party headquarters.

The Government's anti-working class measures at home were coupled with old-fashioned military adventures abroad: intervention in Chad and Lebanon.

Mitterrand's promise of self-determination for the Kanak people of New Caledonia was lost among a welter of electoral proposals designed to impose genuine independence.

The first measure of disenchantment with the CP-SP Coalition's policies came in the municipal elections of 1983. The Communist Party's 1981 electoral base of 15.35% was particularly heavily eroded.

The process was carried further in the 1984 European elections, when the CP's vote slumped to 11.2% — just scraping in ahead of the neo-fascist National Front headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen.

This vote for Le Pen was the most alarming outcome of Mitterrand's policies. His retreat was only giving encouragement to the Right and extreme-Right parties.

Whereas the SP and CP could only muster 6.42 million votes (32.04%), the right-wing Rally for the Republic (UDR) coalition polled 8.59 million votes (42.88%). The ominous electoral breakthrough of Le Pen, who directs his venom especially at the migrant workers Mitterrand and Mauroy attacked, gave the Right a total of more than 10 million votes (53.88%).

The lesson that Mitterrand chose to draw from this setback was to compromise on his election promises even more.

In 1981, Mitterrand had promised that "a great public, unified and secular national education system" would be established. Of course, this antagonised the Catholic hierarchy, which had benefited from the anti-secular concessions granted under De Gaulle's Presidency.

The Right was able to exploit the general dissatisfaction with the Government's performance around the education issue.

Minister for Education Savary was to introduce a law assimilating Catholic school staff into the state school system. On June 24, however, one million people demonstrated under the banners of the Right against the proposed Savary law.

Two days before Bastille Day, Mitterrand abandoned the Savary proposals and announced his "new course."

This was the end of the Mauroy Government. In its place came that of Laurent Fabius, the "President's man."

Fabius' "new course" is simply a continuation of Mauroy's anti-working class politics, but without the emburance of the old election promises.

Fabius, like Bob Hawke, has a number of shibboleths which amount to pro-capitalist policies. Fabius speaks of "modernisation" and "unfiling."

The first means forcing workers to accept the imperatives of capitalist competition: lay-offs, deteriorating working conditions, "flexible" working hours, destroying social services, and reducing real wages.

"Unfiling" too has a familiar ring about it, though in France it means not only embracing capitalist policies but seeking open

political alliance with the right-wing parties.

In these circumstances, and in order to avoid further its "historic decline," the CP took the opportunity to leave the Government.

Fabius actually offered four ministerial posts to the CP. The CP declined, however, on the grounds that Fabius intended to continue the policy of "rigour."

"In the circumstances we do not believe that we have the moral right to let millions of men, women, and young people who are battling with disappointments and fears, believe that we could respond to their expectations within the present Government."

The CP was actually looking over its left shoulder, worrying about the pressure its trade union base, the CGT, was under for supporting Mitterrand's austerity. Nevertheless, its statement accurately reflects the consequences of "Mitterrandism" for a whole generation of French workers.

Mitterrand himself shows not even these regrets. He is now in the process of strengthening his role in Government by increased use of referendums.

This "presidentialising" of Government will enable him to deal more effectively with the present SP-CP National Assembly majority and, presumably, a right-wing Assembly after 1986 — should it be too far Right, even for Mitterrand.

Mitterrand's retreat has opened the way for some form of Gallic Thatcherism in the future. Under such a Government the current assault on the French working class would turn into all-out British miners.

There are salutary lessons in the Mitterrand experience for ALP members.

The Hawke/Hayden repudiation of Labor policies, and the continuation of Fraserite austerity in the guise of the Accord and national reconciliation, can only demoralise Labor's working-class supporters, within and outside the Party.

The Hawke Government was not even pursuing an Mitterrand-style reform program — but it is elected on an austerity policy that can only allow the conservative parties to eventually retake the offensive.

Then it will be open slaughter on the working class — unless we can learn the lessons of France, and fight to radically change the Labor Government's direction.



Mitterrand Government has aided Right and racist revival by ordering police raids of immigrant neighbourhoods.

Central America

U.S., Nicaragua

A tale of two elections

The following article by Greg Adamson is reprinted from the October-November 1984 issue of *Venceremos*, the bulletin of Central American and Caribbean solidarity. Adamson is also a member of the North Auburn (NSW) ALP Branch. For information on the activities of the Committees in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean, and subscriptions to *Venceremos*, contact: PO Box 443, Sydney South, NSW 2000.

In the first week of September, Ray Hooker, a former university dean educated in the United States and Sandinista candidate for the National Assembly was kidnapped by U.S.-organised "contras" (counter-revolutionaries) on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Also missing is local government official Patricia Delgado. Associated Press reports from Costa Rica that contra leader Eden Pastora is holding the kidnapped officials. According to the New York Times, the Nicaraguan Government fears for their lives.

This is just one sign that the current Nicaraguan elections, to be held on November 4 for president, vice-president and National Assembly, is taking place in extraordinary circumstances. The country is at war against a mercenary army claiming 15,000 soldiers, which is financed, armed and directed by the United States Government.

Despite this war and international sabotage, which has cost Nicaragua thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of dollars, the coming elections have won popular support. Nearly 1.6 million people (out of a total population of around 4 million, many under the voting age of 16), registered to vote between July 27 and July 30. Registration was later reopened for a day in areas where fighting prevented registration.

The large enrolment will most likely also be reflected in the voting turnout. By contrast, voting in the last United States presidential election was less than 55 per cent of the eligible population.

A further contrast between the U.S. and Nicaraguan elections is the ease of parties to stand, and to present their platforms. In Nicaragua each party fielding candidates is given up to 9 million convertible U.S.\$900,000 at the official exchange rate, depending on the number of candidates they field, as well as guaranteed television and radio time throughout the three month campaign period. Seven parties are fielding

presidential candidates.

By contrast, the only parties that will get media attention in the U.S. presidential elections are the Republicans and Democrats, both of which have traditionally been dominated by big money. Issues are deliberately given second place to personalities. Ronald Reagan may joke about blowing up the world, but that was unimportant compared to Democrat vice-presidential candidate Ferraro's tax returns.

Reflecting the trivia, an 18-minute film of Ronald Reagan's achievements in his first term, launched at the Republican convention in Dallas, was the product of the director of the Michael Jackson new generation Pepsi commercials, master of the "feel good" school of advertising.

There is very little democracy either within the U.S. electoral system or within either of the two main parties. When Black civil rights activist Jesse Jackson tried to make the system a little more relevant to the many minorities alienated from the electoral system, he was constantly robbed of convention votes by the rigged Democratic Party selection system. For example, in Virginia he won the popular vote but received the lowest number of convention delegates.

Ronald Reagan climbs to the top of the U.S. system because of apathy and indifference among poor and working people towards a system which cannot represent their interests. In Nicaragua on the other hand, poor farmers, workers, small traders, and intellectuals can and are standing for a national assembly which will reflect their interests.

Of the Sandinista Front's 90 National Assembly candidates, 34 are women, seven are from the Sandinista Youth, and 26 represent the country's professionals. The candidates include trade unionists, small farmers, housewives, ranchers, merchants, political leaders, and mothers of fighters killed defending the country.

The United States Government has encouraged opposition parties to boycott the Nicaraguan election. Oppositionist Arturo Cruz travelled from the U.S. to Nicaragua as the "candidate" of the Coordinating group. With fewer than a 1000 members this bloc is made up of Social Christian, Constitutional Liberal, and Social Democratic parties. Cruz, describing himself as a "friend" of contra Eden Pastora, and broad-

casting his links with the contra group, demanded public dialogue with the U.S.-backed mercenaries as a precondition for his electoral participation.

