

Labor combined with SOCIALIST FIGHT MILITANT

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

Volume 4, Number 8, October 1984



Women and the Accord

'Jobs for Women' campaign

Breakthrough in
BHP case

Education under
attack

Hamish Linacre

N.Z. nuclear ships
ban supported

Helen Clark

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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.

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

Don't cry, subscribe!

If you feel like weeping over the state of the Party following the right-wing rampage at the National Conference, the conservative framework of the recent Federal Budget, and the further evidence of Bill Hayden's pro-imperialist views during his tour

of Central America, well, that's quite understandable.

A much better idea, however, is to take out a subscription to Labor Militant, and keep in regular touch with the local and international fight for a socialist society.

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letters to L.M.

Support West Papua

Dear friend,
Since 1962, when the Melanesian people of West New Guinea were delivered into the hands of Indonesia, they have received no organised support from Australia. We believe it is time for this situation to change. Since February this year, 10,000 Melanesians have fled the Indonesian province of "Irian Jaya" for the safety of PNG. This is over 1 per cent of the whole indigenous population.

When interviewed by PNG officials, Church workers and the recent delegation from the International Commission of Jurists, many complained of great cruelty by Indonesia's military. As you would be aware, the military cracked down on both urban dwellers and rural villagers after an attempted uprising by the OPM (Free Papua Movement) in February. The reprisals continue today.

Refugees in PNG are still afraid to return home. They have not been encouraged by the beating and subsequent execution of their country's most prominent cultural figure, the ethnologist Arnold Ap. Most insist there will never be peace while Indonesia's occupation lasts. A few in West Papua is what they seek. Visitors to the country will find that the great majority of people feel the same. It is our aim to publicise this desire in Australia. Our coalition will be as broad as possible: Church groups, workers, academics and other professionals, students, political activists. Our first project is to arrange a speaking tour of the major centres by REX RUMAKIEK, a West Papuan emigre who lives in the Republic of Vanuatu. After leaving Indonesia, Rex studied at the University of PNG, before moving to Vanuatu. There, he is director of the Pacific Centre for Peace, working on various regional issues.

On his tour he will speak of recent developments in West Papua and likely future directions. He will show films and photographs, and introduce audiences to music by the Black Brothers, an ethnic rock group which made the big

time in Indonesia before choosing a life in exile; also, the music of the late Arnold AP's Mambesak folk troupe. Other speakers will support him.

We would like you or your organisation to join our informal "Friends of West Papua" as well as giving financial help to the Rex Rumakiek tour. Remember, the Irian Jaya "border problem" will not disappear in a hurry, so the more Australians who are properly informed, the better.

We hope to hear from you. I can be contacted on phone 02-30 8366; Helen Jarvis on 02-331 3323 (h) and 02-692 3738 (w). We will have a network in other states soon.

Please make cheques out to Friends of West Papua and send with clip off to PO Box K117, Haymarket, NSW 2000, Australia.

Yours optimistically,
Robin Osborne,
Journalist

Battlefield

In respect of G.R. Walters of Melbourne letter of resignation (L.M. September) my wife and I did not go to the extent that he has in respect of our resignations. We had given the matter a lot of thought and despite urgings and arguments to the contrary we felt that we could no longer honestly belong to a Party as we wrote in our letter of resignation to our Branch, with whose policy as expressed from the National Conference we were in complete disagreement and led by men whom we no longer trusted or respected.

We have listened to and read the arguments for fighting from within and while agreeing that there is some merit in the arguments we felt that each must act as he or she thinks fit. For my part I have stated that I find it hard enough to fight with both hands free — to fight with one hand tied behind your back, as you are when bound by Party rules, especially as formulated, interpreted and upheld by those in present power — then I feel that is beyond my prowess.

So, despite 18 or more years of activity within the Party — and a lot of that time in the opposition stronghold of Leon PUNCH's electorate — we decided that we would be

more effective outside the Party, we will be free to swing both hands and as hard as we like. I am not a military strategist but I do recollect Montgomery saying once that as far as possible you endeavour to make the battlefield one of your own choosing. To me at least the battlefield with the Party is not of my choosing and the enemy has command of the heights. Others naturally see it differently and choose to act accordingly. But, however, each of us act. I am sure we can cooperate to the point where we will defeat those who have led the Labor Party to this sorry position.

Santamaria must be green with envy and the C.I.A. proud of their choice — in no other country have they had such outstanding success with so little effort and no bloodshed. Hawke and Keating must rank as two of the greatest commanders that were ever born. B. Appleton, Killcare Heights, NSW

Apple-isle base

The Tasmanian Premier's incredible attempt to offer Tasmania to the U.S. as a base in the event of New Zealand removing the U.S. Antarctic supply base at Christchurch has been met with derision and widespread opposition from all sources, including conservative papers.

The immediate response of the 200 peace activists who demonstrated the day after Gray's announcement proved effective. What the conservative papers stressed was not that the idea of a base which links Tasmania with U.S. war preparations was abhorrent, but that Gray went about it the wrong way — by not going through with the Federal Government — not outright condemnation of the idea of a base.

However, Gray's affront to the Federal Government, the NZ Government and the widespread opposition of the community will ensure Gray's vision of Tasmania as a

military base will remain in his head.

His clumsy attempt to woo the U.S. should be another nail in the coffin of the Liberal Government leading up to the next State elections — as long as the Labor Opposition campaigns hard on issues such as this.

Lou-Anne Barker,
Burnie,
Tasmania

'What's on in Wollongong'

[The following is excerpted from a pamphlet which has been widely distributed in the Party in NSW.]

For some time there has been a public campaign tolerated by the Officers of the New South Wales Branch, to destabilise the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Stewart West, on the South Coast of New South Wales.

This has been carried out by a former State candidate for Wollongong, Rex Connor Jnr. At the last State Election, Connor lost the Labor seat of Wollongong to the Independent Candidate, the Mayor of Wollongong, Frank Arkell.

For several years since returning from Canberra, Connor has been unemployed and conducted a fulltime door knocking and branch stacking operation in an attempt to win Party preselection for a Labor Federal or State Seat.

The Party Officers know that Connor will not defeat West. They know that in the event of a preselection contest, West is certain to win, and they know that the National Executive is likely to rule out any challenge to Ministers in preselection ballots regardless. But Connor is allowed to run riot because the Officers see his activities as a means of preventing preselections generally in New South Wales — even though the impact involves the destructive undermining of a Cabinet Minister, Immigration Policy and Labor credibility across four or five Federal Electorates in the Wollongong region.

Letters to L.M. should be sent to Labor Militant PO Box 372 Wollongong, NSW 2507. Please keep them reasonably short so we can print as many as possible.

Hayden backs status quo in Central America

Foreign Minister Bill Hayden attempted to play the Labor Government's traditional "even-handed" foreign policy role during his recent trip to Central America. And, while a number of his statements on Nicaragua are useful in combating the most warlike propaganda of the U.S. Government, his overall stance failed to break with the plans of U.S. (and Australian) imperialism to hold back the massive revolutionary processes under way in that region.

First the good news. During his tour of Nicaragua, Hayden came face to face with the reality of a society undergoing tremendous social change — lacking the deep problems of poverty, illiteracy, and oppression left by centuries of colonial-backed dictatorial rule.

editorial

Hayden obviously went to Nicaragua with views coloured by right-wing slanders emanating from CIA and ASIO sources — emphasised by his speech to the Party National Conference in July when he supported attacks on Sandinista "violations of human rights," and "attacks on neutral Costa Rica."

However, following his stay in Nicaragua in early September, Hayden commented: "I must say that the situation is considerably different from what I'd anticipated and in many instances much better. I find the society here less repressive than I'd expected."

Confronted with the reality of a society more democratic to its roots than almost any other on earth, Hayden was obliged to admit aspects of the truth of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

And, in an important blow against the Reagan Administration's attempts to portray the upcoming Nicaraguan elections as undemocratic, Hayden was reported in the September 14 Sydney Morning Herald as saying that if the poll was conducted the way it had been described to him, it would "certainly be a fair and secret ballot."

He added that it would not be the Nicaraguan Government's fault if [right-wing] opposition candidates refused to register for the elections, and rejected offers to allow them to register late. This statement cuts across the moves by the U.S. Government to dislodge the Nicaraguan elections as rigged, and to continue its build-up toward full-scale military intervention to crush the "totalitarian" Sandinista Government.

Despite these positive comments, Hayden completely failed to directly criticise the Reagan Administration's covert war against Nicaragua — involving thousands of right-wing, CIA-armed contras, carrying out a terror campaign against the population and economy of Nicaragua.

All Hayden could offer on this point was the statement: "I believe that they will have to have dialogue with the contras if they want peace."

How can you have dialogue with a gang of cut-throat murderers, who are not interested in "reconciliation" in Nicaragua — but only in restoring the property of the wealthy landowners and the rule of a new reactionary Junta?

This call for discussions with the contras in Nicaragua contrasts with Hayden's blatant refusal to demand talks between the pro-imperialist Duarte regime in El Salvador and the guerrillas of the FDR/FMLN, who are struggling for democratic rights and national liberation from U.S. domination in that country. The FDR/FMLN have repeatedly called for negotiations on a broad peace settlement with Duarte, but have been refused out of hand.

In fact, Hayden's strong backing for Duarte in El Salvador was the clearest indication during his Central American tour of his acceptance of the basic framework of maintaining the status quo — the rule of U.S. imperialism — in that region.

"An honest admission would be that I'd had much, much larger reservations about President Duarte than I have now," Hayden said.

"If he falls we can expect a fresh outbreak of death squad activity, of military indiscipline and a general collapse into a disorderly situation in this country which would be very unhealthy for people and would be lathered with split blood."

This picture is an outright lie. El Salvador under Duarte is not a war between the "extremists of the Left and Right," with the "moderate" Duarte regime in the middle, as the U.S. Government tries to claim.

Duarte was put in by means of bogus "elections" to provide a cover for the ongoing massacre of the people by the El Salvadoran military, openly or "secretly" through the death squads, in the interests of the ruling oligarchy and U.S. big business.

Hayden compounded his crime in endorsing Duarte by slandering the revolutionary FDR/FMLN opposition: "If anyone has any romantic notions that the guerrillas represent the hope of the future and will succeed in taking control of this country some time in the near future, I must say that all the evidence I see convinces me otherwise," the September 17 Sydney Morning Herald reported him as saying.

He added that the guerrillas were not attracting new recruits or winning the "hearts and minds" of Salvadorans.

"At this point they are holding their own where they are, but they are not expanding and it may well be they will go into a period of contraction."

What a brilliant deduction on Hayden's part — especially since he failed to meet with any representative of the FDR/FMLN, or even to visit the countryside!

The facts are the opposite to Hayden's claims. The revolutionaries are making steady gains; the Government is losing ground; and the El Salvadoran people overwhelmingly support the opposition, not the regime.

Just as Hayden slandered the guerrilla fighters of Fretilin in East Timor during his visit to Portugal earlier in this recent world trip — claiming that Fretilin was reduced to pillaging world Timorese villages and was losing support among the East Timorese people — he now issues barefaced lies about the El Salvadoran revolutionaries.

From the point of view of the Party in Australia, we must ensure that these fabrications are answered, that the truth about Central America is circulated widely in the labour movement here, and that our Government is pressured to support the genuine peace process in the region. That means demanding the U.S. get out of the area; civil aid for Nicaragua and the refugees in El Salvador; Australian Government support for the Sandinista Government and recognition of the FDR/FMLN as legitimate representatives of the Salvadoran people.

It means backing Hayden's endorsement for the Contadora peace process in Central America, which the Sandinistas have supported — but it means rejecting outright the suggestion that Australian troops might be used in any so-called "peacekeeping" force in the area. The experience of the Middle East has shown that these forces are only a cover, in practice, for imperialist warmaking.

Challenge indexation guidelines Colle workers win strike for 35 hours

On August 7, 35 printing ink manufacturing workers at the Colle Cooke plant in Sydney walked off the job and set up a round-the-clock picket to demand implementation of a 35-hour week. On the same day printers at another Sydney plant, Superline, imposed overtime bans in support of the same demand.

Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

The action of the Colle Cooke workers was unusual in the current industrial relations climate. At a time when the Prices and Incomes Accord is keeping industrial action to a minimum, they stayed out for five weeks and effectively blotted out ink production with a well-organised picket.

In the end they forced the company to back down, although details of the settlement have been kept secret as part of the agreement.

In taking up this campaign the Sydney printing workers have revived a struggle that began in 1981. After a co-ordinated campaign throughout the industry, most printing workers won a 37 1/2 hour week in June 1982 — with written agreements from their employers that the reduction to 35 would be implemented in December that year. However, the Fraser Government imposed its wages 'pause' in December 1982 and this gave the printing companies the excuse to renege on their commitments.

