

# Labor combined with SOCIALIST FIGHT MILITANT

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

Volume 4, Number 5, July 1984

National  
Conference

**Abandon  
capitalist  
policies**

**NCC unions  
blocked**

Reports from State  
Conferences

**Party democracy**

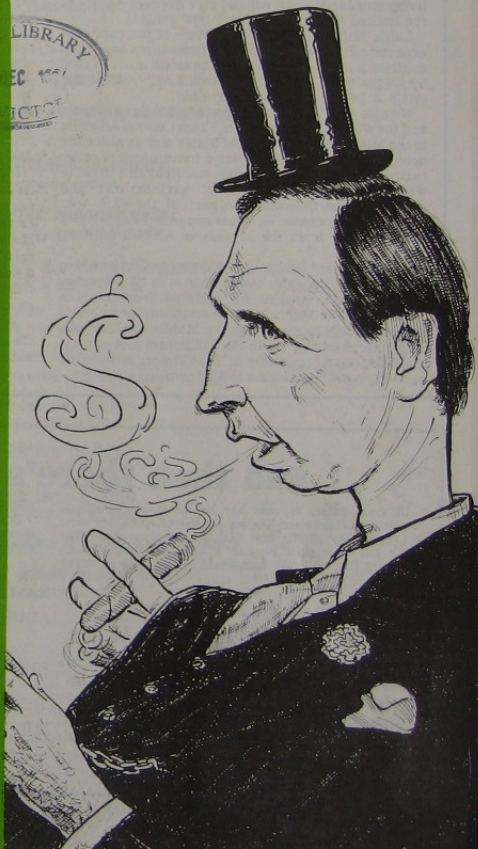
Obstacles to implementing  
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# Labor MILITANT

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 distasteful 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.

## ... and then there's Labor Militant

Different points of view are represented at National Conference. Hawke and Keating are the "pragmatists" who put the bosses' profits first. Hayden certainly sounds the same but he claims he has a different (undisclosed) ideology. The "official" Left would rather hang on to the

status quo.  
But if you want to hear the arguments for radical, socialist measures to resolve the capitalist crisis you have to subscribe to Labor Militant.

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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.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion

Printed and published by P. Brewer PO Box 372, Broadway NSW 2007



## letters to L.M.

### Accord seminar

Dear Editor,  
The Queensland Labor Women's Organisation held a seminar, open to all Party members, in Brisbane on June 3 in an attempt to stimulate debate on the Prices and Incomes Accord.

There were four speakers on the platform, both for and against the Accord and also on what the it means for women.

Alan Muir, Assistant State Secretary of the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association, strongly attacked the Accord saying that in his opinion it was nothing but a wages document. He went on to say that we have essentially made an agreement with ourselves in order to receive those things which are already part of ALP policy.

His remarks were warmly received by the audience, and the ensuing discussion appeared on the whole to express severe doubts in the Accord as a strategy for Labor.

However the small turnout to the seminar, which had been widely advertised within the Party, is an indication that there is still an unwillingness, particularly among the Left, to discuss what the Accord really means for the Australian working class.

The Hawke Government has a grim record so far; reduced wages, cuts in the public sector, vicious attacks on militant unions such as the BLF, attacks on the public education system, lack of promised tax reform to date — while at the same time boosting company profits through handouts, incentives and tax benefit schemes.

It is imperative that the Left begin to analyse the strategy of this Labor Government, not just around the important foreign policy and uranium issues, but the heart and soul of its whole political strategy to revive the capitalist economy on the backs of the working class.

Until this analysis has begun, the Left will be unable to develop an alternate socialist economic strategy.

Helen Russell  
Brisbane

### Sri Lanka

Dear Editor

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed at the NSW ALP Conference: "Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka" July/August 1983

● Over 200,000 Tamils were made refugees.

● Over 2000 Tamils were slaughtered.

● 33 Tamil political detainees butchered.

● Economic base of the Tamils destroyed.

● 5000 properties and business establishments worth \$200 million reduced to ashes.

● Several Tamil youths arbitrarily arrested, detained for indefinite periods and tortured under the notorious "Prevention of Terrorism Act".

● Hundreds of Tamils were killed and disposed of without inquest under the draconian Emergency Regulation 15A.

● Even to date, mass arrests, detention, torture, and killing of Tamils are continuing unabated.

How many thousands of more lives have the Tamils to lose before they can survive as an ethnic entity in Sri Lanka? Only you, the members of the INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, can answer that question.

We earnestly request the delegates of the Australian Labor Party of NSW to urge the Sri Lankan government to:

1. Repeal repressive legislation such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulation 15A under the Public Security Ordinance.  
2. Repeal legislation which bans the advocacy of a separate Tamil state and which has the effect of outlawing Tamil based

political groups and preventing Tamils from participating in public life or from practicing in any of the professions.

3. Grant citizenship and full political rights to all Tamils resident in Sri Lanka.

4. Lift the ban on political parties advocating self-determination of the Tamil people.

5. Give full compensation for the loss of Tamil lives and property during the riots.

6. Withdraw armed forces from the traditional Tamil areas. Distributed by: DeLam Tamil Association PO Box 198, Eastwood NSW 2122

### Irian Jaya

Dear Editor,

Over 8000 refugees from West Irian are now in Papua/New Guinea. They say they fear for their lives if they are forced to go back. But the PNG Government has directed the police to lay charges against those who crossed the border "illegally."

The refugee problem is due to Indonesian repression and heavy-handed attempts made by the Jakarta generals to force West Papuans to abandon their cultural traditions.

Alienation of land and disruption of communities is also brought about by the World Bank-sponsored Transmigration Scheme under which Indonesia intends to relocate 700,000 Javanese in West Irian by 1989 in order to flood the native inhabitants.

The general picture presented to the Australian public of the situation in West Papua is a misleading one. Sydney Morning Herald foreign editor Peter Hastings insists that the problem is one of "race relations" — an "inescapable clash of cultures". As if the two cultures concerned approach each other on an equal basis.

By confusing the issue the Australian press hides the fact that the Indonesian

armed forces have been responsible for atrocities directed against Papuans — including land theft, torture, rape, murder and even legal imprisonment. Forced labour camps have been set up.

We should face up to the fact that the Australian Government is backing up (financially and politically) one of the most repressive regimes in Asia, that of the Jakarta generals. Australian military aid to Indonesia must be stopped.

The refugees must be treated as refugees and not forced to return. Australia should take the matter to the United Nations Commission for Refugees and try and create the political conditions (by ending the terror) that would allow these people to return to their homes.

According to the British publication Tapol a report from a mission station in the Kamberoto area cites examples of returning refugees being forced to dig their own graves and then being shot into them.

West Papuans deserve the support of the Australian labour movement for their just struggle for self-determination.

NB

Petersham, NSW

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.

### Correction

A report on page 11 of the last issue of Labor Militant (Volume 4, Number 4) on the Tasmanian State Council meeting of May 18-19 referred to Senator Jean Hearn as Senator John Hearn. Apologies to Senator Hearn.

## National Conference



## Labor needs a new strategy

The 1984 ALP National Conference is occurring in the context of a deep worldwide crisis of capitalism, despite a limited recovery over the past year.

Just a month before the delegates gathered for the 1984 National Conference in Canberra, the Australian Bureau of Statistics released National Accounts figures that indicated the economic recovery is continuing. Between July 1983 and April 1984 the gross domestic product expanded by 9.2 per cent.

### editorial

While this figure shows a turn-around since the recession bottomed-out in the first part of 1983, it does not represent "stunning growth" as Keating has claimed. The improvement is measured against a low base reached in the deepest recession in many years. The breaking of a severe national drought contributed greatly to the improvement in the gross domestic product in the second half of 1983. And the National Accounts figures, themselves, show that the recovery remains very narrow.

There has been growth in areas such as housing construction and the public sector, but manufacturing industries remain very sluggish. If you discount the fact that State Governments have sold or leased plant and equipment to private manufacturers, then investments in this area have remained stagnant. Furthermore, a survey carried out by the Australian Confederation of Industry and Westpac in early June showed that, while many manufacturers intend to invest in new equipment, there will be a decline in manufacturing jobs.

The nervousness of the investors reflects the fact that there are also signs that a new world recession is in the making. Growth rates are already declining, the banks are faced with a severe debt crisis and stock-brokers have got the jitters.

Australian capitalists are already preparing for the new downturn that will destroy the least efficient producers. As the ACI/Westpac survey indicated the manufacturers are investing in labor-saving technology in order to try and get

an edge on their rivals.

The Hawke Government has never tried to hide the fact that it wants to find a capitalist solution to the crisis. It wants to use the recovery to prepare for the next downturn by "restructuring" industry at the expense of jobs. It wants to carry out a rigorous capitalist rationalisation to eliminate inefficient enterprises and strengthen the profit-making capacity of the leading corporations and banks.

BHP and the leading car producers have benefited most from the plan. After sacking hundreds of steelworkers in 1981 and 1982, BHP went on to record record profits and to buy out Utah mining company. Senator Burton's "car plan" will strengthen the monopoly position of the leading producers and ensure mass sackings from plants that are closed.

The plan to allow the entry of foreign banks and remove Government regulations affecting the domestic banks is also part of the same restructuring strategy. Treasurer Keating hopes that the leading Australian banks will thrive on increased competition and will, thus, provide better services for manufacturers. The ANZ banking group has already demonstrated that it is prepared to take up the challenge by buying the Britain-based bank Grindlays.

The Prices and Incomes Accord is a vital component of the rationalisation strategy. It holds wages in check so that profits can expand and it prevents workers resisting job losses. It prevents unions from promoting their own solutions such as shorter working hours.

The Accord was sold to workers on the basis that it would prevent a further erosion of living standards and ensure them a share of any recovery.

At the 1982 National Conference Hayden, Hawke and other Labor leaders claimed it would guarantee a "redistribution of wealth" and stated specifically that if economic growth reached 5 per cent a Labor Government would be able to steadily reduce unemployment.

The Accord has certainly produced a redistribution of wealth but it has been from wages to profits. It has guaranteed a drop in living standards. And now the Govern-

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## Party ranks oppose U.S. bases

At best Hawke's June 6 statement to Parliament on the role of U.S. bases in Australia can be described as superficial and misleading. It did nothing to fulfil the election promise to remove the veil of secrecy that hides the real function of the installations.

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

Even Don Chipp, ex-Minister for the Navy during the Vietnam War was prompted to say, "The long awaited revelation about the U.S. bases is pathetic beyond belief. To argue that these facilities are not military bases is a crude and deliberate deception that should not be tolerated by Australians."

Hawke's purpose was, however, to get in the first shot for the debate that will be held at July's National Conference. In so doing he has provoked the parliamentary Left into taking a public stand in opposition to his statement.

Four ministers — Brian Howe, Stewart West, Tom Uren, and Arthur Gietzelt — met with Hawke to tell him that it was unacceptable to make a statement to Parliament that had not even been considered by caucus. This was made worse by the fact that the statement had been cleared by the Reagan administration.

Subsequently, 28 Labor parliamentarians

published a criticism of the statement which made two main points: Firstly, that Hawke had contradicted official ALP policy by distinguishing between nuclear weapons and so-called "peaceful" uses of nuclear power and by compromising Australia's sovereignty; and secondly, that Hawke had not discussed the statement in any party forum.

The claim by Hawke that the public would be provided with "necessary" information about the bases was earlier shown to be false in the case of the Nurrungar base in South Australia. Neither Defence Minister Scholes nor Hawke even informed Premier Bannon before approving plans for a \$126 million upgrading of the Nurrungar base. The public only heard about this when the National Times got hold of the story.

Nurrungar enables communications between the North American Air Defence Command and the Strategic Air Command which controls B52 squadrons around the world.

In fact all the U.S. bases in Australia are part of the highly sophisticated U.S. war machine. North West Cape in Western Australia is an important tracking station for the U.S. nuclear-armed submarine fleet in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. These submarines carry 5,000 of the estimated 10,000 U.S. nuclear warheads. As well, North West Cape is one of only three facilities in the world with Very Low Frequency (VLF) transmission system. Transmissions from North West Cape were used to direct the min-

capitalist austerity drive in Australia. It will not show that the growing war threat is linked to the crisis of capitalism.

The debate on uranium mining and the presence of U.S. military installations in Australia provide examples.

Although uranium mining and export will also be opposed because of the many risks associated with the nuclear power industry, the most telling argument will concern the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The disarmament movement has rapidly asserted itself as a major political force in Australia and this will ensure that the debate on issues related to the threat of war will attract attention.

But it is easy to get confused about the cause of the war threat and to pose false solutions. For example, there are even people in the disarmament movement who believe that U.S. bases in Australia have a defensive purpose and who seek to explain the threat of war by the meaningless notion of "super-power rivalry."

The truth is the U.S. bases have an aggressive military purpose. They help to guide a massive nuclear submarine fleet that has the purpose of defending U.S. economic interests around the world.

Australian capitalists also have extensive economic interests in the Asian and Pacific regions — in terms of investments, markets and trade. Australia is a willing partner in a military alliance, symbolised by ANZUS, that has the purpose of defending capitalist exploitation by propping up imperialist and repressive regimes. The Korean and Vietnam Wars provide enough evidence of this.