Despite the lifting of several war-time emergency regulations by the Government for the period up to November, on August 5 the right-wing group announced that it would not run. Its constituent parties then lost their rights to campaign as legal parties, but retain their constitutional rights. The major right-wing party, the Conservative Democratic Party, is participating in the elections.

The United States has not limited itself to verbal criticism of the Nicaraguan elections. After the continued rejection of funding for the Nicaraguan contras by

U.S. build-up

In recent months, the United States has taken a number of steps to increase the level of militarisation in Central America. These include:

- The deployment of the battleship Iowa and the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Nicaragua respectively.

- The return of one detachment of the 224th U.S. Intelligence Battalion to Palmarola in Honduras to resume spy flights.

- The deployment in late August of 50 U.S. Marine Corps experts in communications to an island in the Gulf of Fonseca between Nicaragua and El Salvador.

- The direct involvement of U.S. "volunteers" in contra actions against Nicaragua, two of whom were killed on September 1.

- Reagan administration plans to arm the Salvadoran Air Force with AC-47 cargo planes carrying side-mounted machine guns which can fire 18,000 rounds a minute.

- The return of U.S. favorite Colonel Sigfredo Ochoa Perez to a Salvadoran command, after a stay at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington.

- The introduction of widespread bombing of civilians in El Salvador under Pentagon advice, currently amounting to 7.5 tonnes of explosives being dropped per day, as well as widespread use of anti-personnel chemicals napalm and white phosphorus.

the U.S. Congress, the CIA is now organising funding through "private sources". On September 10, according to New York Times writer Philip Taubman, State Department spokesman John Hughes stated that, "Provided U.S. funds are not used, we do not discourage other countries from providing support (to the contras), nor have we discouraged legal private U.S. contributions."

Contra leader Mario Calero Portocerro boasts that some U.S.\$10 million has been raised this way. "Officials said the CIA had advised the rebels about their fund-raising efforts but had not solicited funds for them," Taubman reported.

One overseas source of support for the contras is Israel, the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, which, Taubman writes, "became involved last year when it made large contributions of Soviet weapons seized from the Palestine Liberation Organization during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon."

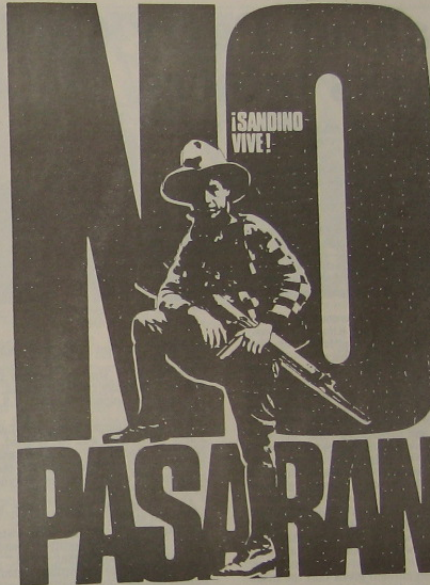
The role of private initiative in the contras' war against the Nicaraguan people became public when two U.S. citizens were killed after taking part in an attack on a training school. Nicaragua defence minister Humberto Ortega stated that four children of cooks and maintenance workers were killed in the September 1 attack by a helicopter and three small planes. U.S. officials described these children as "four Cuban military advisers."

The North Americans were killed when their helicopter was shot down. Maps found showed that he had left from a base at Jamastran, Honduras, where U.S. forces are regularly stationed.

Both those killed were former U.S. Government veterans, not under Government direction. Washington Post correspondent George C. Wilson writing on September 7 recalled a previous disclaimer: "Almost a quarter of a century ago, four Americans were killed flying a bomber against Cuba in the CIA-orchestrated Bay of Pigs invasion. The U.S. Government took years after the incident to concede publicly that the Americans had been killed while flying for the CIA."

A CIA claim to Democrat Senator Patrick Moynihan that the dead vets had merely been on a "reconnaissance mission" suggested that the agency was prattling its operations in preparation for future exposure.

As both the Nicaraguan and U.S. presidential elections approach, the Nicaraguan Government is certain that if Reagan is re-elected he will quickly move to invade Nicaragua. In early August Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega announced that a CIA plot to assassinate a Nicaraguan official and blame it on faction fighting, as a pretext for an invasion, had been uncovered.



If Ronald Reagan is defeated by Walter Mondale, this would throw a spanner in the works momentarily, but is unlikely to change the basic plans of the U.S. rulers towards Central America.

U.S. rulers proclaimed opposition to Mondale's pro-peace Central America policy to be welcomed, but not trusted. A report in the September 3 International Herald Tribune by Leslie H. Gelb states that "Walter F. Mondale, the Democratic presidential candidate, will be moving to the right on foreign policy issues, according to his aides and advisers."

"The assessment is that Mr. Mondale already has a solid base among Democratic peace activists and he must now try to bring back to the fold those conservative Democrats who left the party in 1980 over foreign policy."

Mondale's recent moves include a commitment to higher defence funding at the expense of domestic programs, and "Mr. Mondale's choice of Max Kampelman and James R. Schlesinger,

two Democrats with strong conservative credentials in foreign policy, to join him for a Sept. 1 briefing by Robert C. McFarlane, Mr. Reagan's national security adviser."

One notable feature of United States democracy is that foreign policy is not affected by popular vote. In 1964, for example, Lyndon Johnson was elected against Republican hawk Barry Goldwater, on a promise of keeping out of Vietnam. On the day of his election, it was revealed in the Pentagon Papers, Johnson was taking part in plans to escalate the Vietnam War.

Today a lot of people are worried that Central America will be the stage for a rerun of the Vietnam conflict. Both the Republicans and the Democrats are capable of sending in troops, even given opposition within their own parties. Regardless of which candidate wins, the international movement of solidarity with Central America will need to continue its campaign against U.S. interference in the region.

Britain

Labour Party Conference backs miners

The miners' strike made this year's British Labour Party Conference very different from 1983.

Last year Nell Kinnock was the hero of the Conference. This year Arthur Scargill was.

Jane Burstall

Member Rozelle East (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

Last year, the initiative seemed to belong to a whole wave of people, once left-wingers, moving rightwards to swing behind Nell Kinnock.

This year the Conference firmly distinguished itself from Kinnock's piously "even-handed" denunciation of both miners and police violence.

Instead Conference called for the next Labour Government to "immediately ban the use of riot equipment, mounted police, dogs or any other inappropriate means for the policing of industrial disputes," and demanded that the next Labour Government "enact legislation to make sure the police play no part in industrial disputes." Kinnock then told the press that he would ignore this decision of Conference.

The decision reflects the growth in consciousness during the miners' strike: that the state is not impartial, but against the working class, and in the interests of the capitalist class. This is particularly significant given that the mass media coverage of the miners' strike has become more and more on suggesting that violence and intimidation by a minority of Scargillite thugs is all that is holding the strike together.

Kinnock's announcement that he would ignore the Conference decision on police is indicative of the continuing need for a struggle for accountability.

At the Labour Party Conference, as at the TUC Congress, it was rank-and-file support for the miners which forced through strong decisions, despite the wishes of many of the leaders.

But resolution-passing at Conference is not the same as action on the ground. Since the TUC Congress, most union leaders have done practically nothing to support for the miners which forced through strong decisions, despite the wishes of many of the leaders.

Other Left victories at Conference were the defeat of proposals to water down a resolution supporting Labour Councils defying Tory laws by refusing to



Impact of miners' strike dominated Labour Conference, which called for ban on police violence against strikers.

implement budget cuts or to increase rents and rates.