Most printing workers accepted the argument that the bosses could not afford the 35-hour week during the recession of 1982/83. But 1984 has seen relative boom times in the industry and now the workers see no reason for continuing to delay the implementation of a measure that will create more employment, as well as increase leisure time.

The Colle Cooke company has increased its share of the ink market since 1982 and has introduced new machinery to improve productivity in the past year. Yet it refused to negotiate the further reduction in working hours on the pretext that it would be breaching the Prices and Incomes Accord and, more specifically, the wage-fixing guidelines adopted by the Arbitration Commission in September 1983.

After two weeks of the strike, the national Printing Ink Manufacturers Association held negotiations with the

Printing and Kindred Industries Association. The strikers returned to work for the day to allow the talks to proceed and the company used the opportunity to ship out bulk supplies of ink held up by the picket.

However, the bosses did not treat the talks seriously. The PIMA representatives turned up an hour late and simply told the PKIU reps there was nothing to negotiate.

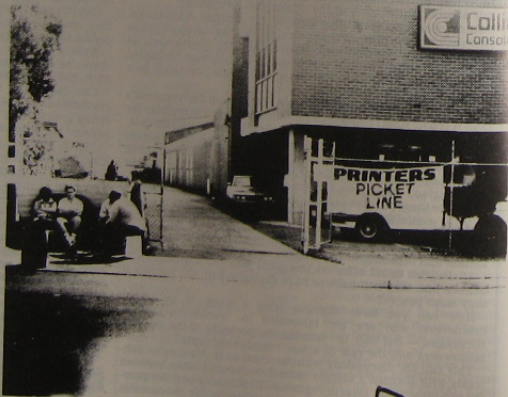
The bosses were supported by the Arbitration Commission and the Federal Government. On September 4, Justice Keogh ordered the striking workers back to work and, on the same day, Industrial Relations Minister Ralph Willis sent a message to the NSW PKIU saying he also considered the shorter hours campaign in breach of the Accord.

Fortunately, the ACTU took a different line and backed representatives of the Colle Cooke workers when they flew to Melbourne for negotiations with the company's head office. These talks, held on September 11, produced the agreement that ended the strike. The ACTU representatives argued that the dispute was an old one that predated the wages guidelines.

However, the ACTU agreed to help the bosses isolate the effect of this strike by keeping news of the victory secret. And the leaders of the PKIU went along with this extraordinary condition. They would not even tell the workers at Superline what happened, despite the fact that they are in precisely the same position as the Colle Cooke workers.

Thus the settlement of the strike shows how the Accord is used to suppress industrial action — even when a strong case can be made for such action being within the framework of the Accord and the restrictive wages guidelines.

Hopefully, news of what the Colle Cooke workers achieved with their determined action will eventually filter out, despite the black-out, and help inspire other workers to take matters into their own hands.



Printing workers' picket outside Colle's plant in Sydney. Details of their settlement have been kept secret to avoid a flow-on.

party affairs

NSW rank and file demand preselection

Almost 1000 ALP members filled Bankstown Civic Centre on September 20 to demand the holding of rank-and-file preselections for the coming Federal elections. The meeting was organised by the Steering Committee, after the right-wing dominated NSW Administrative Committee had twice voted down their proposal to set preselections in motion.

Janet Burstall

Member Rozelle East (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

As reported in the previous issue of Labor Militant, the Right is basing its refusal to hold preselections on the ground that Federal electorate boundaries are being redrawn and have not been finalised.

John Faulkner, Assistant General Secretary of the NSW ALP, exposed the falsity of the Right wing's arguments. Faulkner explained that preselections had been held or are nearing completion in every other State on the basis of draft boundaries released by the Electoral Commission.

In NSW, however, the Party Officers are lodging protests against the draft boundaries in a few select seats. These protests are not because safe Labor seats may become marginal, or for other reasons that may disadvantage Labor as a whole. The protests are designed to strengthen the preselection chances of right-wing contenders.

The fears of the Right are well founded if the preselections held in Victoria and South Australia are any guide. In Victoria, the alliance of the Socialist Left and the Independent faction enabled Peter Staples to defeat Attorney General Gareth Evans. Andrew Theophanous to defeat Bill Landeryou and Albert Knowles to defeat sitting member and Hawke supporter Bob Chynoweth. In all, Labor Unity won only one of the twelve contested seats.

The Bankstown meeting also heard speakers from various parts of NSW explain the need for rank-and-file preselection in their areas, and how Head Office have previously undermined them.

Several Parliamentary representatives were present including Tom Uren, Michael Knight, Frank Walker and Stewart West. West, after initial delay,

has come out in support of rank-and-file preselection — despite a challenge to himself from Rex Connor, Junior.

The meeting unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on the National Executive to intervene in NSW to ensure that preselections are held in accordance with the rules of the Party.

A gag motion was put almost immediately after the mover and seconder (Martin Ferguson and Bruce Childs) had spoken. Only one speaker was heard, apart from those previously organised to speak.

There was no time allowed for rank-and-file members to propose ideas for pursuing the campaign. It is unfortunate that a meeting called to enable rank-and-file participation in the Party did not permit more rank-and-file participation.

While appealing to the National Executive is the only avenue available for immediate reversal of the Head Office decision, we should also recognise that

NSW Young Labor shows activist signs

The Annual Conference of NSW Young Labor held on the weekend of September 22-23, saw an increase in the influence of the Radical Leadership Group over the misnamed Centre Unity.

On the whole, the weekend was a success, with stimulating debate on issues ranging from the British miners to the inadequacy of CEP.

Bill Mankaklis

Camperdown (NSW) Branch, Sydney Young Labor and Municipal Employees Union

Not surprisingly, the Centre Unity faction told the line of their right-wing mentors in the labour bureaucracy. They spoke against the black-banning of coal to Britain, where miners are fighting a life-and-death struggle.

They also had the hide to defend the grossly inadequate CEP. On this, an unemployed delegate from Penrith slammed them effectively — saying that youth in the West couldn't look forward to cushy jobs in head office, and

the National Executive's role in intervention in State Branches does not necessarily lead to increased democracy.

In fact, there are a whole range of problems relating to lack of Party democracy — the abolition of NSW State Council; the undermining of the role of the Parliamentary Caucus; increasing centralisation of power in the hands of the National Executive; and the threat of Federal intervention in the Victorian Branch to overturn the 2-to-1 decision of State Conference rejecting the affiliation of the 4 NCC-dominated unions.

The fight for democracy cannot be divorced from the fight for policies in the interest of the Party's rank and file, both in the Branches and the trade unions.

In the meantime, as a matter of urgency, we must endorse the demand for the National Executive to direct the NSW Party to hold rank-and-file preselections, and, forward our resolutions to the National Executive.

shouldn't have to spend the rest of their lives in meaningless, short-term jobs that did nothing to train them and equip them for further employment.

There was debate on the banning of nuclear war ships in New Zealand, and on the need for increased public investment to create jobs.

One disappointment of the weekend was the resolution on uranium mining. Rather than reaffirming our 1977 policy and stating our intention to fight for its reimplementation, the motion merely urges that safeguards be upheld. This weakens our argument that the only safe uranium is in the ground.

On a more positive note, however, NSW Young Labor's Publications Committee will be throwing its resources in with the AYL's INSIGHT. There has been a long-felt need for a national, activist, campaigning paper — a forum for debate and information network.

Another sign of militancy was the decision to aid the sacked Riverstone meat workers by holding a combined public meeting to publicise their plight.

women's affairs



Time to start questioning The Accord: Its meaning for women

The following paper by Meaghan Delahunty is one of two talks presented at a session on *The Accord: Its Meaning for Women*, at the Women and Labour Conference held in Brisbane from July 13-15 this year.

There is a view held in certain circles that is to be against the Accord is to be anti-ALP and anti-trade union. I take the opposite view. It is just those who are active unionists and ALP members who need to examine the Accord and come out hard against it.

The Accord needs to be examined from the perspective of what the Hawke Government and the unions should do to defend and extend the interests of the working class and, in particular, women. Such an examination shows that the Accord as the central plank of the Government's economic strategy does exactly the reverse.

What I'll attempt to do with this paper is to look at what the implementation of the Accord has meant for our living stan-

dards and working conditions specifically in relation to women, to take up some of the myths surrounding the Accord, and offer a few pointers for an alternative strategy.

From the outset the Accord was characterised by a lack of consultation with the ranks of the trade union movement or community groups — including women. The policies outlined in the Accord are "directed at alleviating unemployment and redistributing income and wealth to the less well-off."

After sixteen months, the gap between the pre-election rhetoric and the reality has widened. Reconciliation has meant reconciling working people to a minimum 10 per cent reduction in real wages, increased indirect taxation and negligible increases in the social wage. For example, even Medicare has to be financed out of our own pockets with a one-and-a-half per cent tax levy, on top of the massive take home pay tax slug we already pay.

It is time we started questioning and challenging a number of false and dangerous premises upon which the Accord was

based.

The assumption that wage rises cause unemployment and inflation, and therefore must be suppressed, is one of the more disturbing and dangerous features of the Accord.

Experience over the past 12 months has refuted this premise. Take the example of the steel and vehicle industries.

The mass sackings at GM-H last year presented a certain test case for the Accord. It raised the whole question that if our wages cause unemployment and inflation, and carworkers hadn't had a wage increase in 14 months, then why had 833 of the workforce been sacked? With even more sackings now proposed this makes a farce of the statement in the Accord that wage increases should not "give added impetus to inflation or unemployment."

It is just this assumption that puts the blame for the economic crisis squarely on the shoulders of the victims of the crisis — the working class and the oppressed and victimised sections of society such as women.

What makes it even more grotesque is that many trade union leaders and certain sections of the Left have caved in and supported and promoted this assumption, which is nothing more than a betrayal of our interests.

Another false premise of the Accord is that the recession is short-term and superficial. The argument, which is one that Malcolm Fraser put forward, goes like this. If wages are restrained, profits will rise and so bosses will invest and more jobs will be created.

Yet profits have risen 53 per cent in the past 12 months, and yet there has been no corresponding increase in investment. In fact where investment has occurred, it has been in the introduction of labour saving technology which will reduce further the jobs available.

This is exactly what is happening in the steel and vehicle industry at present. And Hawke, Keating and Willis have made clear statements about the long-term nature of unemployment at the 10 per cent level in the future.

The Accord package was sold to the trade union movement on the basis that wage restraint would be compensated for by increases in the social wage. Furthermore, the whole deal has been put forward as the best of deals for the less well-organised sectors of the workforce, primarily women, as a means of generating and maintaining existing living standards.

Ironically enough, it has been precisely these workers, primarily women workers in the less industrially strong areas, who have been forced to go outside the system in an attempt to maintain a decent standard of living. The fights waged by the Food Preservers Union and the Confectioners Union during 1983 are prime examples.

There is absolutely no guarantee in the Accord that real wage levels will be maintained over time. Yet where workers have used their industrial strength to push for wage increases or shorter hours they have been attacked by the press, Labor parliamentarians and trade union officialdom.

The attacks at the 1983 ACTU Congress on Gall Cotton, FPU organiser, for daring to back her workers in their fight for wage increases and shorter hours outside of the framework of the Accord is a classic example.

What the Accord meant in practice for the 40 per cent of women staffing the pleket line at Heinz, was a vicious campaign aimed at isolating and weakening their struggle. They were made out to be industrial renegades.

In fact, the system of wage indexation under the Accord doesn't even guarantee maintenance of living standards. It's not automatic, it's not pegged to the real rate of inflation — nor is the CPI flow-on increase guaranteed, and it's always six months behind.

Most women workers have the lowest levels of pay, yet can only maintain their existing inequality in wages if there is automatic, full wage indexation linked to a real cost of living index. This doesn't happen under the Accord and the National Wage Case.

Instead all that is guaranteed is that they fall further and further behind. Wage inequality is not being held stable, let alone improved.

Ultimately, the way to protect and improve the conditions of the industrially weaker sectors of the workforce is through united union campaigns spearheaded by the more powerful unions.

It is important to understand the terms of the Accord. It is a wage-cutting mechanism. The promises to increase the social wage are the sugar coating and mask the reality of cuts to the public health system, to public education, etc. All that is guaranteed in the Accord is wage restraint; prices are only under surveillance.

When it comes to the specific mention of women, the Accord is virtually silent! A close scrutiny reveals one mention in a vague statement regarding education and TAFE policy towards the end of the document. This is a glaring omission considering women constitute 52 per cent of Australian society and 37 per cent of the workforce.

It is even more blatant, considering the Accord's aim of redistribution of income and wealth — given the impact of the recession on women in the workforce, in unemployment rates and as major beneficiaries of welfare.

Firstly, to look at wage levels, on the 1983 figures, of the 28.2 per cent of women who work full time their earnings are 76c for every dollar earned by male workers. Clearly, the 9.1 per cent of wages lost during the period of the Fraser Government's wage freeze and extended by Hawke has hit women hardest. Those who earn the lowest wages can least afford such a cut, even if promises are made about restoring wage levels over time.