The threat of war has not grown in recent years simply because an out-of-work cowboy actor has run amok in the White House. Reagan's war mongering is designed to help the U.S. capitalists impose severe austerity measures on the Third World to ensure their investments in those countries and to conquer new markets by force. The U.S. imperialists have never given up the hope of finding a way to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

It should never be forgotten that the last Great Depression ultimately led to World II. World War III could be a nuclear holocaust with no survivors.

But if you defend capitalist exploitation in Australia, why not defend the interests of Australian capitalists abroad? In fact, if you are going to defend Australian capitalism isn't it necessary to defend the worldwide capitalist system? This is the dilemma for the ALP Left.

A consistent antiwar strategy is also anti-capitalist. It must involve opposition to: uranium mining; the U.S. bases; the ANZUS alliance; Australian aid to repressive regimes in the region; and an end to Australia's economic exploitation of Third World countries. It must also involve support for those who are fighting for national liberation in oppressed countries like East Timor, El Salvador and the Philippines. It must oppose U.S. military adventures in Central America and the Middle East.

Because it lacks such a consistent approach, the ALP Left tends to fight issues in isolation. And it has come to rely on a tradition of doing deals.

Left parliamentarian Brian Howe has virtually ensured that a pro-uranium mining policy will emerge from Conference by rallying support for a policy that would allow the filling of existing contracts. Tom Uren has gone even further by saying that Roxby Downs should be given the go-ahead.

Such a gutless approach is bred in backroom deals between the secretive factions of the parliamentary caucus. It does not correspond to the interests of the labor movement and it will demoralise the ranks of that movement.

As long as the Left tries to play the likes of Hawke, Keating and Hayden at their own game they will lose hands down. It needs to develop a political strategy that can inspire confidence and determination in the ranks of the movement and mobilise them in collective action.

And it needs to start now.

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ment is talking about the need to accept permanently high unemployment levels.

The new wages system has meant the permanent loss of the 9.1 per cent wage cut that resulted from the wage freeze started by Fraser and continued by Hawke. And it now means another virtual wage freeze until April 1985, while prices continue to rise at a rate of 8 to 10 per cent.

Realisation reform has not materialised. Improvements to social welfare (the "social wage") have been minimal. About the only reform of any significance at all has been the introduction of Medicare and yet on Health Minister Bennett's own figures it will result in a net saving of just 70 cents a week for workers on the Average Weekly Wage.

Because the Accord has clamped a straitjacket on the unions it has produced a demoralisation in their ranks and created openings for a right-wing push.

There will undoubtedly be much debate at Conference on the economic strategy of the Hawke Government. Keating has already succeeded in replacing many of the more specific economic policies in the draft platform in order to give the Government a freer hand to discuss budgetary strategy with business leaders and to relax guidelines on things like levels of Australian ownership of new enterprises.

Employment and Industrial Relations Minister Ralph Willis has succeeded in having the employment policy concede ongoing high levels of unemployment and shift its emphasis towards helping the unemployed.

Thus Government strategy promotes economic recovery at the expense of jobs and living standards. But what will the Left put forward in opposition — a real, socialist alternative or a capitalist solution that does not even have feasibility of the Hawke/Keating approach?

Essentially the Left will attempt to defend existing Government regulation of the economy and protection of Australia's manufacturing industry.

But this is a bankrupt strategy. Existing regulations have clearly not worked. They have not saved jobs or prevented cuts in living standards and it is absurd nonsense to claim they give ordinary Australians some kind of democratic control over economic planning.

The Left position dissolves into a crude nationalism. What is more desirable about Australian banks or corporations? Since when has Australian capitalism been concerned about the rights and living standards of Australian workers?

And as long as Government-owned enterprises are run on the same lines as capitalist enterprises they will be indistinguishable.

Similarly, high tariff protection and Government subsidies have not saved jobs. The examples of BHP and GM-HV prove that. They have simply meant higher prices for consumers and a prolonged life for some of the less efficient producers.

The real alternative to the Hawke/Keating strategy is a socialist solution that places human needs and the rights of working people above profits. It involves mobilising the working class in defence of its rights rather than binding it to a rotten deal like the Accord.

The effective solutions to the unemployment crisis must involve a reduction of the working week so that the available work is shared around. They would also involve the nationalisation of enterprises that are not using their full capacity. Plant and equipment now lying idle should be put to use to produce the things that society needs.

This approach would involve a radical departure from Labor's traditions but surely it is obvious that radical solutions are called for? What is the point in defending a strategy that has already failed dismally?

One of the reasons the Left will fail to make much impact at Conference is that it will fail to draw out the connection between the fight against economic and political exploitation in other parts of the world and the need to fight the

ing of Halphong and other North Vietnamese ports in 1972.

The Tranet base in South Australia and the Omega base in Victoria play similar roles.

Pine Gap, controlled by the CIA, is able to eavesdrop on Soviet and Chinese military communications and intercept radar, telephone and radio transmissions. It facilitates communications between agents operating in many countries and CIA headquarters in Virginia.

Australia also assists the U.S. military by providing landing rights for American B52s in Darwin which more than likely carry nuclear weapons.

Hawke's provocative statement was something of a gamble and may have misfired on him. It has certainly ensured intense interest in the debate on the bases at National Conference.

State Conferences in NSW, Northern Territory, the ACT and South Australia have all elected firm opponents of uranium mining in the National Conference delegations and this will have an effect on the debate on the bases.

The South Australian Conference, influenced by the news that Nurrungar was to be upgraded and the ongoing revelations about the Maralinga testing of nuclear weapons in the 1950s and 1960s, overwhelmingly voted to close the bases.

The results of the State Conferences reflect the impact of the massive April 15 disarmament marches. Other actions, such as the Women for Survival camp at Pine Gap, have also strengthened opposition to the bases inside the Party.

Hawke would not be able to win support for his statement in any fair and open debate in any representative ALP forum. Yet he will probably have the numbers for a pro-bases policy at Conference.

It is not clear at this stage just what position the Left will defend at Conference. In the past their lukewarm opposition to the bases has allowed the Right to maintain its open support for them.

At the 1982 Conference, for example, little effort was put into the debate on the bases. It, therefore, attracted little attention within the Party. It has not been an issue the Left has campaigned on to build up momentum for the anti-bases position at Conference.

To a large extent the disarmament and anti-uranium movements are pushing the Left towards a stronger line on the bases. Pressure is also building against the ANZUS treaty. The Left should take advantage of these growing sentiments to launch a campaign at the 1984 Conference aimed at ending Australia's involvement in the U.S. military network.





## Right wins at NSW 'consensus' Conf.

The annual NSW ALP Conference over the weekend of June 9 to 11 was a quiet affair. With few exceptions the policy debates were characterised by an uncommon civility and accommodation. It was, to quote many delegates, a "consensus" Conference.

**Pat Brewer**  
Member Forest Lodge (NSW)

And, as a consequence of the consensus bargaining method, major shifts to the right were traded for minor concessions to the left. Some of the shifts were opposed by the Left, but many were not.

The adoption of a rules revision report resulted in the curtailing of democratic participation in the Branch, State Council, which met twice a year, was abolished and its powers were transferred to either the annual Conference or the Administrative Committee. The Left proposed a second State Conference in November. But the centralisation process has been a long-

term project of the Right and so this move failed to break the factional blocks.

The real gladiatorial contests of the Conference came in the uranium debate and debate on East Timor and the question of banking deregulation and the entry of foreign banks. With opponents and supporters hissing and cheering, the heavies of the Right and Left exchanged accusations, appeals and insults in a brief return to the more usual atmosphere of NSW Conference debates. But the focus of each debate was further to the right than it had been the year before.

The classic example was provided by the economic debate where the stage was set by an address from Treasurer Paul Keating. Keating's speech would have been a real hit at a Liberal Party conference. Saying the Government intended to continue with stimulatory policies, he warned of cuts to the public sector in the coming budget. He claimed that the Prices and Incomes

Accord was creating a "quiet revolution" by internationalising the Australian economy, but there was no mention of redistribution of wealth.

The Left took him on over banking deregulation. It didn't want any foreign banks, in effect defending a monopoly position for extremely profitable Australian banks. No one dared mention the idea of nationalising the banks — a measure that could create many jobs and provide funds for increased welfare spending in place of the proposed cuts.

Rightward shifts also took place in the uranium and foreign policy debates. The only area where the shift was blocked was in industrial relations where Conference voted for the immediate implementation of a 38-hour week for health workers despite a plea by Premier Wran to set this matter aside.

This gain reflected the fact that the union members can exert pressure on their officials, even though most of the union delegations are hand-picked. The key to a significant change in the sterile factional line-up of NSW Conferences is obviously to be found in the ranks of the union movement. But as long as it accepts the straitjacket of the Prices and Incomes Accord the Left will turn its back on this source of strength.

Sydney Morning Herald that it would be a mistake for the ALP National Conference to adopt a "rigid policy" on East Timor.

What those ungrateful generals do not realise is that Hayden and Hawke have to be a little careful about how they overturn policy. They are doing their best but the ban on Dalrymple will set back their progress.

### Keating in left lane?

At the NSW Conference on June 10, Paul Keating seized a rare opportunity to outflank his Party opponents on the left. Referring to the fact that "left-wingers" are rushing against those nasty foreign versions, he said with great flourish:

"What does the Government owe organisations like Westpac or the ANZ Bank?"

This is, of course, pure rhetoric on Keating's part because the same question can be posed concerning any number of companies that receive lucrative government subsidies. But he could not resist exploiting an obvious weakness in the position of those who want to draw some distinction between Australian capitalists and foreign capitalists.

## Major setback for Hawke

In a major setback for the Hawke faction in Federal Parliament, the Victorian State Conference voted decisively against approving affiliation applications from four unions influenced by the National Civic Council and its splinter group the Industrial Action Front.

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

Hawke's faction in Victoria, Labor Unity, had invited the unions to apply for affiliation in an effort to undermine the dominant position of the Socialist Left faction. But too many people in Victoria remember what people associated with these unions did to the Branch in the bitter split in the 1950s and in supporting non-Labor governments ever since.

The special committee to investigate the applications, set up at a State Conference in March, was flooded with submissions and resolutions urging that they be kept out. In all, 151 Branches and other bodies opposed affiliation while only 10 came out in support.

Former NCC members David Grissen and Rosemary Gillespie gave crucial evidence on the role of the leaders of the unions involved.

The final votes were as follows:

Federated Clerks Union — 289 to 140 against.

Shop Distributive and Allied Industries Employees Association — 285 to 154 against.

Federated Ironworkers Association — 270 to 142 against.

Associated Society of Carpenters and Joiners — 271 to 133 against.

Thus the votes against were larger and more consistent than had been expected. Before the Conference there had been some speculation about a possible compromise deal, whereby the two smaller unions — the FIA and Carpenters and Joiners — might be allowed in. But the mood of Conference was uncompromising.

The special committee had split 5-5 on its recommendation. Labor Unity representatives, who included ACTU vice-president Simon Crean, claimed that a party based on the unions had no right to exclude any unions that were affiliated to Trades Hall and the ACTU.

But the Conference was obviously more impressed with the argument that those who have consciously campaigned against Labor have no place in the Labor Party.

Elizabeth Calwell, daughter of Arthur Calwell, said that those who do not know the past are condemned to repeat it.

Conference also issued a warning against Federal Intervention by calling on all Party bodies to respect the democratic decision of the Victorian delegates. Earlier in the year National Executive split 9-9 on a motion to intervene on behalf of the unions seeking affiliation, with the decisive vote against intervention being that of Senator Don Grimes.

Grimes is not prepared to say that he will vote against any new move to intervene. But the strength of the Conference vote makes it clear an intervention would result in a bloody fight. Hawke's faction of all members have struck a brick wall in Victoria.

## Misrepresented

### With his tongue firmly implanted in his cheek

Hawke's June 6 statement to Parliament on the U.S. bases was notable for the fact that it contained nothing that was not already common knowledge. It was checked with the Reagan Administration but not with the Labor caucus. Yet Hawke still had the hide to say:

"It is to be regretted that the previous Government did not make the necessary effort to see that the Australian people were properly informed."

"This has helped build up an unwarranted mystique about them and encouraged a tendency in certain sections of the media and elsewhere to discuss Nurrungar and Pine Gap in a speculative and provocative manner."

### A Clayton's uranium policy

For the Right it will be the pro-uranium policy you have when you are not having a pro-uranium policy. For the Left it will be the anti-uranium policy you have when you

are not having an anti-uranium policy.

The Left will insist that uranium mining must be closed down, but, well, it will be acceptable to allow Australian uranium to be added to the world's stockpiles for another 10 years or so and there's no way of stopping the mining of the world's largest known deposit (at Roxby Downs).

The Right would like the Party to be a bit more honest about what it stands for, but will accept the compromise. Unfortunately the compromise is not even neutral. It is pro-uranium.

### Ungrateful friends

Both Bill Hayden and Bob Hawke have staked their reputations on winning a good relationship with the Indonesian generals by dumping ALP policy on East Timor. But then the generals got shy about the fact that Fretilin's Jose Ramos Horta was allowed to come to Australia and so they knuckled back approval for a visit to East Timor by Ambassador Rawdon Dalrymple.