There was a standing ovation for a fraternal delegate from Nicaragua, who appealed for support against U.S. aggression.

But in the longer view, the Labour Party Conference was not so good. The National Executive is still in the hands of the Kinnock/Hattersley coalition, the approximate equivalent of Hayden's Centre-Left faction.

And on policy issues, there were backward steps. Disarmament policy was watered down. A National Executive economic document, "A future that works," was adopted with little opposition. It confines Labour entirely to capitalist techniques

for managing the private profit economy.

This lack of opposition on economic policy showed the need for the Left to link between immediate struggles, such as those of the miners, and the need for a socialist program.

Blacks organising in the Labour Party argued passionately for a proposal for official black sections, which was defeated. Labour women's proposals for improved representation in the Party were also defeated, despite the support of the NUM. The main support for both these parties (Branches), with the trade unions voting against.

NUM's assets seized

The Tories' courts have seized the National Union of Miners' assets for refusing to pay a fine for "contempt of court". The NUM was held to be in contempt for insisting that the miners' strike is official, after a court ruling that the strike is not official because there has been no national ballot.

Arthur Scargill was also served with a High Court writ for the same matter. He immediately said he would defy the writ. However, Scargill's fine was paid anonymously, presumably because of fear of the consequences of Scargill being jailed.

There have been at least 2 examples of generalised industrial action to free jailed unionists in Britain. In the 1970s, in Australia, we had the example of the 1969 strike wave to free Clarrie O'Shea, whose framways union had refused to pay fines for unlawful strikes. The last thing the Tories want is to provoke solidarity in

industrial action with the miners.

The Tories and the press are in favour of penalising the NUM for not holding a national ballot — at the same time as they are pressuring the picket line unions, NACODS, to ignore an 82% vote to strike in a national ballot.

If the deputies went out, then it would be unsafe to allow scabs to operate any mines. However, it seems likely that a deal will be struck, to call the NACODS strike off.

The NUM needs solidarity action more than ever now. If the Tories and the courts are allowed to get away with sequestration of one union's assets, this is a threat to all unions' right to independence from the state.

The NUM says it can continue the strike despite the seizure of its assets, because there are still resources to support the strike in the hands of local NUM branches, which are unaffected by the seizure.

Rule of the Law

The following are major excerpts from an article in the September 1984 issue of the British Labour Party magazine New Socialists.

In seizing new powers to break the miners, the police have set new benchmarks for further encroachment on civil liberties. Why, demands JOHN FIELD, hasn't the labour movement stood up for their rights?

Since the miners' strike began, around 11,000 police officers have been drafted into the coalfields. Probably 5,000 miners have been arrested, of whom 3,500 have been charged (and almost without fail) convicted. The figures are a bit vague, as no one seems to be responsible for keeping an accurate count, but they give some idea of the state of siege in the mining communities.

Consider briefly the type of tactics employed by the courts and police during this dispute. Both have acted, very clearly, as the government's enforcers. There is nothing very unusual in that, but in doing so they have exercised quite new and exceptional powers.

The police have arrogated to themselves the very powers they are supposed to acquire under the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. They have set up indiscriminate roadblocks, well away from the scene of a crime that has not yet been committed. They have photographed and fingerprinted arrested men without their consent. They have held people in custody for well over 24 hours without allowing them access to a solicitor.

They are even exercising powers that are not granted in the Police Bill, although some Tories might have wished them to be. They have savagely beaten men and women, and systematically broken their own guidelines on the use of dogs and mounted officers. They have made an essentially political decision to limit the number of "official pickets" to six, in the absence of any instruction from a civil court. They have stopped pickets from shouting "scab" or "blackleg" (at Hucknall, the only words permitted on one morning were "cad" and "boulder"!).

The entire police operation has been conducted by the Association of Chief Police Officers, in consultation with the Home Secretary and Attorney General. No one knows precisely how the cabinet has influenced the magistrates' courts, but the remarkable uniformity of their decisions make it plain that instructions — a hint, a dig in the ribs — have been handed down from Whitehall.



Police have assumed vast powers in their determination to "give the working class a good hiding." But the miners are fighting back.

From early April, the magistrates' courts have imposed bail conditions that, according to the National Association of Probation Officers, make actual conviction a secondary matter.

The police are openly taking one side. Tony Judge, editor of the Police Federation's magazine, has written that:

"As the strike has worn on, the police on the picket lines have become more and more convinced that a NUM 'victory' in terms of substantial concessions on pit closures would be seen as a triumph for mass defiance of the law. . . . 'If Scargill wins like this,' said a police inspector, 'then there's no future in this country for any of us. We might as well clear out and let the rabble take over.'" (Police, July 1984)

Groups like Sheffield Picketwatch have been monitoring the one-sided police operation in detail. Sheffield Picketwatch was set up on 6 April by the local trades council to monitor the policing of picket lines, as well as reports in regional newspapers like the Morning Telegraph. These show, for instance, that there were three mounted police charges at Orgreave on 29 May before any missiles came out of the crowd — a vital fact, instrumental in persuading George Moores, chair of the South Yorkshire police authority, that the government wanted "the working class to get a good hiding and be beaten into submission."

In the early days of the dispute, this concern was widely shared. The Guardian spoke of police methods that "should be considered quite outrageous in a democratic society" (3 April). Several local police authorities including South Yorkshire, set up internal inquiries into the handling of the picket lines. Allan MacKay, MP for Barnsley West, managed to secure a parliamentary debate.

Important civil liberties were at stake, and for a time it looked as though they

might be defended. No such luck. Since then, Malcolm Pitts, president of the Kent Area NUM, spent four weeks in Canterbury prison; apart from a small token visit outside the gates by Canterbury trades council and local miners, there were no demonstrations, no mass rallies, no threats from Congress House. Miners from Kiveton Park in Yorkshire, Warsop Main in Derbyshire, have been gaoled; one is still in Lincoln prison as I write. Two miners have been killed.

Twelve years ago, the imprisonment of five London dockers for trade union activities was enough to provoke such serious threats from the TUC that Old Corruption sprang to life once more. Ted Heath exhorted an eighteenth century sinecurist to overrule the courts and release the five men. In 1984, the gaoling of perhaps a dozen men, for breach of punitive bail conditions, raises scarcely a protest.

Why does a trade union movement, which is so proud of its historic struggles against judicial oppression, prefer to forget today's descendants of the Tolpuddle martyrs? It makes you wonder how Congress House would have behaved if it had been around in 1834.

Support needed

Support from the Australian labour movement for the British miners has been among the strongest from overseas, and much appreciated. Financial support will be all the more welcome now, and we shouldn't let our efforts lag.

Reports indicate that more than \$500,000 has already been raised in Australia for the miners' struggle — with more being gathered all the time.

Send donations care of the Miners Federation, 377 Sussex Street, Sydney 2000.

ALP Conference: 'A requiem for Timor?'

The following article presenting an interpretation of the results of the East Timor debate at the July National Conference is reprinted from the October 1984 issue of the magazine Inside Indonesia. The author, Pat Walsh, works for the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, and was present at the Conference.

Further information and subscriptions can be obtained from: Inside Indonesia, PO Box 180, Northcote, Victoria 3070.

"We won the resolution and lost the amendment," commented an East Timor activist minutes after the results of the Timor vote were announced at July's ALP National Conference, adding "and had there been a free vote we would have won the amendment too."