A 1977 OECD study of 12 countries showed that Australia had the highest levels of industrial segregation. In February 1984, 54 per cent of women workers were concentrated in only three occupations — clerical, sales and services.

One of the major factors hampering women's attempt to gain equal pay is the fact that the work areas in which so many women are concentrated are so undervalued.

It is useful to see the terms of the National Wage Case decision, which is the concrete expression of the Accord in this context. They actually work against women gaining equal pay.

The Accord and subsequent National Wage Case decisions prohibit work value cases for existing occupations. The National Wage Case decisions allow for work value cases only in areas where new technology has opened up new areas of employment.

There is no opportunity to have existing occupations assessed for at least two years. Thus women's skills, at present grossly underrated and underpaid, will remain as they are.

There can be no opportunity to have a secretary's job reassessed to be of comparative worth as that of a truck driver, as has recently happened in a break-through decision in the United States. The Accord actually reinforces occupational segregation.

Because women are still largely concentrated in a narrow range of occupations and industries, the impact of new technology is greater in increasing women's unemployment rates. In Japan recently, Hawke foreshadowed more job losses in the manufacturing industry as industry is rationalised and high technology is introduced on the bosses' terms.

This will mean even greater disproportional loss of women process workers' jobs in the manufacturing industry. Thousands of jobs are made obsolete by this method. Women telephonists employed by Telecom are only one example where technology is used to cut jobs — not to improve working conditions.

Here again the terms of the Accord work against women. Shorter hours is one way of sharing around the benefits of new technology and ensuring that job losses and speedups are the only reward for the workers. Yet fighting for shorter hours is ruled out under the Accord except in very limited circumstances "via changes in work practices or procedures."

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Women and the Accord

Continued from page 9.

This means that in order to reduce hours from 40 to 38, workers have to pay for this by giving away working conditions or by agreeing to speed-ups. They have to agree to do as much work in 38 hours as they did in 40, and even this is subject to the employers' agreement.

These offsets are currently at issue in the NSW nurses' dispute for a 38-hour week. Cost offsets proposed include increased meal charges in hospital cafeterias, increased charges for accommodation, no accrual of one day off per month during leave, abolition of part-time and casual loadings, among others. The offsets are insisted on by a State ALP government in one of the few remaining public service areas which doesn't already have the 38-hour week.

The nurses' fight is not just seen as a move to equity by a predominantly female workforce, but as challenging the restrictive guidelines of the National Wage Case — and therefore of the Accord.

The whole thrust of the National Wage Case has been to blind unions from improving conditions and wages. In order to get CPI increases six monthly, the unions have had to sign on the dotted line that they wouldn't pursue wage claims or reduced hours outside the framework of the Accord for the next two years. This amounts to an effective no strike agreement.

And this has meant in fact that going for improvements in conditions is blocked, as trade union officials pressure workers back to work to avoid endangering the Accord. The level of strikes has been reduced, not because there is nothing to struggle about, but because of the restrictive guidelines and the way they are being applied by the trade union officials.

It's worth noting that the employers were not required to sign on the dotted line that there will be no retrenchments, or that they will increase employment as their profits increase. BHP and G.M.H. show the flexibility for the employers under these guidelines.

When you look at the area of the social wage, the effect of the Accord on women is very marked. The social wage is the amount the Government spends on education, welfare, health, transport, etc.

It's important to remember several things in regard to the social wage. First, it is principally financed out of our taxes. Secondly, it is easier for the bosses to cheat on the social wage than it is on the industrial wage.

For example, Fraser abolished Medibank and cut governmental spending savagely with no consistent fight back by the working class. No individual boss could get away with that.

As these cuts to the social wage occurred under Fraser and continued under Hawke, it has been women who have taken much of the brunt. Because of women's double job at work and at home, the cuts to hospital beds, to mental homes, to services for the aged, etc. generally have to be absorbed by the individual family. That usually means that the woman has the increased burden of caring for the sick, the aged, the mentally and physically handicapped.

This is combined with the task of stretching an ever-decreasing pay packet in terms of real worth. Stretching the household budget becomes a major task of looking for bargains to clothe, feed, pay increasing service charges for energy, rates, rent, etc.

Each cut in public spending increases this. For example, cuts to public education spending mean more money is spent by the family in trying to cover the gaps.

This burden on women is enormous when you consider the plight of welfare recipients. Over 60 per cent of all welfare recipients are women. The terms of the Accord promise to "improve the relative position of the most disadvantaged." Specifically it promises to improve unemployment benefits, to index all social security payments not already indexed, and to restore pension levels to the basic rate of 25 per cent of average male earnings.

None of this has been forthcoming. Married women who lose their jobs are not entitled to any unemployment benefits. The negligible increases in the dole still put it way behind the poverty line. Now it has become commonplace to refer to welfare and the feminisation of poverty.

The Accord was committed to reducing indirect taxation. Last year, the Federal Budget broke the terms of the Accord with the increase in indirect tax on beer, cigarettes and petrol — and then went further to index increases every six months. To thousands of women who are not wage-earners, indirect taxation is a particularly heavy burden.

The Accord is committed to easing the tax burden on low and middle income-earners, the majority of whom are women. Yet in 1983, company tax is down to 8.6 per cent, less than half what it was in 1982 budget revenue.

Yet personal income tax has risen to 40.8 per cent for the same period. There is no capital gains or wealth tax, so it's quite clear who foots the bill for the social wage.

Yet social spending for women is minimal. Take childcare as an example. Nearly 43 per cent of all women in the workforce have children under the age of 12 (1980 figures). But the Accord mentions nothing about childcare, or even raises the issue of ACTU policy that childcare should be tax deductible.

When you look at unemployment the situation is glaringly unequal. Unemployment rates for women are appallingly high. And this situation gets worse if you are young, Black or migrant.

22.2 per cent of women under 20 at August 1983 were registered as unemployed. Migrant women account for 30 per cent of all unemployed women and 40.5 per cent of all unemployed married women.

The 1983 budget provided for \$300 million to be spent in job creation under the Community Employment Program. This will lead to the creation of 40,000 jobs of 6-12 months duration per year.

Already the statistics show that women are under-represented in job creation programs. Under CEP in particular you have to be registered for at least three months at the CES to be eligible. Since married women can't get the dole, they tend not to register, so can't apply for these jobs.

This situation hits migrant women particularly hard. Many skills programs have been set up without considering the problems of women workers, especially migrant women and the cutbacks going on there, skill retraining is vital if women are to be able to enter the paid workforce again.

The Accord is the central thrust of an economic strategy which says that the working class, the poor, and the oppressed must wait until higher rates of profit are generated before we can go for increases in wages, shorter working hours to combat the effect of new technology or defend overtime and working conditions.

At the same time social spending is cut, wages are falling further behind inflation and the number of people living in poverty is massively increasing. By any standards such a strategy is a disaster for the vast majority.

The promised economic recovery is clearly a recovery on the terms of the rich and powerful. We need an alternative strategy to the Accord — one that defends and improves living standards today, not promises "pie in the sky" at some indefinite future — and all the while cuts back on what we have already won in the past.

The right to a job to a living wage and adequate social services are our rights as working people and working women, and not privileges to be granted and then taken away. This is especially so when as women we are only just beginning to drive back the wall of prejudice and discrimination that has made second class citizens of us for centuries.

At last year's ACTU Congress, four people spoke out against the restrictions of the Accord. The women of these were women. Women have a vital role to play in exposing just what is happening under the Accord, and to join the fight for a strategy based on social needs and social rights.

women's affairs

Breakthrough in BHP 'Jobs for Women' case

A landmark case challenging job discrimination against women has begun in the NSW Equal Opportunity Tribunal. The "Jobs for Women" Campaign, a struggle by women in the Illawarra area to gain jobs in the steel industry, has culminated in 34 women seeking legal redress from Australian Iron and Steel for alleged discriminatory hiring practices.

Pat Brewer

Member Forest Lodge (NSW) Branch and Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union

The women claim that A.I.S., a wholly owned subsidiary of BHP, discriminated against women when hiring, even after the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act was made law in 1977. This has led to a four-year battle, which is only now reaching a point where it can be begin to be resolved.

The women have faced many setbacks in their fight for equality — but on September 21, after the hearing had already begun, they won a significant victory. They won the right to have legal aid.

For many this may not seem anything more than natural justice. Taking a multi-billion dollar monopoly like BHP to court when you have no job, don't speak the language, and are a woman is surely a perfect example of when legal aid should be granted. But the NSW Legal Aid Commission only decided in favour of the women on its fifth review of their submission for aid.

The Legal Aid Review Committee rejected the application on the grounds that the women's case lacked "merit." The grounds for such a decision were hard to conceive. As the women said:

"We wonder how many times we have to be discriminated against before we can correct the injustices we are suffering. We wonder how this legal body can make decisions on the 'merit' of our case when this particular section of the Anti-Discrimination Act has never been tested, never been taken up in the past, never reached the stage of a court case.

"We wonder why our case has no 'merit' when the legal advice we have had up until this stage indicates that the case is a good one and is important. We wonder about the use of these laws if, unless a disadvantaged group like ourselves wants to seek redress under them, it is made extremely difficult for



us through denial of legal aid."

The women refused to give up, and began a campaign to get legal aid. Eighteen months after the original submission was made, and 4 appeals later, they won.

During the campaign many groups and labour movement figures, including NSW Premier Neville Wran, Federal Minister Stewart West, ACTU Executive Member Jennie George and the NSW Labor Women's Committee rallied to their cause. After the fourth rejection, the NSW Women's Advisory Council gave the women \$10,000 to be able to continue with their case.

Their case is a historic one in several ways. The women are challenging the most powerful and wealthy monopoly in the country.

Their fight began in 1980 when it was discovered that more than 2,000 women had been repeatedly refused jobs by BHP in Port Kembla, the major employer, while the company continued to hire complaints with the Anti-Discrimination Board and started a campaign which resulted in BHP hiring more than 300 women at the Port Kembla and Newcastle steelworks.

With the onset of the economic recession at the end of 1982, the company began to carry out the job-slashing campaign that cut the steel workforce by 10,000 — and continues today with a further projected 3000 jobs to go in the next three years.

As most of the women lost their newly won jobs, 34 decided that it was time to take on BHP on the issue of job discrimination. They will be seeking compensation to cover the loss of wages, had up until this stage indicated that the case is a good one and is important. We wonder about the use of these laws if, unless a disadvantaged group like ourselves wants to seek redress under them, it is made extremely difficult for

them, it is made extremely difficult for

Picket outside Tribunal hearing in Wollongong.

break out of traditional job barriers that make Australia one of the most sex-segregated workforces of all countries — according to a survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The case provides a test of the effects of present direct discrimination and the cumulative indirect effects of discrimination in the past.

The case also sets a precedent because it is the first representative case of its kind in Australia. If successful, it will allow whatever is won by the 34 complainants to flow on to others in a similar situation. It will determine whether stances can act together — instead of having to fight for their rights as individuals against huge corporations like BHP.

The case occurs at a very crucial time for women. Many of their traditional job opportunities are being slashed by sackings and the introduction of new technology. Women's unemployment rates are far higher than men's.

If they are to maintain their right to work and to independent economic rights, they must have access to a wider range of jobs. Breaking through the traditional sex-segregated job patterns is essential.

The need to have affirmative action programs is recognised by the Hawke Government and already a program of test cases is under way, associated with the Introduction of the Federal Sex Discrimination Bill. These must not just be used as cover-up jobs to obscure real discrimination for the majority of women.

That's why the Jobs for Women case is so important. As one of the women said: "The irony is that while we are taking BHP to court for discrimination, BHP was recently chosen as one of 28 companies to participate in a voluntary Federal Government pilot program of affirmative action."

Hamish Linacre speaks on: Education and the Accord

The following are major excerpts from a speech on the effects of the Prices and Incomes Accord on education given by Hamish Linacre, Research Officer for the Queensland Teachers Union, to a one-day seminar sponsored by the Social Rights Campaign in Brisbane on September 2.

In the Accord which was struck between the ACTU and the ALP the following matters were placed before the public as the Agreement. There were specifics, that is fiscal implications, and there were vagaries and polemic which were to underpin the whole thing — to give the essential warm inner glow to such a document. Let's look first at the fiscal implications and what has been delivered.

First of all, there was a widespread feeling in the community, promoted by the Rupert Murdoch of this world, that the education system was falling because we were leaving school too soon. And where were they going? They were going to unemployment.

So it was essential that the Accord had a little bit in it about increased retention rates. And to underpin that there were enormous amounts of statistics produced that Australia had the lowest retention rates in the world — and the lowest had become the solution in itself. Keep the kids in schools and you will achieve that objective.

And all sorts of nonsense was generated to achieve this end. The most facile which still exists, after two years of a Labor Government, is the transition from school to work program. It has been abused, it hasn't achieved its objectives — unless its objective is to keep poor wide-eyed little children, aged 15 or 16, in school rather than turning them out to the non-workforce.