Hayden fired off a note to Jakarta saying this action had caused "great concern and disillusionment" in Australia. But he still told the

## Bannon has rough ride at SA Conference

The first thing one came across when approaching Trades Hall calling for the opening of South Australia's ALP State Conference on June 9 was rank-and-file members handing out a leaflet calling on both Federal and State Governments to stick to official ALP policy and oppose uranium mining.

**Roque Grillo**  
Member Adelaide Sub-Branch South Australian Young Labor

The following morning 2000 people marched on Trades Hall calling for an end to the mining at Roxby Downs. Many ALP members took part in the march. It was obvious uranium would be a controversial issue.

The actual uranium debate took place on the morning of the last day of Conference. A motion calling for the phasing out of the industry was presented. But then Premier John Bannon stepped down from the official platform to move an amendment which would exempt Roxby Downs from the policy.

As Bannon spoke, a group of members unfurled a banner proclaiming "Labor Against Uranium" but Party officials were quick to order the banner taken down.

While anti-uranium speakers presented the facts concerning the dangers of nuclear power and its contribution to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Bannon simply relied on the assertion that the blocking of Roxby Downs would result in the replacement of the Labor Government by a Liberal Government that would "open other mines, start an enrichment industry and make SA a dumping ground for nuclear waste."

A speaker against Bannon's amendment summed up the feelings of many by saying there was no point having a Labor Government if it was going to implement Liberal policies. But no one really took up the challenge to talk about what kind of job-creating policies Labor could implement instead of approving Roxby Downs.

At the end of 90 minutes of debate the vote was taken with Bannon's amendment winning by 132 to 76.

A number of policy motions adopted at Conference will cause concern to both the Bannon and Hawke Governments. In particular, a motion calling for the closing down of all U.S. installations that have direct or indirect military functions runs directly counter to the policies of both Governments. This motion was adopted by a two to one majority.

A motion calling on the Federal Government to set up, within six weeks, a full and independent public inquiry into the British nuclear weapons tests at Maralinga during the 1950s and 1960s caught Bannon off guard and sent him searching through the rule books for a provision that could annul the motion. He failed.

A motion on Nicaragua called on the Federal Government to support the electoral process taking place there and to provide aid and interest-free loans. Other good foreign policy motions concerned the situations in South Africa, East Timor and Iran. A motion calling for the abolition of ASIO was carried without dissent.

Mick Young and State Secretary Chris Schacht tried to prevent the adoption of a motion opposing the affiliation of four right-wing unions in Victoria. But their amendment was defeated.



## Around the Branches

### Tasmania

A decision by Justice Wilcox of the Federal Court — to declare the method of selection of Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union delegates to ALP bodies illegal — represents unwarranted interference in the affairs of the Party.

Wilcox ruled in favour of an appeal by right-winger Geoff Adams who defeated a Left incumbent for the position of AMFSU State secretary last year. The decision was immediately welcomed by Rod Kelly whose regular efforts to win position in the AMFSU have received the support of the National Civic Council. Kelly said it would help his campaign to defeat AMFSU National Secretary Jack Kidd later this year.

While it is true that unions should stick to their rules on the election of delegates to ALP bodies, court interference in the affairs of the labour movement cannot be tolerated. The decision obviously has serious implications for all State Branches of the Party.

### Victoria

The Victorian Young Labor Conference in Melbourne on the weekend of June 2 and 3 was attended by 150 delegates.

Some good foreign policy motions were passed — including support for striking British miners and for liberation struggles in Lebanon, the Philippines, Central America and East Timor.

Despite opposition from Labor Unity members, Conference overwhelmingly passed motions which called for the complete banning of the mining, export or processing of uranium. Another motion called for the removal of US military bases and for the termination of the ANZUS alliance.

Conference also came out strongly against the proposed affiliation of the four National Civic Council influenced unions. As expected, the debate on this was heated. Right-wingers claimed the "extreme left wing" is "isolated so why not the right?"

Left-wing speakers pointed out that leaders of left-wing unions had never called for a vote for the Liberals and that this should be the dividing line. The majority of delegates supported this view.

There was considerable debate over counterposed motions on the

Hawke Government's Prices and Incomes Accord. A motion from Labor Unity representatives praised the Accord, but a motion from Leesa Doughney of Braybrook Branch opposed it.

Left-wing delegates proposed amendments to the pro-Accord motion to delete the most lavish praise for the Hawke Government but to retain a commitment to the Accord. These delegates suggested there are many problems with the Accord but it remains necessary to fight for its positive aspects since it is "all we have got." Their amendments were accepted by Labor Unity.

By contrast Doughney argued: "Yes the Accord does provide a framework in one which does indeed redistribute wealth, but away from workers towards employers. . . . This is the underlying structure of the Accord. Anything else is superfluous."

Her motion called for: full, automatic wage indexation based on an index that truly reflects price rises; a program of extensive public works to create more jobs; a living wage for all pensioners, the unemployed and all disadvantaged persons in the community; a tax on capital gains and other wealth taxes to finance such reforms.

This motion lost by only 20 votes. The elections for the 11 positions on the State Branch's youth policy committee reflected the dominance of the Left at the Conference. Socialist Left candidates won seven spots, Labor Unity four, while supporters of Premier John Cain's Independent faction didn't get a look in.

### Australian Capital Territory

The Left succeeded in warding off right-wing advances in the ACT Branch of the Party at its Conference on June 16 and 17.

In the crucial ballot for a position on the National Executive, the Left's Henry Lawrence defeated Senator Susan Ryan by 80 votes to 56. Following the defeat of a Left delegate in Tasmania in May, Hawke and his supporters were hoping that victories for Ryan in the ACT and by a right-winger in the Northern Territory would consolidate their dominance of the Executive. But the NT Branch returned a Left delegate

and Ryan lost, so the Executive remains deadlocked on vital questions.

The ACT Branch also elected two opponents of uranium mining — Mary Bluer and John Langmore — to National Conference. In 1982 the delegates were Ros Kelly and Marc Robinson and Kelly voted for the Hogg amendment to water down opposition to uranium.

A motion calling for the phasing out of uranium mining was adopted by 108 to 13.

Former Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Government for long-time Commissioner for Community Relations Al Grassy failed in his bid to win presidency of the ACT Branch. The position was won for the Left by the Assistant Secretary of the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association David Wedgegood. Grassy became junior vice-president after the operational affirmative action principles gave the vice-president position to Sue Craven.

### Northern Territory

The annual Conference of the Northern Territory Branch produced some surprise results for the Hawke Government. Branch secretary Dennis Elliott won the ballot for a position on the National Executive left vacant since the resignation earlier in the year of Bob Collins — the Labor leader in the NT Legislative Assembly.

At Conference Elliott voted for a resolution from the Nightlife Aff Branch calling for a ban on new uranium mines and the phasing out of the industry by 1996. This motion was adopted by 34 to 32. Elliott also indicated he would vote for a phasing out policy at the National Conference where he will be a delegate along with Collins.

Collins began his parliamentary career as an opponent of uranium mining and toured the country to condemn the Fraser Government for blackmailing Aboriginal communities into accepting mining on their land. When he became Labor and at the 1982 National Conference supported the Hogg amendment. After Labor failed dismally in Legislative Assembly elections last December Collins branded the opponents of uranium mining as "Left fascists." He has made it clear he will vote for the strongest pro-uranium policy put forward at the National Conference.

### tasmania

## Jobs at stake in shipping rationalisation

The shake-up in Tasmanian shipping puts into question the future of the Government-owned Australian National Line. This in turn threatens massive job losses in the maritime industry in this State.

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

Brambles — the huge trucking and freight forwarding company — has moved into the Bass Strait run. It has entered a joint venture with the State-owned Tasmanian Shipping. And, with its ability to co-ordinate shipping and trucking to arrange a door-to-door service, it looks like establishing a monopoly on the Burnie port.

The P&O company has been operating out of Burnie but will probably move to Bell Bay (near Launceston) to accommodate Brambles. This will put P&O into competition with TNT and the latter has made it clear that if its trade suffers it will pull out of Hobart to concentrate its efforts at Bell Bay.

If TNT pulls out of Hobart the future of the Hobart port will be in doubt and hundreds of waterside workers could lose their jobs.

The northern ports of Devonport and Stanley are also threatened with closure. And many truckies could be replaced when Brambles brings in its own fleet. At the same time, the closure of the Hobart port could result in truck congestion on Tasmanian roads.

There has been a lot of opposition from Stanley residents to the reduction in the operation of the Straitsman — a vessel owned and operated by ANL. Three public meetings have been held and the Stanley Waterside Workers Federation has banned all Brambles cargo and equipment in retaliation. Stanley is located on Circular Head and the Master Warden of the Circular Head Marine Board Merv House has

claimed that, in entering a joint venture with Brambles, the Tasmanian Government has been the victim of a "huge confidence trick." He explained: "For a short term benefit they have paved the way for a monopoly takeover of Bass Strait shipping."

Another warden at Circular Head, Councillor O'Halloran, described the Brogan report which led to the deal with Brambles as "a waste of time and money." He added "I've never yet seen a government inquiry that didn't favour the government."

It is not really surprising that a Liberal State Government should make such a deal with Brambles, even if it does threaten the future of the Government shipping line. But the real scandal that has emerged is the fact that the Hawke Government appointed three top Brambles executives to run ANL only five or six months ago. The decision to move in on Tasmanian shipping came soon afterwards.



Stanley wharfies protest closure of Straitsman

To get a licence from the Federal Government to bring a new ship into operation, Brambles had to find an operating ship to replace. So it went into a consortium with Tasmanian Shipping in order to replace the Straitsman.

Federal Transport Minister Peter Morris approved the licence so that Brambles could "investigate its potential." He claimed he wasn't giving a green light for the company.

And now the deal is done, the Federal Government is claiming that nothing can be done to stop the takeover.

The new ship Brambles will introduce in place of the Straitsman is so large (260 container units) that it will not be able to do the same run. The Straitsman shipped daily, whether full or not, across Bass Strait and serviced the smaller ports of Stanley and King Island.

Morris still had the opportunity to cancel Brambles' licence when he saw what was happening. But he didn't.

The State Government has said the Brambles deal will force ANL to become more competitive. And Hawke has said a recent grant of \$90 million to ANL should ensure this.

But, as a public enterprise designed to supplement and not compete with private enterprise, ANL has the charter of servicing the least profitable runs. If the Hawke Government was prepared to let it operate on more lucrative routes and to co-ordinate its operations with trucking and rail links, it would be able to defeat Brambles and all the other competitors.

However, ANL already faces handicaps imposed by State and Federal Labor Governments. For example, the last Tasmanian Labor Government almost eliminated the State's rail network, thus giving a natural competitive advantage for companies with both shipping and trucking operations like TNT and Brambles.

The Hawke Government has imposed the blatant handicap of placing executive members of one of ANL's main rivals on its board. These people have a primary loyalty to Brambles and they are hardly likely to advocate the expansion of nationalised shipping.

The Tasmanian Trades and Labor Council has also done nothing to protect the jobs of those involved in the shipping industry. In fact, a leading representative of the TTL, Paul Lennon, made a public statement the day before the Brambles deal was announced to say he supported the rationalisation of the shipping industry. He claimed this would mean increased efficiency and protect jobs in the long term.

Lennon's statement was made on behalf of the TTL but the Hobart Waterside Workers Federation was not consulted.

The whole Australian shipping industry is in crisis and requires decisive Government intervention. Instead of allowing a further deterioration, the Hawke Government could step in, place orders for new ships at places like Sydney's Cockatoo Island and build up ANL. Ship repair yards could be built in Tasmania.

Only last year the Soviet Union offered to build a ship repair yard at Margate, near Hobart, in a joint venture with the Tasmanian Government. But, not surprisingly, the Liberal State Government refused the offer. The Hawke Government should have overruled the State Government to ensure the project went ahead.

Unfortunately the Hawke Government has displayed more interest in the profits of Brambles and its like than in the jobs of Tasmanian workers and the future of ANL.



# The need for Party democracy

This is the fifth and final part in a series of articles examining issues to be debated at the July National Conference. The first four have examined foreign policy issues; uranium mining, U.S. bases and ANZUS; pay-offs for wage restraint in the Prices and Incomes Accord; and general economic strategies.

Obviously it is extremely important to oppose harmful policies, like the Prices and Incomes Accord, and to fight to replace them with policies that will improve living standards for working people. But it is one thing to win the adoption of progressive policies and quite another to have them implemented. The following article looks at some of the obstacles that stand in the way of the implementation of progressive Party policies.

The election of a Federal Labor Government in March 1983 was a big victory for working people. At last the Fraser Government had been tossed out and Labor had emerged from political wilderness.

## Martin Turk

Member Livingstone (NSW) ALP Branch

But within days the actions of the Hawke Government began to dash hopes of significant changes. Sixteen months later Hawke continues to receive the billing of a media superstar, but more and more members of the Party Branches and affiliated unions are becoming disillusioned about the performance of the Labor Government.

In its period in office the Labor Government has failed to deliver on a number of key election promises — including some that could easily have been implemented like the repeal of anti-union legislation and taxation reform. Early action on these could have given heart to the labour movement and set the scene for the implementation of Party policy on a wide range of issues.