Many others saw absolutely nothing positive in the result. One activist walked onto the Conference floor and burned his ALP membership card in front of the assembled delegates. A Melbourne woman returned her Australian citizenship papers in disgust, and two senior members of the Socialist Left predicted the end of the Timor movement in Australia. To Max Teichmann, the veteran political commentator, the conference's handling of foreign policy added up to "the destruction or degradation of every principled position hitherto taken up by Labor. Years of agonising over and analysing questions of crucial importance, the whole continuous dialectic of marrying up morality and politics, of ideology and pragmatism, went into the dustbin."

The weeks preceding the July Conference were arguably the time of most intense reflection on the issue for the ALP as a Party since the Indonesian invasion. Not since 1975 when it was last in Government had the party as such been required to, by virtue of the demands of being in office, to come to serious grips with the issue. This change of circumstances, coupled with an intensification of pressure from both Jakarta and sections of the Party's own leadership, meant that the 1984 Conference could not possibly be a re-run of the 1982 Conference when a strong pro-Timor policy was lightly adopted without debate.

It is this writer's contention, that seen from this perspective, the recent policy decision on East Timor was, with some important qualifications, not only positive but substantial cause for alarm in Jakarta where it was earnestly hoped the ALP, the only Australian political party Jakarta has reason to worry about, would put East Timor behind it. As such the Conference outcome was a major achievement for the Timor movement in this country, given its substantial input to the ALP on the subject. Having said that, however, one must also point out that the Conference decision and the process leading to it provided a truer read-out of the real thinking on the issue within all sections of the Party than had hitherto been available. The Timor movement's future program clearly lies in addressing the sticking points and strengths within the Party that have now been exposed.

Differences emerge

The first shot in the pre-Conference campaign was fired by the Victorian Branch of the ALP. In April it adopted virtually unopposed a strong pro-Timor resolution presented by its Foreign Affairs Committee after some consultation with the Australian East Timor Association. The resolution called for Australia, in the interim, to de-recognize Indonesia's takeover, to initiate an international campaign in support of East Timor's right to self-determination, and to suspend military aid to Suharto. The

whole resolution was adopted by the South Australian Branch, with the addition of a call for the withdrawal from the UN of Australia's Ambassador, Dick Woolcott, and in turn by the Canberra Branch who added a call for a Fretilin Information Office to be opened in Australia. The campaign had made a promising start.



March 1975 demonstration in East Timor in support of Fretilin

It quickly became clear, however, in the course of contacts with Parliamentary powerbrokers in each of the Party factions, that none of them fully agreed with, or felt bound by, the Branch decisions. Their concern about the issue, while uneven, was generally sincere and deep. They shared several basic premises with the Branches. None disputed the fundamental injustice of Indonesia's forced incorporation or the continuing repression, and none disputed Australia's broad obligations. But both the Right and privately, the Left, rejected the Branches' call for "punitive" measures, such as the suspension of military aid, and revealed a distinct reluctance to address the question of recognition.

Ironically for some, this broad policy thrust was endorsed by two key figures in the Timor movement. Jose Ramos Horta, who was engaged in a much publicised six-week national tour, also demarcated a much publicised platform devoid of condemnatory, negative elements. In a key speech to the National Press Club on 31 May, he cast Australia wholly in the constructive role of peacemaker between Fretilin and Jakarta. He made no mention of the recognition question and declared Fretilin did not advocate a termination and declared Fretilin did economic relations with Indonesia. Later Jim Dunn was to add his weight to this perspective. His policy submission to the ALP's Federal Platform Committee on Foreign Affairs also made no mention of either sanctions or the recognition question as such.

It is important to emphasise, however, that the faction leaders agreed on this positive perspective for quite different reasons. The thinking of the Right was coloured by the conviction that the incorporation was an irreversible fact of life and that though the Timorese were entitled to an act of self-determination in theory it was both pointless to insist on it and positively harmful to relations with an important pro-Western neighbour. The

Labor Party should therefore stop "flagellating" Indonesia with the principle of self-determination, as Bill Hayden was to tell the Conference, and concentrate on improving the crying human rights and welfare needs of the Timorese. There were, however, enough individual exceptions to this general Right position to give some credibility to the activists' claim mentioned earlier that had factional discipline been relaxed to allow a free vote a pro-self-determination policy could have scraped through the Conference. For its part the Left, including Horta and Dunn, favoured a positive perspective not because they had lost all hope for the independence of Timor but in a bid for the Party's (and the community's) middle-ground whose support was required, in their judgment, if Timor was to be retrieved from the lost cause file and restored to Australia's agenda as a viable political concern. Whatever other concessions they might make in this quest, however, the right to self-determination was flatly non-negotiable. As we shall see it was on this point that the Party was to split at the Conference.

Off come the gloves

During the weeks immediately prior to the Conference, heavy governmental pressure was applied to intimidate the ALP away from a strong pro-Timor position. A stream of threats, warn-



East Timorese refugees picket outside Party National Conference in July. Despite their efforts, Hayden refused to accept references to "self-determination" in Timor resolution.

ings, vilification, and blackmail issued from both Jakarta and Canberra. On 1 June, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mochtar, flatly rejected Horta's centrepiece proposal that Indonesia and Fretilin engage in talks, adding that ALP parliamentarians who supported the idea were "mischievous" and guilty of deluding the Timorese people. Horta was to get a similar reception from Australia's Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, on 8 June. At a private meeting in Canberra, Hayden bluntly accused Fretilin of responsibility for the renewed fighting in Timor, and praised Indonesia's development program in Timor, and torpedoed any idea that Australia should intervene to facilitate talks. On 20 June, in a speech to the National Press Club, the new Indonesian Ambassador, August Marpaung, asserted Timor was a "closed book" and non-too-subtly accused Australians of anti-Indonesian intentions, falsely alleging that there had been

"zero" concern for the territory before the Indonesian takeover.

Hayden took up the cudgels again in a speech at Ipswich on 23 June. Some in the ALP were putting the satisfaction of their "private morality" ahead of the real interests of the Timorese, he disparagingly charged. In an unblushing tour de force he went on to claim that "a harder line on Timor will mean a harder line from Indonesia on direct access to Timor by the international aid organisations." Ignoring the fact that Indonesia had severely curtailed International Red Cross services in Timor since July 1983, virtually the whole period he had been managing Australia's foreign policy.

As 9 July, the commencement date for the Conference, approached Jakarta intensified its attack. The Australia-Indonesia relationship itself was put on the line. On June 29 Mochtar suggested that a strong pro-Timor policy could result in a major diplomatic rift. Having earlier shrugged off Horta's visit, he now saw fit to condemn it professing to be "astounded that a friendly country has seen fit to receive a rebel," and adding threateningly "you (Australians) have done many serious things to injure Indonesian feelings."

Jakarta's jitters that the ALP might well adopt a full-blown Timor resolution, thereby severely setting back Indonesia's international campaign, were also felt in Canberra. That same day, 29th June, Prime Minister Hawke emerged from the background to make a presidential style appeal to the ALP to

maintain "constructive relations" with Indonesia and avoid an "inflammatory" Timor policy.

However, Hayden, the front-runner on the issue, did not have it all his own way. Ironically his attempt to dampen down Party concern by sending Ambassador Dalrymple to East Timor to obtain an up-to-the-minute positive assessment of the situation backfired when General Benny Murdani refused permission for the visit, plainly because of the level of conflict in Timor. Hayden reportedly gave vent to his reaction in language not used by him since his days in the Queensland police force. When the visit finally did take place it was too late and, in Dalrymple's words, "too narrow" to affect the Conference.