If that is the objective then it has succeeded, because retention rates have risen remarkably quickly in the last 12-18 months. And teachers and school systems are copping that. We are not equipped to cope with it. I will come back to that.

We were going to initiate a new programme to assist non-achieving students in primary schools. This has its roots in another turpitude in the broader community about what's wrong with schools — that is, the kids aren't learning when they're leaving — and that's what they become a problem when they get older, and therefore can't get employment.

The intellectual underpinnings of these first two elements of the Accord are frightening in what they reveal.

But anyhow, having been convinced that the children were not getting enough of the basics at the beginning, we'd fix that up with a basic skills course. Well, they have delivered that this year.

It's going to be a beauty. In recognition of the fact that teachers really have failed students of more youthful years over the past couple of generations, we are going to fix that, with a program for the whole of Australia that is going to cost \$6.7 million!

It's going to be a giggle. And what it is going to do, of course, is allow the preschool and early education teachers to buy a few more blocks and possibly a piece of carpet to put over the bare board. That is the situation in most of our schools in Queensland, and it will be just a bloody nonsense.

The next sweeping undertaking was to remedy the deficiencies in capital — it's building equipment — and recurrent funding levels in schools. I love this one, I mean it really is a joke.

Last year the Federal Government provided an additional \$10 million for capital works in schools throughout Australia. And you have to remember that nearly half of the capital works money for government schools, and a higher proportion than that for non-government schools, comes from the Federal Government.

I'll just throw up one statistic which indicates just how ridiculously inadequate based on Queensland alone, we estimate that in State public schools — primary, secondary and special schools — there is a shortfall in excess of \$200 million today in capital works to bring us up to standards. The Schools Commission identified this as being desirable in 1974. \$200 million.

For the Federal Government to throw up \$10 million for the whole of the country as the increase to fulfill this commitment is just nonsense, and amounts to a deceit of the highest order.

The next one was — raising participation rates in tertiary education. Again, this is based on the acceptance of two dogmas. One is that if you can channel children into tertiary education after they leave the schools, they then don't go into the employment market and become an embarrassment there. And that is the main underpinning of this particular promise.

But the one that has some validity, of

course, is that there is extraordinary restriction in our country upon entry to tertiary education — more so than any other of the so-called developed countries. And you have got to be so careful looking at it, but the response has been pitiful again.

I suppose they can argue that they have raised the participation rate by providing for an additional 30,000 places in tertiary institutions Australia-wide over the next three years. In 1985, however, we can look forward to only 3,000 new places at uni's and CAE's, plus possibly the same number in TAFE.

Then there was a promise to provide and maintain government school systems of the highest standard open to all children. That is just laughable — and then funding non-government schools on the basis of need.

Well, you can see Geelong Grammar and Scots College have got need! One can't go through life without winning one's caps, can one; that's a need. And one has to have the best shell on the river, that's a need; one has to have the rifle gallery; one has to have the horse stud.

The problem of course, is that the needs we were talking about when we were conned into this bear no resemblance to the needs of these schools — like Scots, which in 1982 received over \$800,000 from the public purse, or Brisbane Grammar School, which in 1982 received almost \$900,000.

And that's only Federal grants. Add to that a similar amount from the State really, and you get a picture of what is really happening in this country regarding the use of public money to fulfill needs in education.

Now, the next was the provision of training and re-training for the disadvantaged. The reality is that specific programs aimed at the disadvantaged have in fact been cut — and to say that they have been increased is wrong.

The process used to identify the disadvantaged has in fact limited the definition of disadvantaged to a point where the money retained in real terms, say in disadvantaged schools programs, is now expected to spread over a broader number of schools and a broader number of children to achieve objectives that are vague. And the amount of money is pitiful.

For example, whereas in this year's Budget almost \$50 million will be applied to those wealthy private schools I referred to before, only \$34 million has been



"Government schools have been dealt a death blow" under Hawke Government's education guidelines.

applied to service the whole disadvantaged schools program — in both private and government schools throughout Australia.

And the disadvantaged schools program copes with at least three times the number of children that are in those wealthy private schools, because most of the people in those wealthy schools are, in fact, children of already advantaged and elite families.

I won't go into the rest of this rather depressing document. I'll just turn in the last few minutes to what the government has delivered to schools and how it compares with the promises of the Government in the context of the Accord. And the most revealing thing there is a motion of last week's executive of the ACTU, which reads under Education Funding, "The ACTU executive, while noting the increase in real terms in education expenditure, is however concerned to note that the commitments made in the Hayden education plan and incorporated in the context of the Accord, in relation to remedying deficiencies in recurrent funding levels of government schools, and in funding non-government schools on the basis of need, have not been met. These two commitments were unanimously reaffirmed at the recent ALP National Conference and as neither of these undertakings were included."

Now, having said that, what would be an appropriate last paragraph? We have identified a sell-out. We have identified a breach of the Accord of momentous magnitude for schools, and that means big dollars — I'm talking about a \$1,000 million magnitude — what they are going

to do... ?

to do... ? They are going to go and have a little chat; they are going to have "an urgent meeting between the ACTU and the Government." And they don't make any indication in their resolution, of course, as to what the outcome of that meeting might be — except maybe a coffee and a few beers after, and it's a bit tough for those kids missing out.

What do the guidelines offer then? And what do they mean in the context of what the promises were? Let's have a look at the specifics of the Conference resolutions of the ALP, which restated the commitment of the Party to a number of principles which are contained in the Accord document.

The first one was to the primary obligation of Governments to provide government schools of the highest standard. And that is part of the polemic which has sold us the whole Accord package.

"What do they deliver? They deliver "an historic recognition of a dual system of schooling in Australia," "with a common basis for the recurrent funding of all schools, private and government."

And it also goes further. It provides a funding guarantee to non-government schools of a magnitude from one-and-a-half times up to many times those given to government schools.

But that is what's called a primary obligation to government schools. Here are some figures:

Next year, private schools will receive a minimum of \$265 for each primary child and \$420 for each secondary child, as a guarantee from the Commonwealth. From the State they will receive about

the same, depending upon which State they live in. Government schools on the other hand, receive a guarantee from the Commonwealth of only \$148 and \$163 per child in 1985.

The private amounts go up to \$746 for primary and \$1,177 for secondary next year, compared with those two figures for government schools. The horizon for government schools is only \$193 per primary child and \$285 per secondary child in 1992 — and that compares with \$988 for primary and \$1,458 for secondary, in private schools.

Now, all that having been said, let's look at the aggregate amounts very quickly. \$156.6 million per year will be the increase from the Federal public purse by 1992 for government schools, compared with over \$400 million increase per year for non-government schools by 1992.

The government also promised to restore Commonwealth funds to government schools to 10% of government school costs; this would have meant an extra \$240 million by 1986. The Party reaffirmed that at its Conference. This has just been ignored.

They have, instead, provided only 8% of the "community standard," which is no sense anyway. This will mean only an extra \$37 million by 1986.

They also agreed to wipe out the wealthy private school funding. They have backed off that to accommodate the private school interest lobby.

The clear statement that obligation for standards in private schools rested with the private schools was adopted by the ALP National Conference, with governments having only an obligation to assist. In fact they have now picked up a shared responsibility to ensure standards in those schools.

All in all, I will finish by saying that, in light of the Prices and Incomes Accord, what has been dealt out to schools is devastating. To government schools, to kids who are basically working-class, they have been dealt I believe a 'death-blow'.

This is to the point where in ten years' time we will look back and see an education system in this country where private school proliferation will have run rampant. There will be schools for every little group in the community who wants to open one funded from the public purse.

Our public schools will be repositories for the poor, the working class, and the inarticulate in the community. We are going to find our public schools marginalised to the service of the disadvantaged. In terms of the economic power in our society, and that is frightening.

So that is the message for the future, and that is the Accord after a year and a half. I frankly think we need to find some other direction.

Speech by Helen Clark Broad support for N.Z. nuclear ships ban

The New Zealand Labour Party won a tremendous victory over the Muldoon National Government last July 14. One of the key issues which has received much international publicity is the new N.Z. Labour Government's strong stand against visits of U.S. nuclear warships.

The heavy pressure being exerted against the Government by the Reagan Administration — and to the shame of the Australian Labor Government, by leaders of the Hawke Government as well.

A recent tour by Helen Clark, a leading member of the N.Z. Party, sponsored by the Australian peace movement, has been held to explain the issues to meetings around Australia.

Helen Clark currently chairs the N.Z. Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Labor Government's Caucus Committee on External Affairs. She is also Government nominee to chair the Parliamentary Select Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control.

She was elected to Parliament in 1981. She has been on the National Executive of the NZLP since 1978. As International Convener for the Party, she has represented the Party at several Socialist International meetings and other international forums. We reprint below major excerpts from her speech to a public meeting held in Sydney on September 16.

I regard the visit I have been able to make to Australia at the invitation of friends of New Zealand within the peace movement and the Australian Labor Party, as a visit of very great importance to us. Because I am concerned that there has been an interpretation placed upon the policy of the New Zealand Government in the media in this country, and particularly in the United States of America, which seeks to misrepresent the position we have taken.

There seems to be feeling around, in certain quarters, that New Zealand has suddenly had a rush of blood to the head, that it's contracted a very dangerous disease, which the Wall Street Journal called "the Greek disease" and the Washington Post called "Hollanditis".

So I wanted to take you today through the history of the evolution of this policy in N.Z., so that everyone here can go away saying that the N.Z. Government does know what it's doing, it's been working at this for a long time, and the N.Z. people are backing it.

In the past, although we were appalled by the development of methods of mass destruction, we did not see ourselves as immediately threatened. That changed, for us, in 1966, when the French brought nuclear testing very close to our backyard in French Polynesia.

And there has developed in N.Z. a very strong consciousness that World War Three has already begun for so many people in the Pacific, precisely because of the nuclear testing. Not just the testing at French Polynesia, but the testing of the U.S. in Micronesia, the testing of the British at Christmas Island and, in one should add also, in South Australia, because we regard you as very much Pacific people.

If we look about the Pacific, we can see that it has been polluted over a long period of time by nuclear testing, and we've been conscious of that. So our Party together, and we've moved beyond that to take its own actions to show its abhorrence of this development in our region.

Prior to the 1972 general election, we sent one of our Parliamentary frontbenches up to Moruroa on a protest vessel operated by Greenpeace, and that was a grave step to take at the time. When we were elected to Government in 1972 we then had the opportunity to use the weight of the machinery of the N.Z. Government to show our attitude with whatever force we could muster as a small nation.

And we sent, early in the period of that Government, a frigate up to Moruroa Atoll, one of two or three frigates of the N.Z. Navy. It only got there because the Australian Navy was kind enough to support us by having a fuel boat going along behind, because a N.Z. Navy frigate does not have a very long range.

We were grateful for your support in that direct action we took, and I believe it had a very great impact on world opinion at the time. We also took legal action against the French Government at the International Court in The Hague and were successful in getting an opinion, a judgement in our favour.

It did not have the effect of halting French nuclear testing in our region altogether; it drove it underground. We still regard that as a grave offence, even if slightly less offensive than the atmospheric testing. So there was that very strong concern building up.

Increasingly then, eyes turned in N.Z. within the Labour Party, within the peace movement, to the nuclear weaponry of the U.S. to which we are allied — and questions were asked. Could N.Z. in all conscience give any support whatsoever to the nuclear weapons strategies of that country. If it felt so strongly about what France was doing not so far away?

And we felt a need to be consistent in our approach to nuclear weaponry. Accordingly, in the period of the former Labour Government, 1972-75, we did invoke a ban on the visits of nuclear vessels to our ports at that time.

None came in the term of that Government. We were under considerable pressure to admit a visit, but we did not bend. And I think it is a matter of record that at that time the ANZUS treaty did not cease to exist, that trade sanctions were not invoked, and that the world continued to go on.

Well, the Labour Government lost office in N.Z. in 1975, and steps to reverse the policy we had had of declaring strong abhorrence of nuclear weaponry. And they went out of their way to positively ensure that nuclear warships came to our ports: that in itself invoked a reaction from the N.Z. public.

But really their policies went further than that, because from 1976 on we see the two new conservative administrations, the Liberals in Australia and National in N.Z., positively encouraging the U.S. to have a greater presence in the South Pacific than it had had since the end of World War Two.

So, there we were, the period from 1976 on, eight and a half years in our country when we had a conservative Government allied to us and the nuclear interpretation of it, which is supported by the United States.

In 1975, Labour had fought the election on many issues, but one of them was the nuclear ship ban from our ports. We had the same policy in 1978, although it wasn't taken frightfully seriously because nobody thought we were going to win. In 1981, we very nearly became the Government. For the last three years Muldoon has enjoyed only a one seat majority in our



Audience at Helen Clark's Sydney meeting.