But instead the Government has chosen to continue many of the programs and policies of the Fraser Government and, in doing so, it has turned its back on the Party platform. Many of its actions have directly opposed the terms and general thrust of Party policy — particularly in areas such as economic planning, foreign policy and on the specific issue of uranium mining.

At the forthcoming Conference Government ministers will be more interested in bringing Party policy into line with Government practice than finding out what policies the labour movement wants to see implemented.

The ability of Labor parliamentarians to turn their back on Party policy has been an historical problem for the Australian Labor Party. Fights over this very question developed from the time the NSW Trades and Labor Council decided to field parliamentary candidates in 1891.

Against stern and, at times heated, resistance the parliamentarians managed to assert their independence although the fight over conscription in World War I showed that the ranks had not abandoned the fight. The mass movement that developed around the Socialisation Units in NSW in the early 1930s represented the most concerted effort yet seen to demand the implementation of a socialist program. But throughout the history of the Party there have been fights over the implementation of particular policies.

Such a long-standing problem requires a lot of attention. The structures and practices of the Party need to be reviewed and shaken up from the bottom up. However, this article is concerned with particular problems associated

with the adoption and implementation of policy at a national level and, for that reason, it can only look at a couple of aspects of the necessary reforms.

As indicated above, a major obstacle to the implementation of policy has been the tradition of independence for the parliamentarians. This problem has to be the starting point because there is simply no way around it. If the elected representatives of the Party retain the independence to do what they please, the rest of the Party structure amounts to little more than an advisory council and a machine for running election campaigns. In effect, the labour movement has no more control over the political party it constructed and maintains than the bosses and top public servants who give the parliamentarians different advice.

All the State Branches have mechanisms for preselecting parliamentary candidates. There should also be procedures to enable the Party ranks to recall those parliamentarians who do not promote and seek to implement Party policy. The Party should have the right to put forward whichever candidate it believes will represent its interests.

Once the parliamentarians are brought into line the next problem is to construct the sort of policy-making bodies that would faithfully represent the ranks of the labour movement and meet often enough to keep policies up to date. National Conference does not do this.

The present constitution of the National Conference was adopted at a special National Conference in 1981. Until then the national gatherings had simply consisted of six representatives from each State plus a delegation from the federal parliamentary caucus.

The expansion of the Conference to 99 delegates was obviously an improvement. Branch delegations are now weighted according to the size of the Branches and affirmative action guidelines were adopted to ensure that at least 25 per cent of the delegates are women.

However, the 1981 Conference rejected a proposal from a National Committee of Inquiry which would have expanded Conference to 310 delegates with delegations elected directly from affiliated unions and from the broader Branch structure. This would have created a conference more like the annual conference of the British Labour Party.

As it is the delegations to Conference are elected at State Conferences where the dominant factions simply divide up the available positions. Federal parliamentarians do not dominate proceedings to the extent they did before the 1981 changes, but they are still assured of a high level of representation. The parliamentary leadership makes up a separate delegation and each State Branch can appoint a number of delegates who are invariably parliamentarians.

Ministers dominate the presentation of policy reports. Matters of dispute are often resolved between competing factions in the Federal caucus before reaching Conference. Conference is held in the ballroom of the most exclusive hotel in Canberra where the parliamentarians feel quite at home.

Obviously a much larger Conference with delegations elected by the ranks of affiliated unions and by Federal electorate bodies would be far more democratic. It should also meet on an annual basis and there should be a mechanism that would enable special Conferences to be held at the request of the constituent bodies.

One of the arguments ministers use for ignoring Party policies is that they have become outdated. Certainly many of the policies adopted in July 1982, and formulated in the months before that, have become dated. But this problem

could have been eased if a Conference had been convened some months after the election of the Hawke Government to allow opportunity for debate on the Government's proposed strategy.

Furthermore, a National Executive elected by a broad and representative National Conference would have the authority to deal with problems associated with implementing Party strategy. The present National Executive is dominated by Party officers and faction leaders and generally restricts itself to machinery matters. It is seen as a subsidiary to the Federal caucus and not a superior body.

Leading figures in the Hawke Government would obviously fight tooth and nail against any attempt to broaden Party democracy and impose Party discipline over the actions of the Government. In fact, they are already attempting to further centralise the power of the dominant individuals.

The whole notion of caucusing is one that is consciously abused by those in a position of dominance and, for that reason, it is widely misunderstood.

There are obviously important functions of a parliamentary caucus. It is the place where all the parliamentarians can participate in debates about parliamentary strategy and the implementation of policy. Once decisions are made in caucus the Labor parliamentarians can present a united face in public forums, including Parliament, and act in a disciplined fashion. Such unity in action is an elementary aspect of Party democracy — a mechanism for ensuring the implementation of collective decisions.

But it would clearly be a violation of Party democracy if the elected representatives were to be held to caucus positions within the internal forums of the Party, as Bob Hawke has proposed. It is essential that internal Party Conferences provide opportunities for free and open discussion of differing views. How else can the Party draw on its collective

resources to come up with the policies and tactics that will have the conscious support of the majority of the ranks?

Hawke and his supporters want to build the kind of dominating faction in the national sphere as exists in the NSW Branch. Anyone who has observed a NSW Conference will agree that it is anything but democratic. Row upon row of mainly middle-aged men sit stony-faced until given the order by their faction leaders to raise their hands.

Both the right and 'left-wing' Steering Committee factions in the NSW Branch devise their strategies at top-level meetings and pass the instructions down to the caucuses of delegations from rival unions and from Branch structures. Debates are like set-piece moves with the votes varying little from one issue to another.

The NSW Branch shows the end result of rigid factionalism and caucusing gone wild. The growth of this cancer could leave the Party with a terminal condition.

Hawke has run into considerable opposition to his plan to introduce "caucus solidarity" but he has implemented "Cabinet solidarity" within caucus. The effect of this came to a head when Stewart West resigned from Cabinet over the uranium issue. But when West went back into Cabinet under Hawke's terms the latter had scored a major victory.

Even within Cabinet Hawke has built a "kitchen cabinet" to further centralise the real decision-making. A good example of this centralisation process was provided by Hawke's statement to Parliament on U.S. bases — a major policy question that was submitted to neither Cabinet nor caucus (although it was cleared with the Reagan administration).

There is also some speculation that Hawke and his supporters will move to downgrade National Conference. An article in the June 15 Financial Review suggested that

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NSW State Conference. Move to abolish State Council took centralisation process a step further.



# Kampuchea reconstructs

By John Spragens Jr

The following article is reprinted from the May 30 issue of the U.S. *Guardian* — an independent radical newspaper. The author visited Kampuchea in December 1983. It has been slightly abbreviated.

In Kampuchea these days officials speak of "rebirth". City streets bustle, filled with bicycles and a surprising number of motorcycles. The contrast with the years of Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea Government, when the cities were nearly deserted, is striking. This past January traffic signals were revived at a number of Phnom Penh's street corners, dressing the city up for the fifth anniversary of the ouster of Pol Pot.

But Kampuchea's recovery is tentative, at the mercy of the weather and of foreign assistance. As a result of droughts followed by floods during last year's growing season, the country faces a major shortfall in rice, the staple food. Prospects for international aid appear poor. The country may be hungrier than it has been since 1979. That was the year production was disrupted, in the wake of the Vietnamese invasion, as people returned to their old homes from the compulsory farming assignments of the Pol Pot years.

"We certainly will encounter difficulties," Foreign Minister Hun Sen said in a recent Phnom Penh interview, "but in any case we will not allow our population to die of starvation."

The country's transportation network is probably better than it was in 1979, and this may make it possible to spread the hunger around more evenly than in 1979. But the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has estimated the rice deficit at 177,000 tons, at a minimum. Government specialists and Western relief workers say the need may in fact be closer to 300,000 tons. These figures are calculated on the basis of a bare survival ration for Kampuchea's estimated 7.2 million people. If there is not a major relief effort, belts will be very tight this year.

Beyond the immediate need for food, Kampuchea faces a severe shortage of technical workers and managers. Many died in the Pol Pot years or in the preceding five years of war. Others have fled the country.

The Agriculture Ministry, for example, has no extension agents to introduce new crops or farming methods, or to help farmers cope with disasters. Before the Pol Pot period, one ministry official said, there were 100 agricultural specialists and thousands of technicians. In 1979, only seven engineers could be found. Similar shortages exist in factories and government offices.

Kampuchea also needs assistance restoring and expanding its irrigation system and its few fertilizer plants — a necessary step if rice production is to rise.

One major potential source for such development aid and technical training is the UN Development Program (UNDP). The Kampuchean seat at the UN, however, is still held by Democratic Kampuchea — now the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, a tenuous alliance which includes groups led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk and by Son Sann, a former Sihanouk-era prime minister, as well as Pol Pot's group, commonly tagged the Khmer Rouge.

Under terms of the General Assembly resolutions calling for assistance to Kampuchea, Phnom Penh may not receive the kinds of development assistance available to member nations — only relief aid. So there are no UNDP programs in Kampuchea.



Kampuchea, December 1983. Top: A country road in Kompong Cham province. Bottom: Education back to normal in Kompong Cham.



Except for some emergency assistance during the food crisis immediately after Pol Pot was overthrown, the U.S. has sent no aid to Phnom Penh and maintains a trade embargo against Kampuchea. The embargo affects even private U.S. relief groups, which are not allowed to send aid which moves beyond emergency aid into the category of development assistance.

If a diplomatic solution were possible in Kampuchea, it could open the way for substantial development assistance, which would improve the country's chances for achieving self-sufficiency. But the countries which would have to be parties to any broad-ranging diplomatic solution have not been able to agree even on the definition of the problem.

Vietnamese leaders have described the root of the problem as Chinese hostility toward Vietnam. They cite this Democratic Kampuchea Government when it held power — and when it mounted the string of border attacks which finally provoked the Vietnamese invasion which toppled Pol Pot in January 1979. And the Vietnamese have frequently referred to the continued activity of guerrillas under Pol Pot's command as part of the "Chinese threat", because

China is the main source of arms and other support for the DK forces.

Vietnam has, in the past, said that the key to stability in Southeast Asia is an end to the Chinese threat — both in Kampuchea and along the China-Vietnam border, where tensions recently rose again. U.S. intelligence sources estimate that as many as three-quarters of a million Vietnamese regular and militia troops may be tied down on the northern frontier, facing a similarly high number of Chinese troops.

When Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea, now estimated at 160,000, step up their attacks on the resistance coalition, Vietnam-China border tensions rise. The implied threat is that China could again strike across the border as it did in early 1979, just after Vietnamese troops marched into Kampuchea.

Vietnam and its allies in Phnom Penh have also said that any negotiations on Kampuchea should be more broadly defined as negotiations on the security situation in all of Southeast Asia. Such an approach would mean talking about U.S. bases in the Philippines and Australian advisers in Malaysia as well as Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea.

The non-communist governments in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines (recently joined by Brunei) — have insisted on a narrower focus on Kampuchea. Last September, they issued a 6-point outline of their proposal for a settlement. It called for an end to "all interference, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of Kampuchea," for internationally supervised elections and for partial withdrawals of Vietnamese troops on a "territorial basis," beginning in western Kampuchea, to be replaced by peacekeeping forces.

A key element in the ASEAN position has been the expressed view — stated especially sharply by Thailand — that Vietnam is an expansionist power, and that if Vietnamese forces are not withdrawn from Kampuchea, they will pose a threat to Thailand and other countries in the region.

General Benny Murdani, Indonesia's armed forces commander, made waves twice in recent months, however, by saying that Vietnam does not present a military threat to other Southeast Asian nations. "Vietnam by itself is quite poor," Murdani is reported to have told a meeting of Indonesian officials in mid-March, "and practically lacks the ability to attack other countries."

Murdani's views are said to be supported by Indonesia's military establishment, and he retains the confidence of President Suharto. His views also mesh well with those expressed by Jusuf Wandani, director of a Jakarta think tank with close Government ties. In the meeting with Vietnamese counterparts in Hanoi, he expressed a fear that Vietnam would become solely dependent on the Soviet Union. More generally, he said it was not desirable for any great power to become too influential in Southeast Asia.

Murdani sketched a scenario which underscored the need to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning to power. He suggested that initial negotiations on Kampuchea could be handled by Vietnam, Laos and the ASEAN nations, with the major powers called in later to support the regional agreement.

If Vietnam is now willing to resolve Kampuchea issues independently of other regional security questions as it has indicated, this represents a more flexible approach than in the past. So does the formulation which talks directly about Pol Pot and other anti-Vietnamese resistance forces rather than simply making reference to an amorphous "Chinese threat."

But serious sticking points remain. For one, it seems unlikely that China would look fondly on an attempt to remove "Pol Pot and his associates" from the stage or to dissolve their political and military organization. Similarly, ASEAN would probably have problems with the dissolution of the two non-communist anti-Vietnamese resistance groups, led by Sihanouk and by Son Sann.

Kampuchea has ended this international deadlock for more than five years now and can probably tolerate it for an indefinite period if necessary. But the lack of a political settlement cuts the country off from some forms of assistance which could make a marked improvement in the life of its people.

On the ground, at the beginning of the main rice harvest, the situation did not feel so bleak. Phnom Penh was bustling with bicycles and motorcycles. Schoolchildren were alert and enthusiastic. Farmers took time out from harvesting and threshing for a drink of coconut juice or palm wine. But the underlying problems are complicated enough to ensure that Kampuchea will have a difficult time even feeding itself for some years.