Hayden was careful, however, to temper his lectures to the party with some criticism of Indonesia lest he be too easily cast

Continued next page.

foreign policy



Fretilin supporters in streets of Dili shortly before Indonesian invasion in 1975. In the face of continuing strong evidence of popular backing for Fretilin, Bill Morrison claimed that today "Fretilin represents only 1% of the people of East Timor."

Continued from previous page.

In the role of apologist, "We have made so many accommodations," he said on 20 June in a Sydney Morning Herald interview, "that I am now fiercely and unjustly accused of being servile to Indonesia." He went on to criticise Indonesia for cancelling the Dalrymple visit and to warn Jakarta of the "great concern and disillusionment" in Australia over Irian Jaya and the killing of Arnold Op. On the same occasion he also defended Horta's right to be heard in Australia. In a Brisbane interview on 8 July, the eve of the Conference, he was to condemn the activities of the death squads in Indonesia (very belatedly, one might note).

Hayden's preferred policy

Though there were ample foreshadowings, Hayden kept the Party in the dark as to the exact wording of his preferred policy until six days before the Conference.

On 3 July, he submitted a draft policy to the ALP Foreign Policy Platform Committee. The first four of its six paragraphs concerned the importance of Australia-Indonesia relations. The final two paragraphs read:

"The ALP expresses its officially stated concern at the situation in East Timor, in particular its continuing objection to the fact that the former Portuguese colony was incorporated without the East Timorese people having been given an adequate opportunity freely to express their own wishes in a genuine internationally supervised act of self-determination."

"The ALP expresses its concern at conflicting reports about the humanitarian situation in East Timor and calls on the Indonesian Government to allow an independent international mission to enter the territory, with free access, in order to make an independent and impartial report on conditions there."

All six paragraphs were to be incorporated in the final Conference policy. What is especially noteworthy about the draft, however, is what it did not say. As was learned later, in submitting the proposal Hayden had cut the heart out of a submission prepared for him by Jim Dunn by excising two of its key paragraphs. The offending sections read:

"The ALP believes that until the inalienable right to self-determination has been exercised in a genuine act of self-determination, the Timorese people still have that right and the administering power the obligation to ensure that it is freely exercised, and its sequel."

"The ALP calls on the Australian Government to give active

support to international initiatives that have the aim of achieving a settlement of the Timor problem in keeping with internationally-recognised principles. Specifically, the Government should support the current efforts of the UN Secretary-General to bring about a solution to this problem."

The Socialist Left members of the Platform Committee refused to endorse the Hayden draft at this and a subsequent meeting. However the Foreign Minister was adamant. In response the ad hoc Timor lobby at the Conference decided to foreshadow an amendment to Hayden's proposal, despite grave misgivings in some quarters about the wisdom of ditching the Victorian Branch position. This was circulated to the Conference over the name of the NSW delegate, John Birch, and read:

"The ALP expresses its concern at reports of renewed fighting in East Timor and the restriction on access of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ALP will support efforts of the UN Secretary-General to bring about a ceasefire and to bring all parties to the conflict to the negotiating table to ensure that the right of self-determination is guaranteed to the people of East Timor."

The Jones compromise

The Timor debate was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, 11 July, three days into the Conference. On the Tuesday evening a significant shift occurred when the Party's silent majority declared itself. A compromise formulation over Barry Jones' name was circulated with endorsement from an unexpected quarter, Hayden's Centre Left Faction. The Minister for Science and Technology had decided to fix things. His proposal was to become the Party's new policy. It was passed on the voices without a show of hands being called for (although the Socialist Left delegate, Rex Eason, intervened to stress that a significant number of delegates had dissented).

The Jones formulation went considerably further than Hayden wanted to. It highlighted Timor, relegating the paragraphs on Australia-Indonesia relations to the end. More importantly, it put more emphasis on human rights and said Australia should get involved in the international search for a settlement, a proposition contained in Dunn's earlier submission but specifically ruled out by Hayden both in his draft and his talks with Horta on 8 June. Jones was later to confide that Hayden had been bluntly informed that unless he agreed to a strengthening of the policy "he would be rolled," such was the

feeling within the Party. Jones himself, it should be noted, had also been put under some pressure by his own faction, the Victorian Independents. Hayden accepted the new formulation "with reservations" and withdrew his draft. But he categorically refused to accept any recognition of East Timor's continuing right to self-determination as called for in Dunn's submission and Jones and the majority went along with him on this.

The Left amendments

It was on this point that the Socialist Left and the Timor lobby dug in their heels. Self-determination was the only acceptable basis for a workable and just settlement. A new amendment was put forward over John Birch's name which sought to modify paragraph 3 of the Jones resolution as follows (see italicised words):

"Accordingly, the ALP calls on the Australian Government to give active support to international initiatives, that have the aim of achieving a just settlement of the Timor problem in accordance with internationally recognised principles. Specifically, the Government should support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to bring about a ceasefire and to bring all parties to the conflict to the negotiating table to ensure that the right of self-determination is guaranteed to the people of East Timor." It was defeated 55 votes to 43. Only one non-Socialist Left member supported the amendment — Ken Wriedt, the leader of the Tasmanian ALP.

A second Socialist Left amendment was moved by Bill Hartley and Joe Camilleri. Arguing that paragraph 1 of the Jones resolution strongly implied recognition that East Timor was now a province of Indonesia, Hartley sought to replace the word "incorporation" with the clause "subjected to an illegal and unrecognisable act purporting to incorporate it as a province of Indonesia." It was lost on the voices.

In the course of his speech, Hartley requested the Foreign Minister to inform the Conference whether or not Australia accepted East Timor as part of Indonesia. Hayden did not reply.

Space does not permit an analysis of the speeches delivered during the debate. Suffice it to say they were, by and large, set pieces presented to justify positions already taken, not because it was believed they would persuade delegates to change their

minds. A gerobak load of Timorese corpses or a personal appearance by Mochtar would not have made any difference at that point. The Mardani medalion for Positive Propaganda went to he-who-would-be-Australia's next Ambassador to Indonesia, Bill Morrison, who claimed that "tens of thousands of lives" were lost during the 1975 civil war, that Fretilin started that war, and that today "Fretilin represents only 1% of the people of East Timor."

The new policy

The new ALP policy has two disturbing and fundamental shortcomings. First, it does not seek to involve the Timorese in the search for a settlement. A bilateral settlement reached by Indonesia and Portugal, and approved by the UN, would therefore be technically consistent with policy. This would get Indonesia off the international hook on which it has squirmed for so long. But it is most doubtful that it would bring peace to the East Timorese people any more than a similar deal has meant peace in West Irian. Second, the policy fails to address the question of Indonesia's sovereignty. While this could be interpreted as a wish to reserve judgment on the matter, it also leaves the Hawke Government free to extend *de jure* recognition, by word or deed, without technically contravening official policy.

On the other hand, the policy has given the Timor movement plenty to go on with. These positive points can be made about the Party's new position. One, the ALP does not consider East Timor to be a "closed book." The Party clearly feels the situation is intolerable and requires a solution. Two, the Party believes the international community, including the UN and Australia, have a duty to work for a solution. Three, the ALP believes that NGOs, not just Governments, have an important role to play, particularly in the areas of human rights and welfare. And four, the ALP reserves the right to intervene on a question of substance like East Timor even where much importance is placed on good relations with the offending country. The Conference gave Bill Hayden some of the freedom to move he has so often insisted on. How he uses that freedom and who benefits rests in the last analysis with the minders of the policy, the men and women of the ALP.

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reviews

Can the Accord really defend jobs?

Full employment is possible
The Accord, a framework for economic planning and industrial democracy
A pamphlet by Pete Steedman,
MHR for Casey,
June 1984.