Parliament until he was pleased about altogether two months ago — and we're all very pleased about that. But from 1981 on, with Labour so close to becoming the Government, and the anti-nuclear movement having gathered so much momentum, New Zealand has been under a great deal of pressure to modify the position held by the Labour Party and the peace movement on the non-nuclear interpretation of the ANZUS alliance.

In the last three years, we have seen slightly more visits from nuclear warships and at quite provocative times. In Hiroshima Week last year, one of the largest and ugliest ships in the US Navy was brought into the harbour of Auckland.

This had a very counterproductive effect, bringing out 50,000 Aucklanders into the streets to demonstrate against it. And if you don't think that's very impressive, remember that Auckland is a relatively small city of only three-quarters of a million — which means that one-in-fifteen people came out to demonstrate.

So that visit was counterproductive. But nonetheless there were more of them. We have also seen in the last three years a pretty steady stream of visitors from the Strategic Command in Hawaii, from the Pentagon, and the State Department — all chorusing with one voice that if the policy of the Labour Party of banning American nuclear warships from N.Z. ports was implemented, then that was tantamount to ending the ANZUS alliance.

We do not accept that interpretation. And of course, at the same time that this pressure was coming on, NZers were reacting to a number of other phenomena. They were reacting to these statements that were being made from '79-80 onwards after the election of a very conservative Republican Administration in the US that America was looking towards a first-strike capacity.

And that made NZers very nervous, conscious as they were of the dangers of nuclear weaponry, and the thought that they were tied into an alliance that might be part of a first-strike capability.

So in 1984, we once again went to the people with a strong anti-nuclear policy, and we believed we had public support in putting that forward.

Our policy said the following things. Firstly, that the new Labour Government would legislate for a nuclear-free N.Z. — a step we believe we are perfectly entitled to take as a sovereign nation, to make sure that our country is nuclear free.

And we have said that the legislation would cover the following points: Firstly, to make it absolutely clear in our own statutes that N.Z. will never be a land base for nuclear weapons.

Secondly, to put in the prohibition on the visits of nuclear-armed and powered warships to our ports.

Thirdly, to rule out for all time the development of nuclear power generation in N.Z.

And fourthly, to ensure that N.Z. is never a place where nuclear waste may be stored or dumped. We will of course be making exceptions for bona fide scientific and medical use of nuclear materials. Not to do so would not be sensible.

We also were pledged to renegotiate the ANZUS alliance, taking into account the following four points:

The first that N.Z.'s participation in the alliance must be on the basis of its absolutely non-negotiable, non-nuclear stance. And those are precisely the words in the program, "non-nuclear, non-nuclear stance."

Secondly, that our participation in the ANZUS alliance must permit us to promote a nuclear-free Pacific, because we see that as very much in the interests of our security in the long term.

Thirdly, that our participation in the alliance must be on equal terms with the other two parties, and that any decision taken by those treaty parties must be a unanimous one.

And fourthly, that our participation must give an absolute guarantee of N.Z.'s security.

On the nuclear-free Pacific, we have accepted that as a first step we would accept the Australian Labor Government proposal of a limited nuclear weapon-free zone — but we stressed that we see it as very much a first step. And we hope that having consolidated firm ground there, that we can go on in later years to talk about more definite and progressive measures for a nuclear-free zone.

So, there we were, plunged into a snap election campaign, round about the 13th of June, on that policy. Muldoon called this election on precisely the issue of national security and ANZUS.

So we went into an election campaign, with that being his issue — that he was prepared to campaign on that. In the event, the campaign did not come to focus on questions of national security, but to focus more on the economy.

But there were those who tried to make it the issue of the campaign, including the American Ambassador to N.Z., who launched public statements in the course of our election campaign. And that was a new phenomenon for N.Z.

Public statements were made again stating the view of the American Government that the Labour Party's policy was tantamount to the collapse of ANZUS, and that further consequences might flow.

We also had during our election campaign a tour of two Congressmen from Washington — one a Democrat, with the velvet-glove approach, the other a Republican, with the iron



N.Z. Prime Minister David Lange. New Labour Government has won strong backing for its anti-nuclear policies.

unions

Brake van dispute Wran's job cutbacks

The recent train drivers' dispute in NSW has once again highlighted the job-cutting nature of the Wran Government's rail rationalisation program. The real cause of the dispute, however, received scant attention from the media.

By contrast, the views of State Rail Authority Chief Executive David Hill that this was merely an inter-union dispute received wide coverage. The background to this dispute, though, was somewhat more complex than the SRA would have us believe.

Debra Stewart
Member Marrickville East (NSW) Branch and Australian Railways Union

Since October 1982, the SRA has been implementing a rationalisation program which it claims is justified by the level of technology in the railways, and a rising deficit which the Wran Government has refused to fund over a certain level. It's important to note here that while no retrenchments have yet occurred in the SRA, the aim of the rationalisation program is to eliminate positions, and through natural wastage reduce the size of the workforce over time.

One of the proposed rationalisations measures is the reduction from 3 to 2 of the size of train crews on long-distance passenger and freight trains. This is to be achieved by the removal of the brake van at the rear of the train, and the amalgamation of the duties of the guard (who rides in the brake van) and the observer into one position. The net result would be the loss of 800 positions.

As a first step in achieving this aim, the SRA announced a trial period of running coal trains in the Hunter Valley without a brake van and the guard riding on the locomotive. Once this was done, the SRA hoped to remove one crew member and then generalise this type of operation to other trains.

Such a major change in working practices was of course likely to be opposed by the unions. The SRA's intention, however, was to turn the two unions involved (the Australian Railways Union covering the guards, and the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen covering the observers) against each other in a fight to gain coverage of the new amalgamated position.

So, despite the fact that the two unions were involved in negotiations with each other, the SRA decided to go ahead and begin trial in the Hunter Valley, knowing that AFULE policy would immediately force that union to take industrial action. Although the AFULE has now agreed

to allow a two-month trial in the Hunter Valley to go ahead with three crew members riding on the locomotive, the origin of the dispute is far from being resolved.

It would be mistaken to view the rationalisation of the rail system as simply a matter between the SRA and the unions. It has much broader implications.

While the Wran Government has invested in the railways to a far greater extent than previous Liberal Governments, the level of technology in the NSW rail system is nowhere near that, say of European systems. Yet the SRA has bulldozed through its rationalisation with little concern for the safety aspects of moves such as removing the brake van.

The other issue is that of jobs. Surely the main aim of a Labor Government should be to create jobs, not eliminate them. Even with the introduction of new technology, there is considerable scope for creating jobs in the rail industry through expansion of services and improved working conditions.

Instead, the attitude of the Wran Labor Government and its Transport Minister Barrie Unsworth has been to threaten even further closures of rail services as "punishment" for drivers' industrial action. Is this the way to run a rail system in the interests of Labor voters?



New Zealand

Continued from page 15.

hook. Both with the same message, and putting it in different ways, but backing up effectively what the American Ambassador was saying.

And I believe that many NZers were genuinely shocked by this kind of direct intervention in our election campaign. They had more or less tolerated, without agreeing, with the views of the regular visitors who had been coming through saying those things in the previous three years.

But to continue to push that line in the middle of an election campaign in a country which will remain very friendly to the U.S. was really quite counterproductive and intolerable to us. So the election on the 14th of July had a very interesting result in this respect. I don't believe that NZers were intimidated by any of that.

In the event, the N.Z. National Party — which was the only pro-nuclear party contesting the election — got 36% of the vote, having called the election on these issues. The N.Z. Labour Party got around 42.2 or 43% of the vote, with a policy of non-nuclear participation within the ANZUS alliance.

We were of course, encouraged by an opinion poll which came

out three weeks after the election, which asked this question: "Do you approve or disapprove of the new Labour Government's policy to ban nuclear weapons from N.Z. ports?" The answer: Approval, 76%. That is phenomenal result (applause).

Next question, do you approve or disapprove of the new Labour Government's policy to renegotiate ANZUS along the new lines that I've indicated. Sixty per cent approved of that. This is a significant turnaround in public opinion.

It is also notable that a great many NZers now live in zones that have been declared by their local councils to be either nuclear-free or nuclear-weapons free.

The percentage of NZers living in those zones has increased to two-thirds of all our people, and over 89 local authorities have taken that decision. And what that has meant is that the debate about nuclear weapons has permeated down to the most basic levels of our community.

The issue has been debated at borough and county councils and community committees from about the size of 150 up to 180,000, so that the issues are well understood. And that I suggest is why the new Labour Government is getting the support it is getting on these issues.

Aboriginal affairs

John Pat, Rob Walker cases Campaign launched against racist killings in WA

It is almost a year since the bashing to death of the Roebourne Aboriginal youth, John Pat. And on August 28 this year, Robert Walker, a 25-year-old Aboriginal prisoner in Fremantle jail died after being beaten and kicked by prison warders. A police autopsy later concluded Walker died by suicide either by slashing his wrists or a drug overdose. The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement in Adelaide have ordered another autopsy.

Despite witnesses to both these acts of violence, Premier Brian Burke has effectively let those responsible off the hook.

Leon Harrison
Member Cottesloe (WA) Branch

The situation that resulted in the murder of John Pat began when Ashley James, an Aborigine, went to the bottle shop of the Victoria Hotel. Four off-duty policemen were in the adjoining bar. Two of them, constables Terence Holl and Ian Armit, began abusing James. Catherine Park, the bar attendant verified that the abuse was unprovoked.

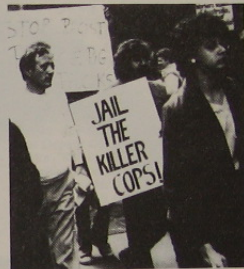
After Ashley James left the hotel, Robert Harris, with friends in a parked car across the road, saw Constable Holl rush out after James, continuing to abuse him and urging him to fight. When Holl punched James in the mouth, knocking him to the ground, James returned the blow.

Other witnesses testified that then other police joined in the fight. A number of Aborigines in the street came to the aid of James. It was when John Pat intervened to drag James away that another policeman punched Pat in the mouth. This caused Pat to fall back and hit his head on the road, where he lay unconscious.

Harris saw Constables Holl and Bordas go up to Pat and grab him by the hair, still unconscious. Bordas then kicked Pat in the face, before throwing him into the police van which had then arrived.

Across the road from the police station, Cecilia Howard and her son William Scadden were witnesses to further beatings suffered by Pat when the police van arrived there.

After the bashings, there was a cover-up. Initially, different accounts were given by the police involved. But by the time of the trial they came up with a uniform story.



Although police claim Pat was alive on arrival at his cell, this is doubtful. Pat was found dead at 11.30 pm. However, the local doctor was called at 11.15 pm, and certified Pat as dead.

Dr. John Hinton, a forensic pathologist, found that Pat died of severe head injuries causing a brain haemorrhage. Pat had received 10 blows to the head. There was a palm-sized bruise on the back of John Pat's head, and other extensive bruising and split lips.

Two broken ribs and a torn aorta were also found and Pat could not have survived these wounds without surgery.

Even though John Pat is dead and other Aborigines severely injured from the assaults, no one has been convicted of these crimes.

The victims were made the aggressors and jailed for assault on the police. Another murder of an Aboriginal man, Rob Walker, occurred on August 28 this year. A prisoner in Fremantle jail, Walker was dragged from his cell at 4 am and was heard to yell: "They are going to murder me," and "It takes five to get one."

From the information given by John Doohan, secretary of the WA Human Rights and Civil Liberties Watch Committee to the NSW Prisoners Action Group. It was found that five prison employees were allegedly involved in Walker's murder. At the moment the names of four are known.

The prisoners witnessed the beating of Walker on the grassed area overlooked by the cells.

Witnesses allege that Walker was beaten to death using boots and batons — mainly boots — over the entirety of his body. Evidence also existed on the grass, where Walker's head had been kicked. Half an inch of blood filled a depression in the grassed area on the Tuesday morning.

Many fears have been expressed for the lives of the witnesses involved — especially Ray Mickleburg, who saw the blood on the grass and reported the assault to Ray Bosci, the deputy superintendent of the inmates. Mickleburg warned Bosci, "That if the warders and officials attempted to cover up the murder and remove any evidence, all hell would break loose."

In both the John Pat and the Robert Walker cases, the racism of the judiciary and the police force has been exposed. Even though Brian Burke has let John Pat's murderers go free and the inquiry into Robert Walker's killers will probably amount to nothing, justice must be pursued.

Aboriginal leaders have called for a Royal Commission after an all-white jury acquitted the police of the Pat killing. Anti-racist forces in the ALP must support a Royal Commission, and a jury including Blacks.

Racist killings by prison officers cannot be allowed to go unpunished. The officers alleged to be responsible for the killing of Robert Walker should be suspended pending an investigation.

Fighting racism effectively can only occur with a correct strategy. While land rights give Aboriginal people self-respect and dignity, having anti-racist laws to fight racists in the police force and judiciary will give a Labor Government credibility in the Aboriginal community.