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members of the Right faction view Conference as a "no-win situation" and want to "continue the process of parliamentary independence from the party structure."

Such moves would obviously have support in business circles. The Financial Review article described the "ability of the ALP National Conference to impose policy parameters on the Government" as Labor's "Achilles heel." Hawke has set out to govern with the "consent" of the business leaders and that is the way they want it to stay.

The Hawke faction in the Federal caucus is not only concentrating its efforts on centralising power in the national sphere. It is also aware that it will only maintain its dominance if it can build a firmer base in Victoria and consolidate its rule in NSW. In fact it aims to control the two largest State Branches in the Party as a matter of priority. In Victoria this involves an effort to get the numbers on the floor of State Conferences through the affiliation of more right-wing unions.

In NSW it involves a further centralisation of power. The NSW ALP Conference on June 9 to 11 voted to abolish State Council, which had met twice a year to deal with business not completed by the annual State Conference. Some of the functions of State Council were transferred to the Administrative Committee and others to State Conference.

Because State Conference now must deal with more time-consuming matters, like the prosecution of Senate candidates, time for debate of policy questions has been further truncated. New Conference standing orders were adopted that allow about half an hour for debate of reports submitted by policy committees.

The NSW Branch has also moved from fortnightly to monthly Administrative Committee meetings which last about 30 to 45 minutes. More and more functions of Party administration are simply falling to individual officers or to informal meetings of officers and faction leaders. The formal

structures that provided some mechanism, even if grossly inadequate, for protecting the rights of Party members, are being eroded.

The "left" Steering Committee faction in NSW has collaborated in some of these changes. At Conference representatives of that faction claimed the informal nature of meetings improved the atmosphere and allowed matters to be resolved by "consensus." But this con-trick simply means that the dominant faction has consolidated its rule.

The ALP Left should be campaigning hard against the undemocratic moves by the Right and it should project a campaign to extend Party democracy. Such an approach by Left currents in the British Labour Party altered the balance of forces between the factions in that Party in 1981 and 1982.

The British Left succeeded in changing the rules so that Party leaders are elected by a college system in which the votes of members of affiliated unions make up 40 per cent, votes of constituency (Branch) members 30 per cent and the votes of the parliamentarians 30 per cent.

Annual conferences of the BLP have exerted pressure on the Party leaders to publicly promote Party policies like unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The British labour movement has bitter memories of the Wilson and Callaghan Labour Governments which tried to impose savage austerity measures through a social contract with the unions. They want to have the opportunity to exert more control over the next Labour Government.

Obviously the changes to the structures and practices of the British Labour Party have been very limited. The struggle for reforms sparked off bitter faction fights and the Right responded with a witchhunt of the Left. The reform campaign lost its momentum.

But the Left in the ALP can learn much from the strength of the movement that developed in Britain (as well as learning from its mistakes). One thing is certain: There is little point fighting for good policies if the structures of the Party prevent their implementation.

*Labor History*

## Labor in the Great Depression



Salvation Army soup kitchen

There are a great many parallels that can be drawn between the current "recession" and the Great Depression of the 1930s — the depth of the crisis; the degree and perseverance of long-term unemployment; the devastating social consequences for working people — to mention a few.

One of the most important, and sadly most disturbing, parallels is the response of the leaders of the labour movement, both ALP parliamentarians and trade union officials.

The October 1929 election of the Federal Scullin Labor Government, after years of conservative Bruce-Page administration, was greeted with much the same elation as that which surrounded the 1983 Hawke Labor victory after seven years of Fraser.

True, there was less charisma and more politics in Scullin's victory — the "Red Flag" and "Solidarity Forever" were sung.

### Rethana Mohideen

Member Braybrook (Vic) ALP Branch

Scullin wasn't billed as "Bringing Australia Together"; rather he offered working people a crash course in economic body-building — "Before: Bruce-Page Government. After: Labor Government-prosperity." So the ALP posters went anyway.

Within a month came the Great Wall Street Crash that signalled the onset of the Depression and unemployment, already 11 per cent (it had averaged 10 per cent between 1922 and 29) spiralled: 19 per cent in 1930; 27 per cent in 1931; and 29 per cent in 1932.

What had happened to Scullin's "prosperity"? In brief, ALP leaders had no comprehension that the crisis had its origins in the failings of the capitalist system. When it came to the crunch the Scullin leadership could only defend working people or the capitalist class. Scullin chose the latter.

In a move that today would delight the likes of NSW Vehicle Builders Employees Federation secretary Joe Thompson, Scullin cut immigration to defend jobs.

He then increased protection for Australian manufacturing, a measure that received whole-hearted support from the ACTU which called for "protection to the point of prohibition" of goods that could be manufactured in Australia.

The problem here was that protectionism only exacerbated an existing crisis of overproduction by strangling world trade. Especially after the passage of the April 1930 Hooey-Smoot tariff law in the United States, protectionism rocketed. The world entered a devastating trade war.

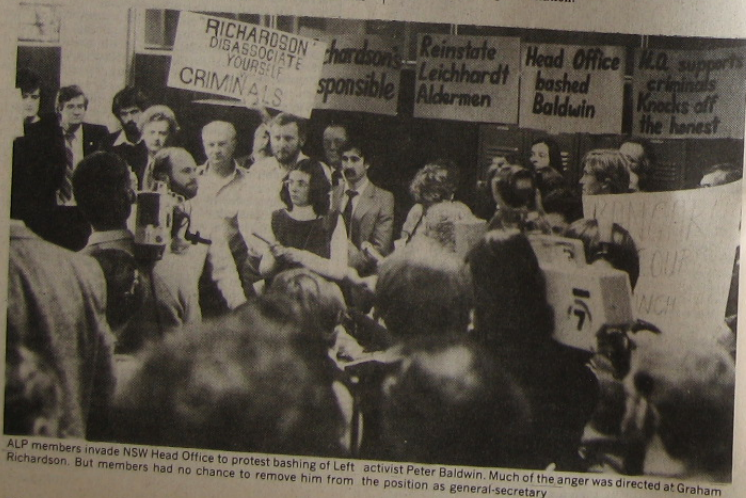
As a result, in the two years to January 1933, world trade slumped by two-thirds. Australian trade heavily dependent on wool and wheat exports, fell by 60 per cent. (While the debate about protectionism continues in Australia it is alarming to note that between 1974 and 1983 world trade governed by protection rose from 40 to 50 per cent.)

Scullin copied his attempt to protect Australian manufacturers' profits with an assault on the living standards of those a Labor Government should have been defending: wage earners.

It was the Scullin Government that invited Sir Otto Niemeyer, head of the Bank of England, to advise it on economic policy.

In a pre-Keynesian age, his advice was hardly surprising: cut wages and government expenditure. This was a proposal that delighted British bankers, who were anxious to ensure

Continued on page 18



ALP members invade NSW Head Office to protest bashing of Left activist Peter Baldwin. Much of the anger was directed at Graham Richardson. But members had no chance to remove him from the position as general-secretary

## Austerity policies did not work



Continued from page 17

they received their interest payments, and Australian capitalists, for whom lower wages meant an increased rate of profit.

Sure enough Niemeyer's advice was accepted at the 1930 Premiers Conference, which included Jack "Greater than Lenin" Lang, in the name of "sharing the burden." The economic logic pursued by Scullin, was endorsed the following year by the Arbitration Court which ordered a reduction in the basic wage on the grounds that the resultant "transference of spending power" to employers would increase employment.

The historical record is clear — not one job was saved by slashing wages. Indeed, such measures only deepened the crisis by reducing consumption. Meanwhile the bosses pocketed the wages they saved.

There were those Labor leaders, however, who were less enthusiastic about such savage anti-working class deflationary measures.

Influenced by former University of Sydney economics professor R.F. Irvine, Federal Labor Treasurer "Red Ted" Theodore and NSW Premier Lang urged "controlled inflation." The banks, (rather than government) should extend credit to boost demands for goods and services. Needless to say the bankers rejected this, and Labor capitulated.

Whatever the virtues of Irvine's recipes over Niemeyer's, Labor politicians tended to view the economic crisis as conspiracy by the "Banksters," especially the foreign ones rather than as a crisis of the capitalist system as a whole. The Australian Worker, journal of the Australian Workers Union, wrote in October 1930 of the "manufactured depression that high finance has engineered." Accordingly, Sir Robert Gibson, conservative head of the Commonwealth Bank, became Labor's enemy, much as nowadays Keating's policies are often attributed to the monetarist bete-noir of the Treasury, John Stone.

The conclusion that followed from the argument that foreign money power was to blame for the crisis was the same as that reached by those who blame the current crisis on foreign multinationals: Australian workers must collaborate with Australian bosses to defend Australian industry.

In the 1930s, as in the 1980s, financial analyses and budgetary crises occupied center stage of Labor economic policy (the ever-threatening "budget blow-out") rather than the capitalist system.

Trade union leaders tended to take the same capitulationist road as that of right-wing ALP politicians. The depression was a bit of life that the working class had no option but to ride out.

Initially this was not the case; with the onset of the Depression, which hit Australia as early as 1927, unionists had all resulted in defeat for the workers. They were: the water-side workers' strike against the Bruce Government's anti-union ("Dog Collar" law); the timber workers' strike; and the 16 month lockout of coal miners.

In all of these the Arbitration Commission, in which Labor politicians and union leaders had placed so much confidence, showed its true colours by siding with the employers.

The Scullin Labor Government, elected on a promise to reopen the mines, never showed the same loyalty to its trade union supporters.

When they were forced to, trade union officials showed a wage slashing decisions of the Premiers Conference the ACTU even considered a proposal for a general strike to "overthrow economic tyranny." However, such militant resolutions and rhetoric were never translated into action. Conservative trade union bureaucrats, often earning \$20 a

week while their unemployed members starved, meekly accepted every blow that State and Federal Labor governments delivered.

Many trade union officials feared that defeat of the Scullin Government would mean a reduction of tariffs, which they believed were saving jobs.

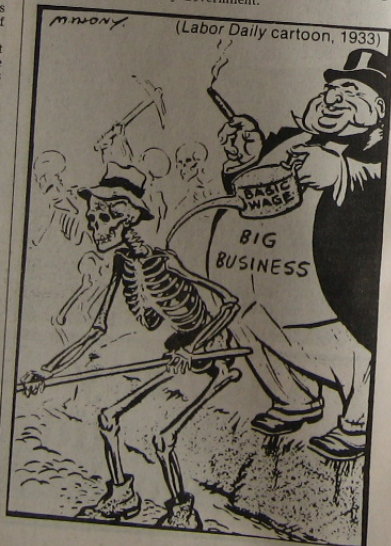
This approach, summed up by the AWU as "the worst Labor Government is better than the best anti-Labor Government", has an all too familiar ring about it.

The net effect of right-wing labour movement leaders capitalising before the capitalist crisis, instead of taking decisive steps to challenge it, was disastrous for the working class. After Joe Lyons deserted the Labor Party and helped bring down the Scullin Government the country was stuck with a long period of conservative government up until World War II. The Scullin Government had betrayed working class hopes and destroyed confidence in the Labor Party.

It is clear that the capitalist class understood very well that right-wing Labor governments could be used effectively to undermine working class resistance to austerity policies, whereas conservative governments would inevitably meet greater resistance.

A London Times editorial of August 22, 1930 put it frankly "It is perhaps fortunate too, that in both, (Australia and Great Britain) it is a Labor government which has been forced to contend with the economic crisis."

But then, as now, there was another path Labor could have taken: that of mobilising the industrial and political strength of its supporters to resolve the crisis in favour of the working class by implementing socialist solutions. A repetition of Labor's performance in the 1930s can only pave the way for demoralisation and the return of a savage Liberal/National Party Government.



## party policy

# Labor and East Timor

The following are extracts from a taken from a pamphlet produced by the Australian Coalition for East Timor.

"Our servility towards Indonesia seems to know no bounds, despite that country's appalling record in Timor and the intimidation and political harassment of those who fail to support President Suharto. We in the Labor Party do not subscribe to the belief that Indonesia is vitally important to Australia and we are of only marginal importance to it. We are neighbours, we have to live with each other, but we do not have to accept so meekly the contemptuous and offhand treatment now regularly handed out to us." — **Bill Hayden, February 26, 1981.**

The Labor Government came to power with a clear and definite policy on East Timor: recognition of the right of the East Timorese to self-determination and independence, opposition to defence aid to Indonesia while Indonesian troops remain in East Timor, support the free migration of East Timorese, and support for East Timor at the United Nations.

Mr Hawke claimed that Australia's concern "must be in the interests of the people of East Timor. No other consideration is relevant". Yet the pattern of behaviour of the Labor Government has been disturbingly similar to the Fraser Government's disastrous approach.

Mr Hawke's first statements as Prime Minister emphasised good relations with Indonesia but did not affirm Party policy. Not only did Mr Hawke on occasion avoid using the term "self-determination" (referring instead to "an act of internationally supervised desire" and "an act of self-expression"), but went on to say that the lack of such an act was "in the past" (Jakarta, 4 June 1983).

Neither Mr Hayden nor Mr Hawke have affirmed the continuing right of

the East Timorese to self-determination.