Ever since the ALP-ACTU Accord came into being in March 1983, sections of the Left have been trying to explain its benefits and potential. This pamphlet from Victorian Socialist Left MHR Pete Steedman (which is available on request from his office) is the latest such offering.

Tony Brown

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

There are four main sections of the pamphlet: a brief summary of criticisms of the Accord; the planning framework of the Accord; the need for an alternative economic and industrial strategy; and an outline of an alternative.

In outlining his alternative, Steedman sets himself no small task. He claims that with an alternative approach to "strategic" sections of manufacturing industry Australia can return, in less than 10 years, to full employment.

This is the core of the paper — that through the planning mechanisms of the Accord and an appropriate industry policy full employment can be restored. In essence, Steedman is arguing that while the Accord is fundamentally all right, it is only the interpretation and implementation that is a problem.

What he fails to question is the actual record of the Hawke Government. Nowhere is any consideration given to the real state of the economy and the real reasons for the introduction of the Accord.

It is no longer possible to write about the Accord without pointing to its effects on wages and union independence.

Steedman acknowledges that under quarterly indexation (the ACTU's preferred option) workers would be \$1 week worse off, while under the existing six-monthly indexation workers are \$8 week worse off — although I think he has underestimated this figure. He also refers to the claim that unions are becoming more tied to the centralised wage-fixing system, and that the ACTU effectively becomes a "policeman" of the trade union movement.

However, he does no more than refer to these criticisms, which are all valid. For

instance, in 1973, before Whitlam introduced centralised wage fixation, the contribution of the National Wage Case to average weekly minimum male wages was 19.1%. By 1977 this had increased to 94%, and by 1978 it was 98%.

Similarly, no reference is made to the ACTU or NSW Labour Council's role in regard to policing the BLF and that union's legitimate right to defend its own interests.

The way the question of planning is dealt with is quite consistent with Steedman's central argument. "The major achievement of the Accord is that it establishes, once and for all, the legitimacy of trade union involvement in the central policy making processes of the national Government. Such an achievement represents potentially the most significant extension of trade union influence in decades."

The kind of planning that is envisaged, however, is a very centralised, bureaucratic affair in which ordinary workers and consumers could play little part.

There are, as well, elements of "Left corporatism" in the strategy — in that Steedman wants to organise planning through agreements between capitalists, workers', and state representatives which involves a sacrifice of workers' independence in order to persuade capitalists to behave according to the plan.

While Steedman places great emphasis on planning and its impact on manufacturing industry, he fails to mention that this has been the area of greatest disparity — and more importantly neglects to offer a reason for this.

He does acknowledge that after 18 months the Australian Manufacturing Council and its associated network of industry councils have not yet been formed. But there is no mention of the "new realists" plan to restructure and rationalise industries such as steel, automobile and metal manufacturing.

Indeed, so intent are Hawks, Button and Keating on implementing their plans that such reliable allies as Joe Thompson, NSW Secretary of the Vehicle Builders Union and President of the NSW Labour Council, have publicly called for Button's resignation. On the other hand, the powerful AMFSU, while protesting some of the Government's policies, has ultimately provided the necessary support to protect the Government.

Steedman's alternative economic and industrial policy rests firstly on a return

to Keynesian expansionary fiscal policy and, in conjunction with this, a revised industry plan.

Like many before him, Steedman speaks as if the present recession and cutbacks just resulted from the policies and vindictiveness of the Fraser Government. Of course, those policies exacerbated the problem, but they were not policies out of the blue. They were not a response to the decline in capitalist profitability.

Up until very recently, some capitalist Governments were still advocating policies of spending themselves out of the crisis. The fact is, however, that these policies produced other problems — inflation, uncontrollable state deficits, and so on.

Too often the advocates of the alternative strategies fail even to register that such problems exist.

Unless the Left understands why such problems have occurred with Keynesianism, and has a plan to deal with them, then high-spending policies by themselves will lead again to the same results.

It would only be possible to begin to deal with the problems accompanying rising state expenditure at present by combining it with other policies which make major inroads into the rights of capitalist property-owners, and other policies directed towards mass democratic involvement in economic life. And that, of course, means a political strategy to defend any reforms that are made by stronger means than those dictated by the norms of parliamentary democracy.

The second feature of Steedman's alternative policy rests on import replacement (presumably protective tariffs, although this is not spelt out); export promotion; and industry modernisation. There is no mention made of the fact that if Australia introduces new tariff barriers our trading partners will retaliate by similarly introducing barriers — thus jeopardising all three aspects of his plan.

According to the plan, though, once this turnaround is introduced, a whole series of other factors then simply fall into place — higher employment, less dole payouts, less Government borrowing, etc, all leading to a healthier capitalist economy.

Unfortunately, Steedman omits any reference to how these policies will be implemented. Will Hawke be intellectually convinced? Will the Left eventually win the numbers and then be in a position to introduce such policies?

It is, of course, a difficult question and there are no easy answers. But if you start with the premise that such an alternative will be introduced from above and implemented through centralised and bureaucratic mechanisms, then the answer is even harder to find.

'Silver City'

Silver City
Directed by Sophia Turkiewicz
Starring Gosia Dobrowolska and Ivor Kants
Hoys Cinemas

There is less to Sophia Turkiewicz's film *Silver City* than meets the eye, which is a big disappointment. It has a potentially great subject — the treatment of Polish refugees who arrived in the fifties by xenophobic Australians, but the love story gets in the way.

The relationship between two refugees, Nina played by Gosia Dobrowolska, and Julian, played by Ivor Kants, is the real centre of the film, not the context in which that relationship unfolds.

Belinda Weaver

Member Glebe (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

Heavily sentimental, the film suffers from the casting of mainly Australians, with the exception of Dobrowolska, in the main roles. The actors expend so much effort on their accents that they are too exhausted to flesh out their characters. And some don't even get the accent right.

Like *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Silver City* is set in a potentially exciting social and political situation. However, the characters are merely set against this backdrop — they never seem really part of the action. The action is just there to add colour, the events just an excuse to separate hero and heroine so that they can meet up again.

Gosia Dobrowolska as Nina makes the best of her role, which is unsympathetic. Her love affair with the husband of her friend Anna (played by Anna Jemison) is hard to understand.

Julian is so glum and sad that he seems to have nothing to offer the bright Nina. Dobrowolska's infectious grin makes his interest in her plausible, but their relationship is never satisfactorily explained.

He writes to her and she asks later whether he meant the things he wrote — but the audience never knows the basis for the relationship, which seems to come from nowhere. The relationship also seems doomed from the start — Julian is living in the past and is unable to desert his wife and son.

The film opens with Nina on a train, where she meets Julian again after twelve years. The film then flashes back



Silver City: newly arrived young migrant women look out at their camp for the first time.

to their arrival and subsequent life in the depressing migrant camp, nicknamed *Silver City* after the corrugated iron structures.

There are some humorous touches — Arthur Calwell as Immigration Minister forcing a giant koala on an uncomprehending female migrant; the awfully characters are merely set against this backdrop — they never seem really part of the action. The action is just there to add colour, the events just an excuse to separate hero and heroine so that they can meet up again.

As time moves on, Nina wants to have a better life, and she and Julian set up house together in a one-room shack. They have left the camp behind and even met some kindly Australians. But Julian is still tied to his family and their future seems uncertain.

The film finally returns to the present day. Nina has become a teacher, but Julian is still trapped in a dead-end job. Nina has used her optimism and drive while Julian has stagnated. Nina tends to crow a bit over poor Julian, but at the end he at least has his family, while Nina is alone.