The John Pat and Rob Walker cases are an issue of national importance to the labour movement. Campaigns are being mounted in several States to demand justice.

With a Federal Labor Government and Labor Governments in most States, Party members can play an important role in demanding strong action to halt these racist attacks.

For more information on the national anti-racist campaign, contact: The Committee to Defeat Black Rights, PO Box 498 Broadway, NSW 2007. Ph (02) 660 3444.

unions

WA TWU official arrested Fight frame-up of John O'Connor

The WA Trades and Labor Council has launched a campaign to fight politically-motivated extortion charges laid against John O'Connor, State Secretary of the Transport Workers Union.

On Friday August 17, he was arrested at his home and charged with extortion, arising from black bans put on a Geraldton pastoralist and trucking Company owner, Bruce Leshman. Leshman runs the Phoenix Transport Company and the Georgina Pastoral Company through the Leshman Family Trust.

Andrew Honey

Member Fremantle (WA) Branch and State Secretary Federated Rubber and Allied Workers' Union

A petition and a fact sheet were distributed to unions on Friday September 7. Three posters, a leaflet, and a bumper sticker were distributed a week later.

An organiser from the Miscellaneous Workers Union, Norm Marlborough, has taken leave to co-ordinate the TLC campaign fulltime from Monday September 17.

Further action planned includes: levying unions and collection of donations (see address below), workplace meetings, industrial action, and a mass rally on October 3 when the charges are due to be heard.

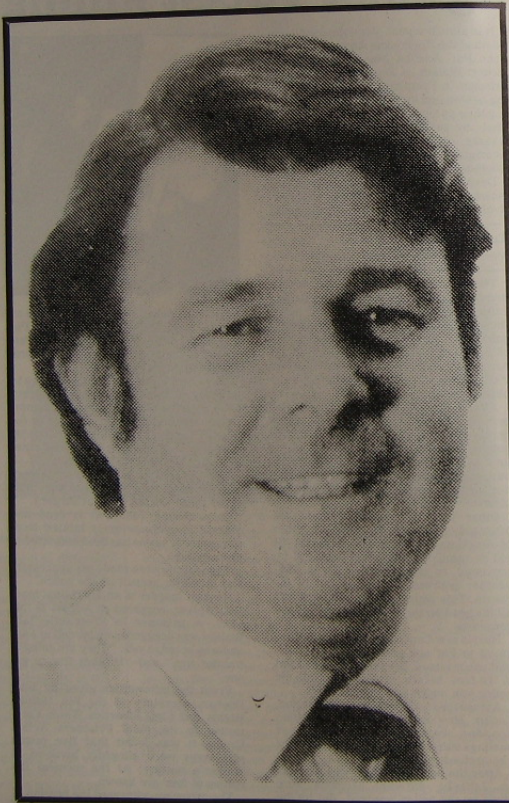
The campaign resulted from a lively meeting of the WA TLC on September 4, when the executive came under fire for its lack of action.

Two motions were carried. The first directed the officers to carry out a campaign "in the best interests of the trade union movement," and to have an executive meeting to get the campaign underway. That meeting was held on Friday September 7.

The second motion, which was carried unanimously, reads:

"It is the belief of this meeting that the charge against John O'Connor is a

WA Transport Workers Union Secretary John O'Connor. Trades and Labor Council is campaigning to defeat politically motivated extortion charge against O'Connor — a test case for union rights in WA.



trumped up political charge which emanates from a desire on the part of political conservatives to embarrass the Government and the trade union movement.

"We pledge ourselves to take all possible steps to influence the courts to completely discharge John O'Connor.

"We also seek to influence the police to withdraw all charges against O'Connor or any other union official currently under consideration for similar legal action."

How did O'Connor come to be charged? The barest outline is that in 1983, the TWU attempted to recover some \$8,000 owing to a truck driver employed by a Geraldton pastoralist.

After fruitless negotiations the matter went before an Industrial Court (the industrial magistrate is supposed to redress breaches of an award).

At this point, the Confederation of Western Australian Industry became involved, and represented the interest of the pastoralist — succeeding in getting the case twice adjourned until February 1984.

In February, the TWU put forward a modified claim for \$2,750, as the other \$5,250 was worked beyond the hours allowed by the State Transport Act.

This modified claim was thrown out on a technicality. The TWU has not proved that the driver was eligible to be a member of the union. No attempt was made to recall the witness to establish this, and it was only raised by the employer's advocate after the driver had left the stand.

Because the Liberals' Industrial Relations Legislation is still in force, all claims for wages are void after one year (Labor policy is to get this extended to six years).

This meant that because of the employers' confederation's delaying tactics there were no other legal avenues of redress.

Bans were placed on the company, which subsequently agreed to pay \$3,000 of the claim. The bans were then lifted.

Just before Easter this year, the Burke Labor Government introduced legislation to replace the harsh anti-union legislation introduced by the conservatives in 1979 and 1982.

The Liberals launched a dirty campaign against the legislation — which would first of all have reduced penal provisions against unions, and among other moves, extended the time for reclaiming wages from one year to six.

As part of its campaign the Opposition went on a union-bashing binge that, on the surface of it, appeared to have a tenuous connection with certain events that had actually taken place.

The torrent peaked with a speech by Bill Hassell, Leader of the Opposition, in which he purported to list the crimes of

the union movement.

Both Hassell and Richard Court made attacks, under privilege, against John O'Connor and other unionists alleging coercion and corruption.

It is not known how they came by their version of the "facts," but a photocopy of Hassell's speech indicates that the union-bashing rhetoric was typed on one typewriter, while the "examples" were typed on another, and then interleaved at appropriate places.

In replying to a motion in the Upper House cooked up by the Opposition on Wednesday May 15, Des Duns, the Minister for Industrial Relations, indicated that on the previous day, the police had been called in to investigate the allegations raised by Hassell and Court three weeks earlier.

"... yesterday the Acting Commissioner of Police (Mr Ralph Wilson) and the Deputy Commissioner of Crime (Mr John Willey)... had a long and detailed discussion with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Hassell). "They have taken away all the material supplied by the Leader of the Opposition and after it has been examined, a report will be made to me so that we can separate truth from fiction." (Hansard, 8409:1).

And further:

"To recap, the Government is firmly convinced that the actions it has taken to investigate these allegations are the correct ones.

"It has directed two senior police officers of this State to interview the Leader of the Opposition.

"I make this offer... to Mr Masters. If he would like to submit the material he has to (them)... I will ask the Minister for Police to see that that happens so that he can give them out the material he has. They can sort it out to find out if anything is actionable... " (Hansard, 8411:2).

Duns went on to say that he would decide after a report had been made on recommendations to Cabinet for "a very wide-ranging inquiry" to investigate the whole building industry.

At that time the Builders Labourers Federation was taking the flak, and the Opposition was trying to score the Burke Labor Government for withdrawing from the B.L.F. deregistration case.

What is not known is how the two senior police officers reported on the allegations or why the police minister authorised industrial relations minister authorised charges to be laid against John O'Connor three months after the police had spoken to Hassell.

On August 20, Senator Peter Cook circulated the text of a press release on the arrest of John O'Connor.

In it he said that O'Connor had not been arrested by the police; "In reality, he has been arrested by the gerrymandering West Australian Legislative Council.

"If the democratically elected Labor Government's Industrial legislation had been passed by the Council, John O'Connor's alleged actions would not have been an offence."

"Senator Cook said that provisions under which Mr O'Connor was arrested dated back to the dark days of union bashing under previous conservative governments.

"The provision was pre-Economic Summit, pre-Consensus Industrial Law and did not reflect current community attitudes."

This is quite untrue. For the simple fact is that John O'Connor was arrested and charged not under any industrial law, but under the Crimes Act — which could just as easily have happened had ameliorated labour legislation been in force.

One union which has been very clear about the Government's responsibilities is the Electrical Trades Union, which adopted a strongly-worded motion at its State Council on August 29:

"State Council condemns the Minister of Police Mr Carr for allowing the prosecution of T.W.U. secretary J. O'Connor on charges of extortion, and the continued harassment of B.L.F. secretary K. Reynolds on similar grounds.

"Such actions threaten the activities of all Trade Unions and their Officials who act to recover unpaid wages that employers have refused to pay their members.

"They are akin to those of the Thatcher Government in Great Britain which has also used the Civil and Criminal Courts to attack the Coal Miners and other Trade Unions.

"It is unacceptable that the very first of such attacks should come from a Minister in a Labor Government.

"We therefore call upon the Premier to remove Mr Carr from his portfolio and bring to an end these actions. We call upon the A.L.P. to remove Mr Carr's endorsement before the next State election."

While it is important to take up the actions of Carr in allowing the frame-up of John O'Connor to come to fruition, we have to recognise that the main protagonist is the employers, their politicians, and their organisations.

Certainly, the sacking of Carr would set the record straight on just where the Burke Government stand on the question of trade union rights. Its first responsibility is to drop the charges against O'Connor.

Party members in WA and nationally should take up this issue through their Branches and unions, and send motions and messages of protest to the WA State Government — and resolutions of support and donations to the WA TLC, 74 Beaufort St, Perth 6000.

Whose side is Kinnock on? British Labour challenged to stand with miners

The British Labour Party Conference begins on October 3. Pressure is mounting on Party Leader Neil Kinnock to take an unequivocal stand on the side of the British coalminers, whose strike is now more than six months old.

Prior to last month's Trades Union Congress, Kinnock made the first tentative statements in support of the miners — but still focussed on the "violence" of the pickets. The same pressure that is on Kinnock also saw the overwhelming majority of the TUC embrace the National Union of Miners in their struggle against Thatcherism and unemployment.

But whether this is the genuine article or not will be seen in the weeks and months ahead. The miners are extremely sceptical of the TUC because of their betrayals dating back to the 1926 General Strike, and the more recent sell-outs of the NGA, NALGO and other unions in their effort to impress Thatcher with their "New Realism."

The following is the text of a speech made by Joan Maynard to a National Union of Miners meeting at South Yorkshire on September 8. The speech is reprinted from Socialist Organiser, a weekly paper in the British Labour Party.

Mr Chairman, comrades and friends, I'd like to bring you the fraternal greetings of the Campaign Group of MPs in the House of Commons — a group of the socialist MPs who have supported the miners from day one of the overtime ban, and all the way. That, we feel, is the very least we can do.

I must say I'm tremendously proud to show my solidarity with all of you — with the women and the fantastic struggle that they're putting up in this campaign; with the men and with the families and with the communities. With all of you we stand today and every day in solidarity for your victory. And now we have the support of the TUC and, I must say, comrades, not before time!

With a few honorable exceptions — I'm thinking of the seamen and the railway unions and the TGWU — we've had to wait until now to get the support of the majority of the TUC. The decisions that were carried at the TUC — we want to see the trade union leadership campaign-

ing for those decisions. We don't want to hear that it can't be done. There's no such word as "can't," comrades; if you want to do it, you'll do it.

Success

Now, I believe this week Arthur Scargill and the miners' union have scored a tremendous success, and that means you've scored a tremendous success. — You know that MacGregor's running now and we're chasing him and the Tory government.

We need very much to educate our unions politically. I say that comrades because, fancy organised workers — workers in general — not seeing the importance of winning this struggle, and not seeing that if you go down, we all go down. Now if we'd done our job properly — if we'd educated people politically — they would have understood that message.

Civil liberties

I want to say a word or two about civil liberties. Because you've been at the sharp end of an attack on civil liberties which has never been witnessed in this

country before.

I'm thinking of the police activities, not only on the picket line — though god knows that's been pretty horrendous — but also the police stopping people on the motorways and not allowing people to move freely in our country.

The fact is that our police force has been organised on a national basis.

Comrades, I want to link this with another struggle that's been going on for a hell of a long time — the struggle to unite Ireland. Because, all that the police are doing to you they've been doing to Irish people for a very long time. That's where they practice it.

We ought to be ashamed of ourselves in the labour movement that we haven't years ago identified ourselves with the struggle of the Irish people to unite their country and gain their right to self-determination.

Comrades, you can't keep freedom and justice to yourselves if you deny it to others. And now we've got repression here on our own doorstep. So remember that, because that's another struggle we're going to win as well as the one that you're conducting.

Now there are a lot of struggles going on in society today. There's yours,



Mounted cop hits woman strike supporter at Orgreave.



Press photographer seeks aid for miner injured by police at Orgreave coking pit. No doubt where the violence comes from.

there's the struggle in local government to keep democracy and to allow the local people to elect their own local councils and decide what rates should be levied etc. There's the Greenham women's struggle for peace, and let's not forget that either comrades, because if we don't win that struggle, the others won't matter.

And there's a close connection between the struggle of the Greenham women and the struggle that we're all conducting for peace, and the struggle that you are conducting.