The Labor Government has failed to take a stand at the UN in support of East Timor, refusing to commit itself to vote for the East Timorese right to self-determination, and allowing the issue to be deferred. By standing back from activity at the UN, Australia has aided Jakarta's diplomatic strategy to remove East Timor from the UN agenda.

Negotiations with Indonesia over the Timor-Australia seabed boundary are tantamount to de jure recognition of East Timor's incorporation into the Republic of Indonesia. This is against Party policy.

Mr Hayden has implied that the Party may have to accept recognition of integration to secure a seabed boundary favourable to Australia.

However, to date there has been no indication that Indonesia will soften its claims in return for Australian recognition of their annexation of East Timor or that the oil and gas fields will disappear if the negotiations are not concluded swiftly.

Immediately prior to the elections Mr Hayden declared, "Our party policy is clear. It lays down a number of obligations, including no military aid to Indonesia, while the criteria we have laid down aren't met. I find no problems with that..." (25 February, 1983).

Despite a clear party policy opposing continued military aid to Indonesia: May 1983: An Attack class patrol boat was handed over to the Indonesian navy August 1983: The Labor Government budgeted \$10.3 million in military aid to Indonesia for 1983/84.

During Mr Hawke's trip to Jakarta he repeatedly made reference to "changed circumstances" as justification for not implementing Party policy. There have been no changed circumstances in East Timor which would legitimise stepping back from the fundamental issue: East Timorese self-determination. The major events of 1983 — the clear call by the resistance



Soldiers of Falantil, Fretlin's armed wing. War will not go away.

for self-determination and the launching of the new Indonesian offensive — point to the need to maintain and strengthen support for the Timorese.

The opportunity for the Timorese to freely express their desires and aspirations is the only realistic solution to the Timor problem.

The April 1984 resolution of the Victorian Branch of the ALP provides a basis for principled Australian support for the East Timorese.

Australia should ensure that any bilateral or multilateral diplomatic activity on East Timor includes consultation with the East Timorese.

Wishy-washy resolutions useless. Diplomatic expressions of "regret" and weak resolutions on aid and welfare will be a clear signal to Jakarta that it can expect no serious questioning of its actions in Timor.

The very least the Government can do, if it is to retain any vestige of a genuine defence of the East Timorese is to:

- Affirm the continuing right of the Timorese to self-determination.

- Advise the Indonesian Government that this cannot be reversed without genuine moves on Jakarta's part to permit such a process.

Any position short of this will close the door on any honest Australian contribution to a just solution.

## Fretlin Peace Plan

Direct negotiations between Portugal, Indonesia and Fretlin, under United Nations auspices, to discuss:

- the constitution of a truly impartial UN Peace Force or Multinational force as the indispensable condition to safeguard and ensure: — the functioning of a transitional administration

- the proper implementation of decisions reached during dialogue about the stationing of the two belligerent forces, Falantil (Fretlin's armed forces) and the Indonesian armed forces,

- the holding of a free, democratic consultation of the East Timorese people and
- fixing the date for the transfer of sovereignty.

The right is reserved for Australia to participate in the negotiations as an observer. Other observers may be chosen on the proposal of Portugal, Indonesia or Fretlin in equal numbers, each of which shall be subject to the approval of the other two parties.



# Impressions of Cuba Real democracy at work

A country of palm trees and tropical forests, golden sand and bright blue sea. A country unmarred by advertising but dotted with political billboards; full of revolutionary history. A country whose people are friendly; determined to let nothing threaten their society, and always ready to explain why.

These are just some of the impressions I was left with after visiting Cuba in January and February 1984 with the Eureka Brigade — the first Australian work brigade.

During our four weeks there, we worked in citrus orchards and assisted in construction work. And after the work came an exhaustive tour of the island and a detailed introduction to

## Val Edwards

Member North Auburn (NSW) ALP Branch and Labor Women's Committee. Member Printing and Kindred Industries Union. Australia/Cuba Friendship Society and Committee in the Caribbean

Cuba's history and way of life.

The Moncada Barracks in Santiago, which took the opening shots in the revolution when Fidel Castro led a small expeditionary force against the garrison stationed there on July 26, 1953, and the Siboney Farmhouse, used

as the headquarters for planning the attack, were among the historic sites we visited.

In Cuba history nudges progress along and we saw both an operational 50-year-old sugar refinery run by steam engines and the Celia Sanchez textile factory, the most modern in Latin America.

The beautifully restored area of Old Havana, sponsored by the World Heritage Trust, provided a stark contrast to the modern housing units under construction everywhere.

The 66 brigade members were a mixed group but the majority of us were members of the Labor Party. We had among us an ALP candidate for local

elections in Tasmania and an ALP alderman from Sydney. From the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union we had a NSW official and an organiser from Victoria and from the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association we had the NSW president and a national vice-president.

Others were printers, miners, lawyers, health workers, wharfers, technicians, journalists and students. There were representatives from every State in Australia. Several of us had been active in Central American solidarity work. Others knew little about Cuba or Central America.

Yet such a diverse group left Cuba with a unanimous admiration for what has been achieved there and with the knowledge that this small island has a lot to teach the world.

A highlight was meeting a Cuban construction worker who had been in Grenada when the US marines landed. "It was held in Grenada for 12 days," he explained, "in a cage with no cover, on hard asphalt, after the marines landed. The first day they had bulldozers digging large trenches near where they were. They told us that Fidel Castro didn't want us and that was why we had been sent abroad. They said they were digging our graves."

He had been in Grenada to work on the construction of the tourist airport and he was horrified by the cruelty shown by the invading troops. People had been simply left to die until the Red Cross was allowed to land over a week after the invasion.

Peter Milton, a Federal Labor parliamentarian from Victoria, was in Cuba on his way to Nicaragua and he visited us at the Julio Antonio camp. He too had been impressed and he said he was determined to strengthen links between the governments of Cuba and Australia.

Cuba, of course, must exist in the shadow of the United States and on the island itself, just 100 kilometres from Santiago de Cuba is the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay. You are constantly reminded that Cuba's neighbour is less than happy about what is happening there. In the factories we saw noticeboards telling workers exactly what to do in case of aerial bombard-

ment, how to guard against the use of poisonous gas and how to organise resistance to invading troops. In places we saw mounds of dirt where new bomb shelters were under construction.

Cuba is a country under siege and it is time the Australian Labor Government made it clear it supports its right to exclude Peter Milton's example and visit the country, they will earn the respect of the Cuban people.

Because of the number of unionists in the brigade we took a keen interest in working conditions. And, despite the fact that Cuba is an underdeveloped country compared to Australia, I can report that Australian workers would do well to win some of the conditions we saw.

Wages are not high. But all hospital treatment and health care is free. The best of medical care is available for all — including specialist treatment. Health care facilities put ours to shame.

Education is also free and textbooks, to any level, are provided. Adults are encouraged to continue their education and universities provide classes for factory workers and farmers as an important part of their curriculum.

Rent is never more than 20 per cent of income, and is usually 10 per cent or lower. It is related to income.

The general social security payments — for illness, work accidents and old-age pensions — are 70 per cent of wages. Electricity is provided at below production cost.

Salaries depend on skills and the importance of skills to the economy. The highest wage is never more than 5 times the lowest, and a government official or parliamentary minister could well receive less than a technician in a factory.

Women comprise 40 per cent of the workforce with childcare being free and available for all working mothers. Women are represented at all levels of the workforce.

Workers, through their unions, must be involved in all management decisions and a factory manager does not have the power to carry out a decision opposed by the workers.

The Cuban system of government is very different. It provides food for thought for those who are appalled by the lack of democracy within the ALP.

Despite what Ronald Reagan may try to tell you there are plenty of elections in Cuba. All people 16 years and over have the vote. Electorates of about 1000 voters elect their delegates to a municipal assembly. The municipal assemblies elect representatives to the provincial assemblies and the National Assembly. The system is known as People's Power.

Women already make up 22 per cent of the National Assembly and efforts are being made to increase this percentage. This certainly shows up the NSW ALP Branch which got its first woman representative in Parliament in 1983.

People's Power delegates are required to be far more responsible to their electors than are Australian parliamentarians.

Firstly, each delegate must report back to their constituency each quarter at a special meeting where voters can raise any issue they like.

Secondly, the delegate must make one day each week available to hear the views of the electorate. Correspondence from a constituent must, by law, be answered within 60 days.

Thirdly, the majority of representatives continue working, and receive no remuneration for their position.

Finally, and most importantly, if 20 per cent of voters request a meeting to vote on recalling the delegate it must be held and this is not too difficult in an electorate of 1000. Recall votes are taken by secret ballot. The same provisions apply at all levels — in the municipal assembly can recall delegates to the provincial assembly and so on.

The Cuban Government claims that virtually 100 per cent of the voting population turns out for elections.

Cuba wants to develop more trade with Australia and to have better government-to-government relations. Members of the brigade left Cuba convinced that these are important objectives and we intend to pursue these matters in the various forums of the ALP. We will support the efforts of Peter Milton at the Federal level.

## Cuban women's delegation

Two Cuban women will be in Australia in July at the invitation of the NSW Labor Women.

One of them, Isabel Jomarron, is a leader of the Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) in the second largest city (Santiago) and a member of the central committee of the Cuban Communist Party. She will be accompanied by Hilda Vasallo from the International department of the FMC.

A dinner to welcome the delegation will be held in Sydney on Thursday July 5 at the Graphic Arts Club. They will travel to Wollongong to meet women involved in

the Jobs for Women campaign which has campaigned for the right of women to work in the BHP/AI&S steelworks at Port Kembla.

Illawarra Labor Women is organising a reception/dinner on July 7 at 7.30 pm on the 4th floor of the Ironworkers Club, 325 Crown St, Wollongong. Phone Robynne Murphy at the Migrant Resource Centre (29 1843) or Marie Petersen (96 23-39) for further details.

Jomarron and Vasallo will be in Canberra at the time of the National Conference from July 9 to 13.



britain

## Tony Benn on miners' strike

# 'This strike will not be lost'

The British miners' strike is moving into its fifth month. In its length and intensity it rivals the great miners' battles of 1926 (which led to a general strike) and the early 1970s (which brought down the Heath Tory Government).

Two miners have already died on the picket lines and violence has frequently erupted as the Thatcher Government has mobilised a massive police operation to try and smash the will of the miners. National Union of Mineworkers leader Arthur Scargill has been among those arrested.

But Thatcher has been unable, or unwilling, to impose fines on union leaders for breaking her anti-union laws. And the strike has grown from strength to strength.

The miners are determined to prevent pit closures that threaten the jobs of 20,000 miners in the next 12 months.

The following remarks were made by Labor's Left parliamentary leader Tony Benn in Nottinghamshire in early June. They are reprinted from the British paper Socialist Organiser.

I'd like to pay tribute to the Nottinghamshire miners on strike who are taking a leading part in bringing this strike to a successful conclusion. You are striking on behalf of all the Nottinghamshire miners, whether they are on strike or not. If this strike were to be lost, which it will not be, this coalfield would suffer directly under the policy of the present Government.

Many of the pits in Nottinghamshire would be sold to the multinationals.

We are learning now what many trade unionists and socialists have said over many years — that it's one big struggle which brings together the interests of every miner, and all the miners wives and families and everyone else fighting for the living standards, jobs and services of working people.

The young miners today are the finest generation that the NUM (miners' union) has ever produced. And we have learnt that women if you are ready, as you are, to make use of your skill and talent are able to do a lot more than just back up the old man at home. . . . They're on the picket lines, they're organising the soup kitchens, they're speaking at meetings, and I believe the mining community has every reason to be proud of the women who work and live in the mining villages.

We've learned the connection between the miners struggle and everybody else's struggle.

I went down to Greenham Common the day the police evicted those women who've been camping for three years in appalling conditions outside the U.S. missile base. I saw exactly what you've been seeing in the coalfields of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire — hundreds of police, pickets non-violent in what they are doing.

While we are meeting, a man has gone to Chequers (Prime Minister's residence) called Mr Botha. He is Prime Minister of South Africa. Why has Thatcher invited him here?

Firstly, because the uranium that goes into the nuclear power stations in Britain comes from Namibia, which the South African Government has occupied. She wants to be



Tony Benn

sure she can get enough uranium for nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

Secondly, she wants cheap coal from South African pits to beat the Notts miners.

Thirdly, she's learning from the very police techniques that Botha has used against Black South African miners. She has used against Black South African miners. She has used against Black South African miners. She has used against Black South African miners. She has used against Black South African miners.

The same goes for London. London is to lose its power to elect its own government. Why? Because Mrs Thatcher hates democracy as much as she hates the trade union movement.

What about the teachers? They are on strike. The money that should be going to educate our children is going to build a new runway in the Falklands. Five hundred million pounds spend on one runway. Why? Partly so that the multinational companies can get control of the natural resources in the south Atlantic and also to protect Mr Botha in case there's a rioting in South Africa.

This is one big struggle and it's not only happening in Britain. In Germany last weekend, a quarter of a million workers were out in the streets because they want the 35-hour week.

They say the police are there to let you get to work. Well last week they sacked 2000 workers at Bathgate. Supposing those British Leyland workers turn up at Bathgate the day arresting the management of British Leyland because they won't let them work?