The film's concentration on the relationship is a weakness, for the love story is not sufficiently engrossing to keep our interest. The scenes of Nina's rather grim jobs — first in a hospital, then in a sweatshop — come to nothing, there is no dramatic build up. We don't learn enough about Nina to understand

her or care about her.

A lot of care has gone into the making of the film. The sets, clothes, and period are lovingly created and the photography is excellent.

The director worked on the project for a long time, trying to find the right film. However, Australian films need to break away from what is really cultural taxidermy. It is not enough to recreate a period through costumes and sets — a film should illumine a period, characteristics of life in that period. The background of films like *Silver City* needs to be brought to the fore, to become part of the action — or else there is no point in making such films.

Some film-makers have attempted to re-examine aspects of Australian history successfully — for example, Richard Lowenstein's *Strikebound*, in which the characters are firmly rooted in the events of their time. The weakness of *Silver City* stems from the characters' dislocation from their context.

Had *Silver City* shown more clearly Australian racist and xenophobic attitudes towards refugees in the fifties, it could have drawn many parallels with current Australian society today — as a new wave of migrants and refugees face similar hostility. As it is however, *Silver City* is a love story with a backdrop a little out of focus.

party affairs

Quiet time at Tas State Council

The recent Tasmanian State Council was held over two days, October 20-21, but unfortunately little came out of it. The general attitude was that nothing controversial should come up prior to an election — and this makes for a very stierle gathering.

Lou-anna Barker

Member Murchison (Tas) Branch

Science and Technology Minister Barry Jones gave the opening address, concentrating his attention on the problems of unemployment. In "economic monocultures," areas with a high degree of specialisation — coal, iron, mining and heavy manufacturing — "where the traditional base is contracting and new work forms are not emerging."

Jones said many felt threatened by increasing technology. "Their jobs, security, self-image all seem to be at risk."

While Jones' analysis of the employment prospects for these areas was probably quite good, his solutions were not.

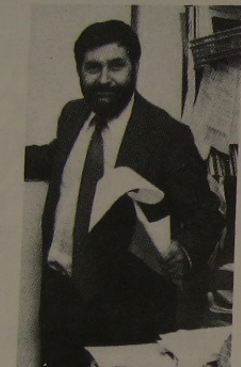
Instead of suggesting the obvious solution that all workers need to benefit from improved technology through shorter hours with no loss of pay and conditions, his sharing the available work around, he explained there was a need to pay more attention to "the value of time-use outside work, and get away from the notion that our value is determined externally by an employer — that if an employer says we are worth \$300, that is our value, if he withdraws the job we are valueless."

"We ought to be concentrating on exercising the right to make individual choices — about how we live, what we work at, and how long we work and a variety of trade-offs between work and leisure income."

He didn't explain how workers could make individual choices about their life once they were sacked, and had little chance of finding another job.

Jones also praised the Accord, citing the "Steel Deal" as one of the benefits. However, the "Steel Deal," which gave BHP \$80 million, does not guarantee jobs — as can be seen by BHP's plans to retrench all its apprentices in Port Kembla who finish their training at the end of this year.

Jones' speech, which was met with great applause, set the tone for the State Council — not the wit or analysis, but the lack of any criticism at all of the Hawke Government's anti-worker policies.



Science and Technology Minister Barry Jones. His analysis of unemployment quite good, solutions not so good.

A motion against the Accord by the Murchison Branch was conveniently placed last on the agenda — by which time there was no quorum.

Some important policy committee reports, for example on the Economy, on Minerals and Energy, and on Technology and Social Change were rushed through without discussion — while hours of discussion were spent on the Rules Committee report, in particular on whether the returning officer should deposit the sealed envelope of votes in the bank immediately or not.

A victory for the Left was achieved when Paul Lennon had to leave the Council after a motion was passed that only ALP members, apart from the press, be allowed to attend.

Paul Lennon, secretary of the Tasmanian Trades and Labor Council, has applied for membership of the Party, but is known to have distributed pamphlets last March for Independent Senator Brian Harradine (who is associated with the NCC).

Lennon refused to sign a letter stating that Senator Harradine, the Liberals, and some Democrats displayed anti-Labor attitudes, and that he would support the Labor Senate team.

Some important motions were passed at council. A motion backing the British

miners, moved by the AMFSU was passed.

Support for an Australian policy of opposition to visits by nuclear-powered or armed vessels to Australian Ports and opposition to any attempt by the Australian Government to undermine New Zealand's stand on this was endorsed.

There was also much discussion on the recent passing by the Liberal State Government of the Poisons Amendment Act, which allows for entry to premises, strip and "cavity" searches — with the amount of force necessary by police — and for jail sentences of up to 21 years for someone in possession of a certain amount of Indian hemp.

There was a lot of criticism of the Parliamentary Labor Party for allowing the bill to be passed without a division. Opposition Leader Ken Wreidt, claimed that the PLP were only abiding by Party policy which included mention of strip searches. There was a motion passed at last State Council to decriminalise possession and use of marijuana, but the policy Wreidt was referring to was 1978 policy, which still stands.

However, there is no mention in that policy of cavity searches, and it would be expected that ALP parliamentarians would have realised that this could be used for intimidation by a police state.

While the section of the motion criticising the PLP was deleted, the motion condemned the legislation and called on the PLP to attempt to repeal those sections of the Act "which discriminate against human rights and the dignity of citizens of this State."

A motion was passed calling for a change to parliamentarians' pensions to more accurately reflect general community standards — much to the chagrin of some parliamentarians. At the moment, for every \$1 contributed by parliamentarians to the pension scheme, the taxpayer contributes \$15.

A suspension of standing orders was carried to put a motion on Tasmanian shipping.

The motion criticised the Liberal Government "for the chaos which now exists in the matter of Bass Strait shipping." It called for full "details of the agreement with Brambles together with a schedule of freight charges," and a "detailed breakdown of job losses including multiplier effects, which will be caused by the introduction of the Kirk Challenger."

Overall, the State Council did not inspire a great deal of confidence in the vigour of the ALP only six weeks prior to a Federal election.

party machinery

South Australia

Activist's guide to ALP

The South Australian Branch is notable for its large trade union vote at Conference, with as near as possible to 75% of votes coming from union delegates, and 25% from Sub-Branch delegates, on a card-vote system. This system of voting relates to the number of members each delegate represents.

Peter Sobey

Member Spence (SA) Branch

Another factor which makes it a little different from other State Branches is the strong influence parliamentary members have on the Sub-Branches. Labor Members of Parliament are able to attend and speak at any of the Sub-Branches in their electorate, and many use this to their advantage.

The SA ALP has also presented itself as not having hard and fast factions, like those which operate in NSW and Victoria. Yet there are factional differences, with a Left grouping, the Progressive Unions and Sub-Branches (P.U.S.), having a large influence on Convention votes, but a small participatory membership. The SA State Secretary, Chris Seacht, has been an active organiser of the Centre-Left national faction, which was Bill Hayden's power base at the last National Conference.

It's possible to join the SA ALP once you're over 14 years of age, when you are also automatically become a member of Australian Young Labor until you turn 28 years of age. Australian Young Labor is an active organisation in SA — publishing the national paper, Insight, for the organisation.

Policies of AYL have come into conflict with ALP policies — particularly Young Labor's opposition to uranium mining, where AYL has organised trips to the Roxby Downs Protest and helped organise a demonstration in Adelaide against Roxby Downs.

The paper of the SA ALP is called The Herald. Some of the main structural points about the SA Branch are as follows:

1. The Party is divided into Sub-Branches. You join the Sub-Branch in your residential area unless granted permission to do otherwise. Sub-Branches are the basic organ of the Party and must comprise at least 7 members, and meet at least once a quarter. Motions from the Sub-Branch can go to Policy Committees, State Council, Federal Electorate Councils, or District Assemblies.