You see I've always been opposed to nuclear power. I believe that nuclear power is dangerous and that we don't need it and that what we should be developing is a coal industry, not the nuclear power industry. And the nuclear power industry is connected to the nuclear weapons industry.

So these struggles are all linked up together and as Tony Benn, who's standing here beside me so often says, we've all got to support each other. When we all learn that lesson — you know the old lesson "united we stand" — then we can't lose.

It amazes me you know! Working people who go to work in the morning (those still lucky enough to have a job) — I say to them, do you not think when you're go-

ing to work that if you all stayed at home for ten days the whole world would stop? In other words comrades if we could only get over to working people their tremendous power, we could take over tomorrow — another example of how we need to educate them politically.

Social violence

Next, a word about the violence. In that speech Neil Kinnock made earlier this week, I think when he started talking about violence he must have forgotten this poster up here showing the policeman on horseback about to club down a woman. What about that violence?

What about the social violence that the Tories are perpetrating in our country — that deindustrialising our country? What about the violence to four million unemployed? And what about the violence involved in the destruction of our health service, so that people are dying because the money isn't there?

That's what we should have been hearing from Mr Kinnock. He should have been telling us where the real violence comes from.

And the other thing he should have been doing is coming out clearly and categorically on your side in the strug-

gle. Comrades there are only two sides in society — the bosses' side and the workers' side. You have to decide which side you're on, as the song says. So Mr Kinnock needs to decide which side he's on.

Anti-union laws

Now then, comrades, anti-trade union laws. With the laws that this Tory Government is bringing in, they are making it impossible for trade union people to defend their members. If you stay within the law, the Tory laws, you can't defend your members — it's impossible.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs understood that many years ago and if they hadn't broken the law you and I wouldn't have been here today celebrating the fact that we've got a miners' union and a trade union movement in this country.

Because every right that you and I have has been fought for, and they've often been fought for against unjust laws.

Class law

The laws and the courts in this country are the laws and courts of the other class, not of our class. We've got to remember that in this struggle.

And we've also got to remember that the employers break the law when it suits them. They break safety laws, they break health laws, they break tax laws — they break any law when it suits them. Finally, we've heard a lot this week about getting a settlement. We all want a settlement. But we want a settlement — and we're going to have one — that means victory to the miners!

Comrades, I end with this. I stand with you in solidarity today, tomorrow, and every day until that victory is won. Good luck.

How you can help

The miners' struggle against pit closures has become a fight against the Thatcher Government itself. For seven months the miners have refused to retreat, despite the hardships that such a strike has meant. For whole working-class communities, particularly in Wales and the north of England, there are few who are working.

The support of workers around the world has been a great help. But of course more is needed. Donations from union branches, ALP Branches and regional Electorate Councils will become even more important as the winter months set in.

Resolutions of support and donations should be forwarded to the British National Union of Mineworkers, care of the Miners Federation, 377 Sussex St, Sydney 2000.

Interview with Ken Livingstone 'I came into politics to change society'

The following interview with Ken Livingstone, leader of the left-wing Labour-controlled Greater London Council, was taken by Perit independent radical journalist John Clements in 1983. We print it as a remarkable account of the views of the man described by the British big-business press as 'Red Ken,' because of the progressive policies carried out by the GLC under his leadership.

So effective have the left Labour London councillors been that the Thatcher Government has moved to abolish the GLC entirely. After some opposition in the House of Lords, this is finally planned to occur in 1986.

However, Livingstone has counter-attacked with a huge 'Save the GLC' publicity campaign, and the move to force new council elections as a referendum on the future of the GLC. The resignations were set for September 30.

The struggle for the GLC will play an important role in British politics and the fight for progressive policies in the Labour Party as a whole.

'We have turned this into the most effective platform the radical Left ever had in Britain,' Livingstone commented in a recent interview, 'and it has started to win massive popular support. That scares them because if we can do this here, think what we could do if we got our hands on the national government.'

Q. Tell me, a little personal stuff first. How did you get to this position? Why didn't you go in another direction? What was your motivation? When did your start from?

A. I was born in 1945, so by the time I was eleven and started secondary school we had the invasion of Hungary and Suez. I had a very good teacher at the time who encouraged the class to debate politics, and from then on I was always interested.

But my main interest and my job was always in the area of natural history, and I worked in a hospital after I left school. It wasn't until the end of the 1960s with all the Labour Party and try and change it from within into being a more radical socialist party.

I joined the Labour Party when it was absolutely at its lowest point here in London, the height of a very disappointing Labour government under Harold Wilson. And we set out, a group of us on the Radical Left, to develop an interest in local authorities because everyone in London had just written off local councils as basically boring.

It was a long, up-hill struggle. When I first got on the council in 1971 I was the only person on the Left really. We then set out to build interest, and by the end of the decade we'd gotten a whole range of people interested and involved.

And when the Tories came up for re-election on the Greater London Council, which is a sort of London-wide body dealing with planning and transport and house building and so on, I'd people under 35, interested so that we had a majority within the Labour group when I met — and I was elected.

I suppose a lot of people were surprised that I didn't go into Parliament and pursue a political career there, but I always felt you could actually achieve more in local government. It's only over the last three years, under Margaret Thatcher, that the



Ken Livingstone

Government's brought in major restrictions on the powers of local authorities and made this a much less important position — with much less chance to actually initiate change.

But we're still able to do quite a lot. And several members here, including myself, are hoping to get elected to Parliament at the next General Election and start the fight to actually transfer powers back from the central bureaucracy and the civil service to local authorities.

Q. Yes, well this point of bureaucracy keeps coming up and there are people who say that the GLC is just another ordinary bureaucracy, and it's not needed because you've got your ordinary councils. Can you tell us its functions?

A. Well what we basically do in London is have 32 councils covering the 7 million people — they're the borough councils. They provide the housing management for council estates, provide the social services, run the libraries, most of the parks and so on, and manage and repair the suburban and residential roads.

The GLC's functions are those which are best done city-wide, rather than by a part of the city. We are responsible for overall financial control of London transport, the buses and the tubes.

We run those major metropolitan roads that cross borough boundaries and take traffic in and out of the city. We run the fire service, because it would be nonsense to have different ones in different parts of the city, and we are supposed to be responsible for strategic planning and job creation and so on.

In the past the Council has done nothing about creating jobs and generating new employment. We're the first administration here to start to do that in a serious way.

And one thing has really taken off. This is the fact that we are aware that the GLC has a major tax base. In the sense that our rates predominantly come from the large office blocks in central London.

So, if we, say, put the rates up a penny that means the average domestic rate-payer pays another 2 pence a year, but from the City of London — the centre, the offices — we get around 8 million pounds. So by putting a penny on the rate we get in another 20 million pounds. And what we've done since the



Livingstone has taken a strong stand in support of Irish national struggle.

election is to actually have a small increase, which is now going into funding community groups.

And we are the first Council, and I think probably the first area of government in this country, which is starting to develop a relationship with all the areas of the dispossessed in our society — women, feminist groups, Black groups, gay groups. That is, all the groups who in the past, the traditional labour movement and the bureaucracy of central and local government have largely tended to ignore.

We are developing a dialogue by saying to them how can we use the GLC to benefit your particular section of the community. And as well as working with these various groups in the community, we're also working with a whole range of other campaigns against nuclear waste being transported through London, a whole range of issue groups around the ecology and so on.

I think this is what really annoys and upsets the British Establishment because they see the potential danger here of aligning all these groups who, in the past, haven't had power, and haven't been a part of a collective work experience. Organise them, link them to the traditional trade union part of the labour movement, and you have an overwhelming majority of the population.

Q. What does appall a person coming into London is the extraordinary difference between the appearance of London in, say, the West End and the City, and other places. Is it your function to try and even this out a bit?

A. Well, this is what we've set out to do, because in the City of London, the centre, there is the most incredible wealth. Then you have a band of predominantly working-class housing around that — places like Balham, Hackney, Lambeth, Brixton, Islington, and Newham and so on.

There's very poor housing, and massive unemployment — at least 20% — throughout this sort of inner half of London.

And then around that you have the wealth of the suburbs. And a large proportion of people in Britain who live in the suburbs, including those who control the great corporations, civil servants and so on, commute from their suburbs into the centre.

They just pass through the areas that have been neglected for the years. And we took the view that we should use the wealth of those who control the great corporations, civil servants and so on, to actually support services in those skilled and unskilled working-class areas, which have been neglected in the past.

And, of course, this has been neglected in the past. And, of course, this is why the Government is now talking about trying to abolish us — because the GLC is a marvellous mechanism for redistributing wealth. A third of all our income comes from the office blocks in the absolute top or three square miles at the centre of London.

Of course, they don't like it, and they have a lot of weight and influence with the Government.

Q. Understandable. What isn't quite so clear, you get yourself into very controversial areas now. You went over to Ireland to do a bit about the 800-year-old problem in Northern Ireland and those very disadvantaged areas that you were talking about

might be very opposed to this. Alright, you've got your principles, but do you think it's doing your cause any good.

A. Well, I think part of the problem here — and I should mind again it's the same in other parts of the world as well — is that there's a tradition that politicians advance their careers by saying nothing at great length. You just carry on trying to get a job in a ministry, keep your nose clean, and if you don't do anything controversial, don't rock the boat, you get promoted.

That's what's wrong with politics. Politicians should be people who seek to lead towards a set of social and political goals. And that means when you start that long struggle to build a majority, you're starting with causes that are unpopular.

But unless somebody gets out there and starts arguing for them, and fighting for them, and agitating for them, they're going to stay unpopular.

I've been surprised how initially, when we won the election in London, people were really quite worried and disturbed about us. But we're now building solid blocks of support.

And the press are going screaming mad here — no one more so than the Murdoch papers — to try and characterise us as lunatics. But people are seeing us on television and radio and making up their own mind.

I didn't come into politics just to be some boring, innocuous and irrelevant individual — just there to get a nice, comfortable ministry and be driven around in a big black car. I came into politics because I want to change society.

Increasingly people in the Labour Party, in my generation, are prepared to stick their neck out on the assumption that it might be painful at first, but in the end you're going to win the argument.

Q. Well, to come to where you started, you said you joined the Labour Party to try and improve it from within. Do you think you're succeeding?

A. Oh yes, I mean, when I joined the Labour Party in London it was overwhelmingly old, white and male — very racist, often quite corrupt. A lot of the councillors had their hands in the till, or just used the Council for junketing around the world and living quite well at the rate-payers' expense.

Now we've got rid of almost all of that old guard. We've deselected them, and now the London Labour Party is much more cosmopolitan and reflects the broad population in London.

What we have done here on the GLC has now started to happen on the borough councils, places like Islington and Hackney and Southwark. All of those have been seeing the old guard, who in the House have been in the hands of property developers, and have always done what the Government told them, being kicked out.

We're getting people in who are prepared to fight. And I think that that tide, that generation, is going to work its way through the Labour Party.

There'll be a big influx of those people into the Parliamentary Labour Party after the next election. Now I believe that within this decade we will see the transformation of the Labour Party into a genuinely radical, socialist party. That's not been the case since it was created.

'Labor's Titan: The story of Percy Brookfield'

Labor's Titan
The Story of Percy Brookfield, 1878-1921
By Gilbert Giles Roper, and Wendy and Allan Scarfe, eds.
Warrnambold Institute Press
133 pages
\$5.85 paperback
ISBN 0 949759 03 1

Percy Brookfield was the main leader of the mine workers at Broken Hill during the militant industrial and anti-war struggles during World War I and immediately after.

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1878, Brookfield spent his early years in Australia prospecting before taking work in the Broken Hill mines. In 1916 he was elected as chairman of the strike committee for a 44-hour week, and as President of Labour's Volunteer Army which campaigned in the mining town against conscription.

Coral Wynter

Member Darlington (NSW) Branch and Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union

He was elected to the NSW Parliament as an ALP member in 1917, using his position as a champion of worker's causes such as the "IWW Twelve" (twelve members of the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World had been framed on arson charges for their opposition to the war) in support of the 1917 strike of the NSW rail workers, and against the war.

Because of his staunch opposition to the compromises of the State Labor Party, Brookfield was expelled, formed the Industrial Labor Party and was re-elected to Parliament against the "official" Labor candidate.

Brookfield led demonstrations of the majority of the 'ownpeople of Broken Hill' against the war and against conscription. Addressing one march on August 6, 1916, organised by the IWW, Brookfield declared that:

"... boys of eighteen years of age are taken from their homes despite their mothers' tears and their fathers' protests and driven into the hell of the Western Front. There the military situation has reached a deadlock. Instead of our politicians crying 'Kill, kill!' it would be better

for them to advocate fellowship and humanity among the nations; but no, they are howling for blood and yet more blood."

Brookfield appears to have had no systematic doctrine. His transition from prospector to militant Labor leader came under the impact of events — the imperialist slaughter in Europe, and the betrayal of the Australian Labor leaders who became the most bellicose patriots. This book is an important contribution to the history of Australian history when Labor governments demonstrated their worst colors for the first time, and when tens of thousands of workers responded with resistance and searched for political alternatives.