The great saying is "The miners united will never be defeated." That's right, but what we're saying in Ollerenton today is even bigger than that. The working people of the world united will never be defeated.

## Apology to Lech Walesa

During the days when Solidarnosc was a legal union in Poland, Arthur Scargill — leader of the British National Union of Mineworkers — believed it to be a counter-revolutionary body attempting to overthrow the Polish state.

However, during the miners' strike the Polish Government, that Scargill had supported against Solidarnosc, has been sending coal in Britain.

In Sheffield on June 5 Scargill said: "I think I owe Lech Walesa an apology."

party policy

# Erosion of human rights policy opposed

Frank Noakes

Member of the Whitford (WA) ALP Branch.

Western Australian Senator Gordon McIntosh has taken up a campaign in defence of existing ALP policy on human rights in an effort to block changes being proposed by the national Foreign Affairs and Defence policy committee.

If the changes proposed by the committee are adopted at the National Conference they will allow the policy to be interpreted in a selective way. Three new paragraphs are to be inserted to allow human rights to be interpreted according to historical, cultural and social factors. That is, a Labor Government would be given the latitude to take these factors into account in deciding where violations of human rights have occurred.

Existing policy contains the following unambiguous statement (Paragraph 64):

"Labor deplores violations of human rights whenever they occur, irrespective of the ideology of the government or society which perpetrates them, and shall not be selective in opposing such violations."

The new draft policy proposes to add three additional paragraphs (numbered 67 to 69) which read as follows:

"(Labor) recognises that the great historical, cultural, social and economic diversity among the nations of the world means that there remain considerable differences about what constitutes human rights and the relative importance of different rights;

"(Labor) recognises that a Labor Government, in pursuing Labor's human rights policy, will have to take into account these differences of values with states and will need to judge carefully the most effective means of implementation of Labor Party policy; and

"(Labor) recognises that in pursuing its human rights aims, a Labor Government must give paramount importance to the interests of those persons whose rights it is seeking to protect, and should avoid taking positions which in practical terms will be to the disadvantage of these persons."

In addressing the Australian Institute of International Affairs on December 9, 1983, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Hayden confirmed the fact that this

would lead to reduction in the scope of human rights violations that a Labor Government would oppose. He said:

"... we can start by working towards establishing a 'common floor' of respect for fundamental rights, while retaining a flexible approach to culturally relative rights, for example rights derived from varying social and religious backgrounds."

In a letter circulated to Branches and affiliated unions in Western Australia, Senator McIntosh has argued: "I am of the belief that our current policy reflects the 'common floor' of respect for fundamental rights; it is based on a combination of internationally accepted treaties and covenants which include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"Any alteration that weakens our human rights policy will provide us, and others, with an excuse not to face up to the responsibilities of such treaties. We cannot condone in any way the actions of military regimes and repressive governments, like those in South Africa, Indonesia, Chile and Uruguay. I, for one, cannot believe that the ordinary citizens of those countries

are happy living with their governments' notions of what constitutes human rights.

"We must be cautious of any additions being enshrined in our platform which would directly contradict any section of our policy, (paragraph 64 in particular), thereby placing us in a compromising situation interpreted by others."

Senator McIntosh has been consistent in his opposition to all human rights violations wherever they have occurred. He was the sole dissenting member of a bi-partisan parliamentary delegation to East Timor last year which gave the green light to the continuing oppression of the people of that country.

With his record, Senator McIntosh deserves to be listened to on this subject. He will raise his objections on the floor of Conference.

The 1982 Conference adopted the slogan "Preparing for Government" when it weakened a number of Labor's more progressive policy commitments. If policy changes like that proposed for human rights policy are adopted in 1984 the Conference may become known as the "Maintain Government at all costs" Conference.



Victims of Pol Pot tyranny in Kampuchea. Was Pol Pot a product of "social and economic diversity among nations." Proposed alteration policy would allow a selective interpretation.



## land rights

# Mining lobby has agents in Party

Pressure is being mounted in the Western Australian ALP Branch against proposals for the introduction of Aboriginal land rights legislation at both the State and national levels. Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Clyde Holding has established a mechanism for drawing up uniform legislation to cover all States and the State Government has set up an inquiry, the Seamen Inquiry, to examine the matter at the State level.

**Bernadette McKenna**  
Member Subiaco (WA) ALP Branch and Administrative and Clerical Officers Association

Supporters of the powerful mining lobby in WA have been campaigning to exclude mineral rights from any legislation. And they have an agent in the ALP in the form of Graeme Campbell, Member for Kalgoorlie in Federal Parliament.

In late March Campbell sent a provocative letter to other members of the Federal caucus which suggested the issue of land rights has "the potential to cause enormous harm to the interests of the Labor Party if it is not correctly handled."

Campbell argued that "the issues of land to use and the ownership of minerals are separate issues and should be treated as such. Article 3 of our Federal Policy objectives states that we believe in the democratic control and strategic social ownership of Australia's natural resources for the benefit of all Australians. This can only mean ownership by the crown."

Campbell claimed that land rights have relevance for the "tribal community" but not for urban Aborigines. He tried to present a left face by saying "Mineral rights are total anathema to a socialist philosophy and in any case will not redress the past years of wrongs."

Apparently Campbell believes socialist philosophy dictates support for

the material interests of the wealthy mining companies against those of an oppressed layer of society. It is his view that is a total anathema to socialist philosophy.

The mining lobby has stepped up its campaign because the report of the Seamen Inquiry is likely to be tabled in Parliament in the next few months. And unfortunately there are already signs that it is having an effect. In early June the Australian reported that State caucus had passed a resolution calling for withdrawal of the special Federal legislation designed to protect sites of significance for Aborigines.

State Minister for Minerals and Energy David Parker has publicly assured the mining companies that State legislation will not grant mineral rights to Blacks. Bill Thomas, senior vice-president of the WA Branch of the ALP and adviser to Parker, has circulated a report among State Government MPs advocating a refusal of an Aboriginal right of veto over mining.

Thomas wrote "When our commitment to Aboriginal land rights is implemented, it should grant to Aboriginals the rights to land equivalent to that enjoyed by most members of the wider community." By this reckoning the leaders of the Aboriginal community should be given land holdings similar to those of Alan Bond and Lang Hancock!

# Racist attack on proposed Victorian legislation

Extreme right-wing racists are on the warpath against Aboriginal land rights in Victoria. Fanatics, like those of the League of Rights, are organising a big campaign.

**Richard Lane**  
Member Kensington (Vic) ALP Branch and State ALP Aboriginal Affairs policy committee

They are backed by powerful mining and pastoral companies and big landowners who want to protect their own interests by whipping up unjustified fears in the general community about loss of land.

The struggle for Black self-determination has been portrayed as a "Communist plot". According to a pamphlet "Red over Black" by former Communist Party member Geoff McDonald, the plan is to set up a separate Black state into which North Koreans will be then imported to plan a takeover

of Australia.

In Victoria a League of Rights front, the "Save Victoria Committee" has distributed McDonald's pamphlet widely and organised public meetings in rural districts to spread fear and lies about the Cain Government's proposed Land Claims legislation.

Much of the debate, if it can be called that, has been focused on a property acquired for Aborigines by the State Government at Lake Condah in the western district. The property, which was the site of an Aboriginal mission of great historical significance, was bought from one farmer and an effort was made to buy an access strip from the property from a second farmer, Muldoon.

Other farmers persuaded Muldoon to block the deal in order to draw the line against the Cain Government's proposed legislation. And this provided the Liberal and National Party politicians with an opportunity to give sup-

port for the campaign being led by the League of Rights.

Liberal Opposition leader Jeff Kennett has got into trouble with the Jewish community for refusing to condemn the League of Rights which is well known for its anti-semitic views. While the Liberals have said they don't endorse the views of the League of Rights they have shown no hesitation in supporting its campaign against Aboriginal land rights.

The Victorian Liberals are trying to play the same game in relation to land rights as Andrew Peacock and his colleagues in Federal Parliament in relation to Asian immigration. They want to take advantage of racist sentiments whipped up by extreme right-wingers as well as "respectable" racists like Professor Geoffrey Blainey.

The labour movement needs to take up all these issues to prevent the cancer of racism from spreading further.

Continued on page 25

## land rights

Continued from page 24

Thomas' term "wider community" is meaningless, particularly when he referred to the "wider community ownership of minerals." He used this deception to say "areas or sites of particular significance should remain open for exploration or mining."

Thomas, and others like him, are well aware that it is a small and powerful minority that sits on the boards of mining companies that control access to minerals. His campaign is designed to protect the interests of these people and he should have the honesty to say so.

Graeme Campbell has been equally dishonest and racist to boot. In his letter he tried to draw a distinction between "Thinking Aborigines" and those "who revel in the animosity of the general population." He also attempted to slander the leaders of the Aboriginal land rights movement by claiming they are being whipped up by "white agents." He suggested that present ALP policy "seeks to save the conscience of the guilt-ridden middle class."

Hopefully Campbell will soon get a taste of the "animosity" of "thinking" Australians who recognise the legitimacy of Aborigines' claims to land and compensation for centuries of injustice. People like him should have no place in the Labor Party, certainly not as its representative in Parliament.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the supporters of Aboriginal land rights in the ALP will have to wage a determined fight against both the mining lobby and its agents in the Party.

## wollongong

# How a loser wins

Recent events in the Wollongong area have given ALP members a crash course in the meaning of the term "rot".

Rex Connor Jr, son of a minister in

**Robynne Murphy**  
Member Wollongong (NSW) ALP Branch and the Federated Ironworkers' Association

the Whitlam Labor Government, has refused to accept the fact that his comprehensive defeat at the hands of Independent Frank Arkell in the March 24 State elections suggested that the people of Wollongong do not concede the "right" to inherit a parliamentary salary. At the Annual General Meeting of the Wollongong Branch he put on a show that was subsequently described as "better than Monty Python."

# Consultation procedure blocked

Twelve months ago, the Victorian Aboriginal Land Rights Task Force applied for funding for consultation with Aboriginal communities on the proposed Land Claims Bill. The application is still awaiting approval.

**Richard Lane**  
Member Kensington (Vic) ALP Branch and State ALP Aboriginal Affairs policy committee

While Aborigines in the State welcome the fact that the Cain Government is proposing to introduce land rights legislation, most of them see the Land Claims Bill as inadequate. That bill was prepared at the end of 1982, yet Aboriginal communities have been subsequently denied a proper process of consultation.

The Government has been given plenty of indication that there is dissatisfaction with the proposals. It has land and protest meetings and letters and protest resolutions have been flooded with protest resolutions and letters and protest meetings have been called.

Adoption of the legislation was deferred for a year but most of that time has been squandered by the fact that the Government has not provided the Task Force with the necessary funds.

The Task Force can certainly not be

held responsible for the lack of consultation. It drew up a submission in June last year on how that consultation might be carried out. It proposed a two-day State conference to initiate discussion, to be followed up by community workshops and regional meetings. At the end of 12 months a five-day conference would draw up final recommendations. And to help with all this it required funds to employ an executive officer, a research officer and a secretary/typist.

The Government claimed it could not afford \$300,000 for such a procedure and recommended instead that an application be made for funds from an employment scheme.

An application for funding under the Commonwealth Employment Provisions scheme was finally approved at the State level in April this year and referred to the relevant Commonwealth body. But it has not yet been approved by that body.

The Government obviously wants to rush legislation through so it can say it has fulfilled an election promise. But in doing so it is demonstrating the fact that it is not serious about Aboriginal self-determination and it is discrediting the ALP in the eyes of the Black Community and the many supporters of Aboriginal land rights.

At the end of the meeting Connor was seen leaving the hall with the unsealed ballot box tucked under his arm. The next day the Illawarra Mercury carried an article giving the results of the vote accompanied by a scathing attack on the "cancerous growth" of the Left.

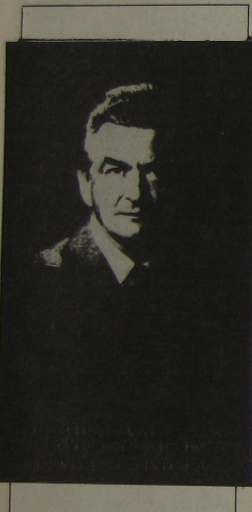
At the Branch meeting after the AGM, Shirley Connor added another chapter to the saga by announcing that two membership ticket books, with 46 empty membership vouchers, had "gone to the rubbish dump" or got lost somewhere.

The Illawarra SEC did not meet before the State Conference because the results of the Wollongong ballot had not been declared. Yet who should turn up at Conference as a SEC delegate but Rex Connor! He has distinguished himself as a loser in Wollongong and yet Head Office thought he had earned the right to take his place at State Conference.

It seems a little naive to ask, but what happened to democracy in the NSW ALP?



# A study in 'pragmatic' politics



**The Hawke Ascendancy**  
By Paul Kelly, author of *The Dismissal*  
Angus & Robertson. \$19.95

Near the end of the last ALP National Conference in July 1982, Tom Uren — a leader of the Left faction in the ALP Federal caucus — burst into the hotel room of Paul Keating — leader of the Right — while he was in the shower.

**Martin Luck**  
Member Livingston (NSW) ALP Branch

Uren was in a hurry to clinch a deal. If Keating would ensure that proposed alterations to his policy on urban and regional development were defeated, he would collaborate in an attempt to change the Party leadership.