Labor Militant, November-December 1984

2. District Assemblies are based on the State electoral boundaries in Adelaide and must meet at least once a quarter. They consist of all members of Sub-Branches within their boundaries. These are the most useful for conducting State election campaigns and giving support to the candidate.

3. Federal Electorate Councils are divided on the basis of Federal electoral divisions and comprise all Sub-Branch members within these boundaries. Although these have the potential of being a much larger gathering of members, the ranks don't usually attend FEC meetings. FECs must meet at least once annually. Both District Assemblies and FECs elect office bearers at an annual meeting, held after March 31.

4. The next regular form of Party organisation is the State Council, which meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Trades Hall, where the ALP has its offices. State Council is comprised of delegates from Sub-Branches, affiliated unions, delegates from District Assemblies, FECs, and a delegate representing the Federal and State Members of Parliament. State Council deals with motions that have come from the Sub-Branches and Items referred on by the State Executive.

5. The State Executive consists of the office-holders of the State Branch, the Leader of the Parliamentary Party, and 20 other people. Except for the Parliamentary Leader and State Secretary, the Executive is elected each year from the Annual State Conference. The State Secretary is elected for three years. The State Executive holds monthly meetings, or when requested.

6. The State Convention is held annually on the Queen's Birthday weekend, commencing on the Friday night. Special Conventions can be called by State Council or the State Executive. A delegate ratio is worked out on the basis of the numbers of members in affiliated unions and Sub-Branches, delegates from



District Assemblies, FECs, State and Federal Parliamentary delegates, and delegates from AYL. The largest vote is controlled by the unions.

Items for the Convention must come from FECs, District Assemblies, Sub-Branches, Affiliated trade unions, AYL, AGM or the State Executive. An agenda committee consisting of the President and Secretary of the Party and five people elected from the Convention decides on the items that go to Convention, and the order of business.

The State Convention is able to submit items to the National Biennial Conference. It also elects delegates to the National Conference.

SA Branch elects 8 delegates, 2 of whom must be women, and 2 proxy delegates to the National Conference. The Convention also elects members to various committees, such as the Platform Committee, Fundraising Committee, Campaign Committee, and various policy committees.

Special Conventions are called to select Party candidates for parliamentary elections. Candidates must be members of an affiliated union.

7. SA local government is notable for the absence of Party intervention. Local government in SA is run on an independent, "non-aligned" basis. Even though the Sub-Branch may support the election of a certain candidate, the Party doesn't officially campaign for the candidate.

Like all other State Branches of the Party, members in South Australia are bound by the objectives of the Party — which are to achieve the political and social values of equality, democracy, liberty, and social co-operation. Unfortunately, it seems that, in practice, these objectives tend to remain in the pages of the rule book, rather than being acted upon.

If you would like to contact the SA Branch, its address is: 1116 South Terrace, Adelaide, 5000. Ph 211 8744.

solidarity

Halt military aid to Marcos!

The most striking statement made by President Reagan during the second U.S. Presidential debate in October was that the U.S. should give all necessary support to President Marcos of the Philippines.

Nelum De Silva

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch and NSW Nurses Association

This is said in a period when hundreds of thousands of people throng the streets of the Philippines in big anti-government demonstrations. And also at a time when the Chief of Staff of the armed forces and other senior military officers had been blamed for the murder of the opposition leader, Benigno Aquino, in August last year.

The Reagan Administration and U.S. Senate staff analysts have also concluded that the Philippines Government of President Marcos is in serious trouble. According to a Senate staff report made public in early October, many Filipinos see it as "a foregone conclusion that the Marcos era is in its terminal stage."

But U.S. leaders have concluded they must back Marcos or risk losing the major stake they have in the Philippines. The two largest overseas U.S. military bases are Clark Field and Subic Bay Naval Base, and they are only two of 21 U.S. military facilities in the Philippines. Experts say that there is no way that the U.S. could duplicate the strategic advantage of the Clark Field and Subic Bay bases anywhere else in the Pacific.

Aside from this, U.S. corporations have more than US\$4 billion invested in the Philippines — which is roughly 60% of total U.S. investment in South East Asia. A vast majority of the country's people live in misery. 80 per cent of Filipinos live below the poverty line. Yet Ferdinand Marcos is one of the richest men in Asia — and Imelda Marcos is reputed to be the seventh richest woman in the world.

The only means of maintaining the status quo is by repression. Because of this, alongside his economic empire, Marcos has built up a military elite closely tied to himself and his cronies.

When martial law was declared in 1972, the armed forces were 65,000 strong. Ten years later, there are 350,000 regular forces, supplemented by an estimated 30,000 to 500,000 paramilitary and reserve troops.

Thousands have become victims of dictatorial measures like torture, detention, relocations, and massacres.

In response to this repression and unjust rule, opposition groups and alliances have developed in most sectors of the population.

The country's economy is in ruins, and this has driven many business people to join the mass of workers, youth, and poor farmers who are calling for a change.

The assassination of Aquino sparked a political crisis which has continued unabated. "Justice for Aquino, Justice for all," is one of the mass movements which sprang up in August 1983 with the object of simply seeking justice against those responsible for the public execution of Aquino.



Benigno Aquino

On the other hand, there is also "illegal" opposition. The Communist Party of the Philippines, after years of struggle under martial law, claims that its armed strength has grown by thousands.

Marcos himself has said that the greatest threat to his regime's stability is the National Democratic Front. This is an umbrella organisation of all outlawed political groups, including the CPP. The NDF, as well as the legal opposition, is for a national democratic coalition government. They have both arrived at the same basic analysis of the situation.

But it is not only the United States that aids and backs the repression of people's democratic and civil rights in the Philippines. Australia is one of the richest and most powerful supporters of Marcos.

Australia is providing development assistance to two rural projects in the Philippines — at Zamananga Del Sur and in Northern Samar.

In Northern Samar, however, the reality is that 7% of the aid has been allocated towards agricultural projects, whilst 70% is being spent on roads. It is obvious that the roads have provided the military with greater access to communities where there is social unrest.

There is also direct military aid to the Philippines. This was \$146 million for

1983-84. Some of this money is used in the following ways:

- \$600,000 for Australian advisers based in the Philippines to train the Philippine military in the maintenance of Australian-supplied Nomad aircraft;

- \$700,000 for Philippines military personnel to be trained in Australia.

The provision of military aid to the Philippines must be strongly condemned in the light of the fact that military spending in the Philippines has increased 800% since 1972 — yet it has had no foreign enemy since World War 2. The Australian Labor Government, with its continuing provision of military aid to



Scene after murder of Aquino

the Philippines, must accept responsibility for supporting a military force with a notorious record of arrests, torture, imprisonments, disappearances, and murders.

Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Hayden has justified the training of Filipino soldiers by saying that it is giving them grounding in democratic principles!

Trade between the Philippines and Australia will total \$280 million this financial year. Australian companies, primarily in search of a more strictly controlled and cheaper workforce, have invested \$50 million in the Philippines.

Wages in the Philippines are one-tenth of those in Australia. In addition, workers are forced to work long hours, while severe limits are forced on trade union activities.

The question of the Philippines must now become a major issue in the ALP — as the crisis in that country deepens.

The Right and Centre-Left factions at the July National Conference managed to block a resolution aimed at cutting off military aid to Marcos.

All supporters of human rights in the Branches should now begin to press the Federal Government to stop aiding the Philippines regime — and to support the movement for a national democratic government in that country.