By the end of the Conference Hawke

was convinced he had the numbers to defeat Hayden even though the media had described the Conference as a triumph for Hayden's "pragmatism." Above all, the Conference had proved that there was little difference in the political approach of Hawke and Hayden but Hawke was convinced his time had come.

The challenge caused traumas for a number of the leading parliamentary identities. Uren was rapped over the knuckles for his unilateral approach to Keating and, although some wanted a change, the Left faction finally decided to stick with Hayden.

Keating could not make up his mind. Others in his NSW-based faction believed they could extend their influence under Hawke's leadership, but Keating wanted to leave his own leadership options open for the future. Who should he attempt to succeed: Hayden or Hawke?

Eventually the NSW Right joined the Victorian Right to back Hawke, but the result was Hayden. 47. Hawke, 37. Hayden had survived but Hawke had signalled his intention. Six months later his second challenge was successful.

The Hawke Ascendancy, by journalist Paul Kelly, is a detailed account of the way Hawke rose to the leadership of the Labor Party and so on after the position of Prime Minister.

The early chapters, that first deal with the contrasting personalities of Hawke and Hayden and then describe the period of Hayden's leadership of the Party, are rather slow-moving. But when it comes to describing the events that led to Hayden's downfall the book assumes the character of a political thriller.

It must be an accurate account of the events because none of the people involved have challenged it on that score. At least some of those people wanted the book written because Kelly was given a wealth of inside information. The result is a fascinating study of how the power-brokers of the ALP operate.

It presents a contrast of political styles. Keating is calculating, Graham Richardson is blunt and ruthless. John Button tries to perform a balancing act but ends up sacrificing personal loyalty for ambition. While Hawke is confident he was born to rule, Hayden jealously protects his position.

Among the most dramatic scenes are three occasions when John Button travels to Brisbane as an emissary of doom to Hayden. Both men cry when

they realise that matters have got beyond their control.

Also dramatic is the description of the day of reckoning — February 3, 1983 — which developed into a race for time between Malcolm Fraser, wanting to announce the election date, and the Labor caucus, wanting to replace Hayden. Fraser was held up by a governor-general who wanted to make sure he did things by the rules and so the announcement of Hayden's resignation came first. This turned out to be an important psychological victory for Labor.

The description of the power plays involved in Hawke's rise to the top gives an indication as to why people can so easily become hooked on this kind of politics. It has the excitement of a major gambling plunge and the intellectual stimulation of chess, or perhaps war games.

But the book also gives some classic examples of the kind of attitudes that are bred by the opportunism of "pragmatic" politics. For example Hayden recalls a phone conversation with Graham Richardson the day after a television program on Sunday, had claimed that Hawke was about to make a second challenge for the leadership.

Hayden said: "everyone's a mate in NSW. It's a bit like the mafia presenting you with a bunch of flowers."

"Anyhow," Graham said, "Mate, mate, I know what you are ringing up about, that dreadful programme on Sunday. Max Walsh, oh, he's a dreadful bastard. Look, I've got nothing to do with it, mate, and I want to tell you, mate, we're behind you all the way."

"I said, 'Well, Graham, that's not what I rang you up about, but now that you've raised that's what you said last time there was a challenge.'"

"And he said, 'Oh, mate, this time I've got to tell you the truth; last time we told you a lie.'"

Another example comes from the mouth of Neville Wran. Kelly describes a meeting of the Labor Party's election campaign committee in Sydney the day after Hayden's resignation. The meeting had agreed on a central slogan of "Bob Hawke — Bringing Australia Together" and the theme of reconciliation:

"Neville Wran told the meeting reconciliation was fine but 'the greedy bastards wanted spiritualism they'd join the fucking Hare Krishna'. Wran said there no substitute for a tax cut."

The irony of it all is that Bill Hayden, who tried to champion a "pragmatic" approach for the ALP with his economic "rationalism," and by promoting the wage-cutting Prices and Incomes Accord, ultimately became a victim of a more ruthless exponent of that kind of pragmatism — the supreme opportunist Bob Hawke.

## party machinery

# Western Australia Activist's guide to ALP

The Western Australian Branch of the ALP is obviously better than some for finding your way around. It is certainly more open than the NSW labyrinth that was examined in the April issue of *Labor Militant* (Vol 4, Number 2).

**Leon Harrison**  
Member of Cottesloe/Nedlands (WA) ALP Branch.

An important feature of the Branch is the State Executive which contains 200 representatives of the rank and file and meets on a monthly basis.

The Left is organised around the Socialist Caucus, although many on the left refuse to have anything to do with it. The SC, sometimes aptly described as Socialist Carcass, has very few clear principles and never campaigns — it therefore has little influence.

It does however organise the occasional forum which provide members an opportunity to participate in discussion.

Upon joining the ALP a member automatically receives *Labor Voice*, the Branch's official monthly journal.

People can join the Party either by becoming a direct member through Head Office or by joining a Branch. You can join any Branch, regardless of where you live.

Women members automatically become members of Labor Women's Organisation and people 26 and under are automatically members of Australian Young Labor.

Motions from Branches often go to the Federal Electorate Council. From there they may go on to the Administrative Committee which makes a recommendation to the State Executive. Some motions are referred to the relevant policy committee for consideration.

Branches, FEC's, LWO and AYL can send motions direct to State Conference, held every second year. But the Administrative Committee makes a recommendation as to whether the motion should be adopted or not. Copies of the Rules and Constitution and the State Platform can be bought from Head Office.

Some specific points concerning different areas of opportunity for action:

1) **Branches.** As a Branch member you are eligible to stand for any Branch executive position, or FEC delegateship. You will need 12 months continuous membership to become a FEC delegate to State Executive. You are free to raise any issue but you need



Labor Voice celebrated the election of the Burke Labor Government in 1983 with this photo of four State Labor Premiers. The one on the far right (appropriately) is Bert Hawke, Bob's uncle, who was elected in 1945. The others are, from left Tonkin (elected 1971), Burke (1983) and Wise (1953). We are still waiting for socialism in WA.

a seconder to be able to have a motion debated.

2) **Federal Electorate Councils.** Electorate Councils are composed of all the political Branches in the Federal electorate. A Branch's delegate entitlement is determined by the size of its membership. Affiliated unions that have members in the electorate are allocated delegates to the FEC on the basis of the number of members in the electorate. Many unions do not take advantage of this positions so it is worth checking with your union office. LWO and AYL are each entitled to one delegate. The FEC elects a selection panel of 12 members who, along with the State Executive, choose the candidate for that Federal electorate.

3) **State Executive.** This meets once a month and comprises delegates from unions, political sections plus the Administrative Committee. Unions are entitled to one delegate per 1000 members or part thereof and union delegates make up 90 per cent of the Executive. FEC's provide a total of 55 delegates between them. LWO, AYL and the Rural Labor Association are each entitled to one delegate.

4) **Administrative Committee.** This committee consists of 15 members. It makes recommendations on all items coming before State Executive. At the State Executive delegates vote on the committee's recommendations, not on the original motion from Branches, unions etc, unless the recommendation is defeated first.

5) **Labor Women's Organisation.** Every woman joining the Party is

automatically a member of LWO. The LWO's committee consists of a president, two vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer and four committee members. LWO is entitled to one delegate to State Executive and State Conference. LWO can forward motions direct to either body. All women members should be encouraged to attend LWO meetings. LWO is traditionally more radical than other sections of the Party. Many women find that they can find confidence and develop meeting skills more readily in the LWO than in generally male-dominated sections of the Party.

6) **Local government.** Branches make a recommendation to State Executive that a local government candidate be endorsed. State Executive then either accepts or rejects that recommendation. However, many Party members stand in local government elections without seeking Party endorsement. This is done because of the widespread belief in the community that politics have no role in this arena — an idea promoted by the Liberals and not effectively countered by Labor. Many Branches support candidates surreptitiously. The problem is that, if they are elected, the Party has no control over them as councillors.

There is really very little encouragement given to people to be politically active in the Party. Sure you will hear from the Head Office at election time asking you for help and dollars, but that's about as far as it goes. But don't be discouraged, just get in there and make your voice heard. Good luck!



nuclear power

## Pro-uranium policy despite opposition

The closer it gets to the National Conference the more apparent it becomes that the result of the uranium debate will be adoption of the "caucus position" — the current Government policy as adopted at a caucus meeting last November.

**Bruce Threlfo**  
Member Annandale (NSW) ALP  
Branch and Labor Against Uranium

That policy will allow the giant Roxby Downs mine in South Australia to continue on an indefinite basis and it will allow all existing uranium export contracts to be filled.

Roxby Downs has the largest known uranium deposit in the world and existing contracts for uranium mined at Ranger in the Northern Territory run until at least 1992. There will probably be debate over whether new contracts should be allowed for Ranger. But even if the Left defeats that move the final policy will be pro-uranium. The destruction of the pre-1982 anti-uranium policy will have been taken a step further.

Hawke and his supporters will be happy with such an outcome because it is obvious that there is tremendous opposition in the Party and union ranks to their openly pro-uranium views. State Conferences in June confirmed the fact that the anti-uranium forces are gathering strength and that the majority of Party units want to see a return to an unambiguous anti-uranium policy.

The largest State Conference, NSW, voted for a pro-uranium policy. But two important developments indicated the strength of anti-uranium sentiment. Ten out of 24 delegates elected to go to the National Conference oppose uranium. This compares favourably with eight in 1982 when the Hogg amendment to weaken the Party's policy was adopted by a vote of 53 to 46.

The second development was the fact that Jack Hallam — a member of the Right faction and minister in the Wrang Government — rose to second an anti-uranium motion. This amendment lost but another amendment banning uranium sales to France while that country continues testing nuclear weapons in the Pacific was adopted.

The Northern Territory Branch of the Party is one of the smallest, yet the adoption of a policy calling for a definite timetable for phasing out all uranium mining by that Branch is highly significant.

There is a lot of pressure on the ALP

in the NT to advocate an expansion of the territory's uranium industry. There is a widespread opinion that the industry is vital for providing jobs. The Ranger mine is already in operation and several others are ready to proceed. The mining companies represent a powerful lobby and even the Northern (Aboriginal) Land Council is in favour of the development of some of the mines.

In elections for the NT legislative assembly in 1983, Labor leader Bob Collins campaigned vigorously in favour of uranium mining and when Labor lost he tried to pin the blame on those in the Party, particularly in Victoria, who campaign against uranium. He described his opponents in the Party as "Left fascists".

As in 1982, Collins is a delegate to the National Conference and he has made it clear he will vote for uranium. But, unlike 1982, the second delegate will be anti-uranium.

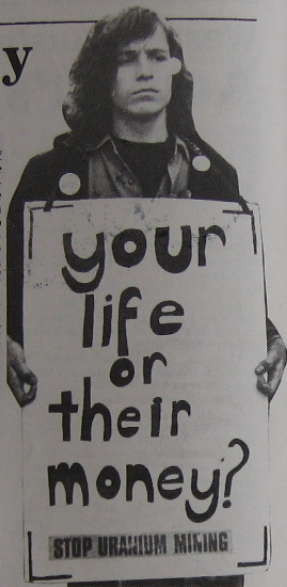
The June 16-17 Conference in the Australian Capital Territory also registered a gain for the anti-uranium forces. A policy in favour of phasing out all mines, including Roxby Downs, was adopted by a vote of 108 to 13. And two anti-uranium delegates were elected to National Conference, whereas the ACT delegation had split one-one over the Hogg amendment in 1982.

The South Australian Conference produced a mixed result. A motion in favour of phasing out all uranium mines was presented and this gave rise to a long and emotional debate. Premier John Bannon moved an amendment to exempt Roxby Downs and he eventually won this position by a vote of 132 to 76.

However, a number of delegates to the South Australian Conference took part in an anti-uranium demonstration outside Conference and the newly-formed Labor Against Uranium group is gaining support.

The Victorian Branch retains a very strong anti-uranium policy that includes a call for repudiating existing contracts. The Western Australian and Queensland Branches are in favour of phasing out the industry and in both States opposition to uranium cuts across normal faction lines.

All the head counters are predicting that the numbers on the floor of National Conference on the uranium issue will be very close and that a strong performance by the Left could sway some vital votes. But even before the Conference began the Left made it clear it was willing to concede substantial ground without a fight.



Instead of putting forward a definite timetable, of say 12 months, for ending all mining and export, the policy position drafted by Brian Howe and circulated around Party units proposed that existing contracts should be filled — a process that could see Australia exporting uranium for another 10 to 12 years.

Even worse, a national leader of the Left, Tom Uren, said in Adelaide on June 17 that he was prepared to concede approval for Roxby Downs. Uren's argument was that the project would not proceed because of the poor world market for its chief products — copper and uranium. But the present glut in world supplies may well subside and Roxby Downs could become a key source of uranium well into the future.

Uren's pathetic compromise can only weaken the Left position and encourage the Right.

On June 12 Hawke called together the national leaders of the Right and Centre Left factions to devise strategy for the uranium debate. They decided to fall back from the pro-uranium draft policy circulated by the Centre Left's Senator Walsh to the caucus position. In view of the Left compromises they must be confident that their second best option will hold.