The book was written by long-time ALP militant Gilbert Giles Roper, who died before the manuscript was completed. The work was finished by Wendy and Allan Scarfe, who have performed a valuable service to the Labor movement by seeing the work into print.

However, the two editors do not appear to be known very much about the history of the Australian and international workers' and radical movements, and their editorial work reflects this defect. For example, where Roper refers to the "famous anti-war manifesto" that influenced the Australian anti-conscriptionists, the editors say they can find no trace of such a document. The manifesto was, of course, the Zimmerwald Manifesto written by the consistent anti-war opponents who had been members of the European Social Democratic and Labor Parties.

The editors say they could not trace the Junius Pamphlet also referred to by

Roper. The Junius Pamphlet was written by German Social Democratic Party leader, Rosa Luxemburg, while in prison for her anti-war views. Despite this defect, *Labor's Titan* is excellent and timely reading. Brookfield took a stand against war and austerity that clashed with the prevailing views of the Parliamentary Party, but which gave expression to the majority views of the movement as a whole. For his courageous stand, taken without heed for personal safety or career, he enjoyed and deserved the status of a hero.

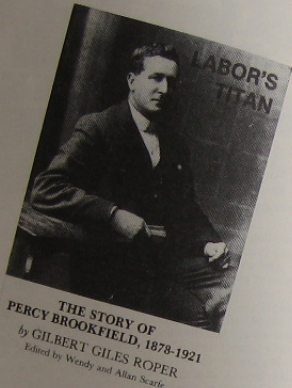
He died in tragic and heroic circumstances trying to disarm a mad gunman on Riverton railway station in South Australia in 1921.

Fifteen thousand Broken Hill workers out of a population of twenty-four thousand followed his coffin to the graveside. The *Barrier Daily Truth* carried the first verse of Brookfield's favorite song, the *Red Flag*, on its front page.

Donald Grant, who had been one of the IWW Twelve, wrote in his obituary to Brookfield:

"... He told the masses just how much and how little they might expect from parliamentary action. Australians rubbed their eyes and beheld an honest politician.

"... But the fight goes on. And the best tribute we can pay to his memory is to make the loss up, so far as is possible, by more and better efforts on our part. This, I know, is the tribute he himself would ask of us. "It may be said of Brookfield, as was said of another, 'He taught us how to live, and harder lesson still, he taught us how to die. Vale Brookfield.'"



'Strikebound': Story of a militant miners' struggle

Strikebound
Directed by Richard Lowenstein
Starring Carol Burns and Chris Haywood
Narrated by Ronin Films

Strikebound is a moving film about a major turning point for the Australian labour movement — the first successful strike after many great defeats of the 1830s Depression. Based on the collection of oral histories, *Weevils in the Flour*, by Wendy Lowenstein, which chronicled the Depression in the words of the people who suffered most, *Strikebound* is directed by her youthful son, Richard.

Belinda Weaver

Member Glebe (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

It is the story of Agnes and Wattle Dolg, a Scottish couple involved in the Korumburra sit-in miners' strike in 1936. Wattle, played very effectively by Chris Haywood, is a Communist and a miner.

His wife Agnes has recently changed from Protestant to active Salvation Army member. Carol Burns as Agnes portrays convincingly Agnes's further evolution from Salvo to militant organiser of the women, as the miners strike for their demands.

The Korumburra miners worked a small, run-down mine in appalling conditions for low pay. Paid by the amount of coal each man produced, miners could often be robbed by an unscrupulous fellow worker who would switch the tags identifying each worker's load.

As the film opens, Wattle is trying to organise the men to fight for better conditions and a minimum wage. The bosses react with a lock-out and import scab labour to keep the mine going, much to the miners' disgust.

The miners, torn between the urge to beat the scabs up and yet to understand how desperate men are set against one another by the bosses in times of Depression, try to solve the problem by paying the scabs to leave town. Many take the ten pounds, then jump off the moving train to scab again.

The film is unashamedly on the side of the miners. The bosses, driving around in a flurry of dust, seem ruthless and hard — apparently the characters are true to life!

The miners' cause is a just one. As Wattle says, the miners can't live on

their pay even when they are working, so they need to fight for a decent living.

After six weeks on no pay, the miners plan a sit-in. Agnes has begun to organise the women to maintain food and support for the men. The women show real enthusiasm in their black-banning of shopkeepers who have opposed the miners' cause.

Neighbouring Wonthaggi, also a mining town, sent massive support to the Korumburra miners. Unfortunately, scenes of 2000 miners and their wives had to be cut from what was an over-long film. Wonthaggi at that time boasted about 50 per cent of its population as Communist Party members who generously gave money and support to the miners' strike.

Although shot in colour, the film has a muted and grainy look, like slightly faded photographs. The lighting is evocative, with some of the scenes in the pit seemingly lit only by the faint lights on the miners' helmets. At the beginning of the film, these helmets produce a magical effect — as the miners walk through the darkness, it is like watching glowing fireflies.

Some points, although simply made, are telling. In one scene, Wattle fills a bowl with water, graps the soap and begins to wash. The water is immediately blackened, unusable, merely from the grime on his hands. One begins to sense the hardships of the miners, the enormity of the task of merely keeping clean.

Little music, except for rousing songs of struggle lustily sung, is heard on the largely percussive soundtrack. In one sequence, the inaugural singing of the *Red Flag* by the newly formed Korumburra

Communist Party Branch has to compete with the Salvos' determined rendition of Onward Christian Soldiers! Despite the Salvos' greater numbers, the Communists won the day. It only for their incredible knowledge of so many verses of the *Red Flag*.

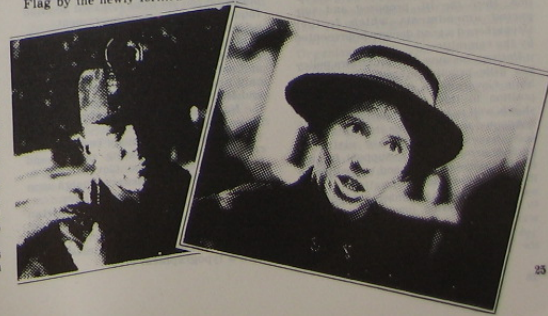
The real Agnes and Wattle Dolg speak in interview at the beginning and end of the film. Although now in their eighties, their politics have not melted.

Agnes is still proud to be working class and believes that the working class has done heroic things — and can do them again. The Korumburra sit-in shows the truth of this — the determination of the rank and file miners, the support given by the Women's Auxiliary, the Wonthaggi men and women, and the support of the trade union as a whole prove that the Australian labour movement has a proud history.

The miners' eventual victory in the strike, despite the Depression and the reserve army of scabs waiting to pounce on their jobs, shows that gains can be won, even in Depression times, by workers united in struggle. Such a struggle must have been an example to the Kemira miners in their brave sit-in.

It is rare to see an historical film in which the working class in Australia is presented at all, much less sympathetically. To see a film with workers expressing socialist ideas and taking militant action in a just cause is even rarer.

For this reason alone, *Strikebound* should be seen. However, the fine photography, the excellent performances by Chris Haywood, Hugh Keayman and especially Carol Burns, and Byrne and the songs make this a memorable film.



party affairs

Negotiations replace debate

WA Branch holds 'consensus' Conference

The WA Branch Biennial Conference has been heralded as the "consensus Conference." Held September 1-5, the Conference was uncontroversial to say the least — with hardly even a division called for.

Partly this reflects the generally progressive nature of the Branch, but it also reflects the "Labor in government" syndrome pervading the Party as a whole.

Frank Noakes

Member Whitford's (WA) Branch and Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees Association

This was the first Conference since the formalisation of factions in the Branch. During the course of the Conference, lengthy behind-the-scenes negotiations took place between the leaders of the Centre-Left and Broad-Left.

This was a major reason for the lack of debate on the floor.

At the last State Executive meeting, the BL proved it had the numbers by winning all the pre-election ballots. However, at the Conference the BL chose negotiation over debate.

Most of the documents presented by the Policy Committees proposed a watering down of existing policy, with the exception of Foreign Affairs.

The BL supported amendments to most policy items which, while preventing wholesale sell-outs, in reality at best maintained the status quo.

Foreign Affairs was a notable exception. Here, the BL proposed and supported amendments which further strengthened a good document presented by the committee.

Perhaps because foreign affairs policy has little practical significance to the State Government, there was little opposition to this policy — which now stands well to the left of national policy.

Adopted was a call for the removal of U.S. bases, opposition to visits by nuclear-armed vessels, support for the East Timorese people and opposition to military aid to Indonesia.

An amendment expressing opposition to U.S. aggression towards Nicaragua was adopted.

A resolution of Conference supported the strong stance taken by the New



WA Conference adopted policy opposing visits of U.S. nuclear warships, under pressure of demonstrations like this.

Zealand Government in regard to visits by U.S. nuclear-armed warships.

The CL's only real opposition came on the only item directly affecting the State Government which read: "6 (1) Labor will — prohibit the use or purchase of South African goods by State Government departments, instrumentalities and authorities." The CL's attempt to water this down failed.

The Policy Committee on Aboriginal Affairs recommended the complete removal of the Land Rights section. This was to be replaced by a statement in parenthesis that would have based the policy on the yet-to-be-released Seaman Inquiry set up by the Government.

Labor Militant organised a well-publicised forum on Land Rights, with particular emphasis on action to be taken at Conference. Eric Bridge MLA, the only Aboriginal Member of Parliament, and Bob Riley, National Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Conference, addressed the forum.

The forum unanimously endorsed the retention of the existing policy, and further called on the Government to begin a public awareness campaign upon the release of the Seaman Inquiry.

The following day Premier Brian Burke met with the leaders of the BL and listening policy, and that his omission had been a typographical error!

Burke is known to have wanted the principles contained in the policy removed as he intends reneging on them. The policy reaffirmed by conference calls for Land Rights legislation along the lines of the Northern Territory model.

Under the Industrial Relations platform a proposal for a State Accord was adopted — but far from unanimously — with two delegates speaking strongly in opposition. A resolution under the Economics section applauding the Accord was again opposed. An amendment put up requesting that the State Government work with the Federal Government in finding an alternative to the Accord was lost.

Another Conference resolution declared its support for John O'Connor, the Transport Workers Union Secretary (see accompanying article).

All in all, the Conference was a pretty tame affair with no major changes watered down, but with many areas presented, said of his Committee's deliberations, "It was a process of un-crossing the 'Ts' and undotting the 'Is'."

The Conference had the net effect of giving the Burke Government even more latitude in how it interprets, or misinterprets, Party policy.

party machinery

Queensland Activist's guide to ALP

Like Western Australia, the Queensland Branch is relatively easy to find your way around, by comparison with the NSW Branch for example.

Helen Russell

Member Banyo/Northgate East (Qld) Branch

Any person over 15 years may join a Branch, as long as they are resident within a State Electorate. A member cannot join any Branch regardless of where they live, but must obtain the permission of the Branch where they reside, and also have the consent of the Administrative Committee.

All women members of the Party are members of the Labor Women's Organisation, which holds a Conference once every two years. The last Conference was held in March this year.

There is also a provision for Women's Branches to be set up, having the same status and functions as other branches. To my knowledge, there are no such Branches in existence at this time.

Members between the ages of 15 and 26 automatically become members of Australian Young Labor. AYL is relatively inactive in this State and has been for some time.

Motions of Federal significance from Branches go to the Federal Division Electorate (FDE). From there they may go the Administrative Committee which makes a recommendation to the State Council, or are referred to the relevant policy committee for consideration.

State Conference is held every two years. Items for the agenda must be received from the relevant constituent unit at least four months before Conference. However, the Administrative Committee or State Council may allow late items to be added to the Agenda.

Branches — Branch members are eligible to stand for any Branch Executive position or FDE delegateship, as well as Municipal Electorate Committees (MECs) and Electorate Executive Committees (EECs).

Federal Division Electorate — The FDE meets monthly and is composed of one delegate elected from each Branch within the Federal electorate. An equal number of delegates is elected from each Branch and the number is determined by the preceding Annual General Meeting of the FDE, but cannot be less than two.

State Council — State Council is held every three months and is the supreme



Queensland branch "revival rally," Brisbane, March 1980

body between State Conferences. It has the power to determine all matters between Conferences, with the exception of those matters reserved to State Conference or the Administrative Committee.

State Council is composed of delegates from political sections, the Administrative Committee and Unions on the basis of a 60/40 ratio between union delegates and member delegates.

Member delegates are on the basis of two delegates from each Federal Division — at least one of whom shall be a woman chosen by proportional representation by a plebiscite of branch members.

Administrative Committee — The Administrative Committee determines all matters affecting the general welfare of the Party, subject to the overriding authority of State Conference and State Council, and is also responsible for the overall administration of the Party.

It comprises the State President and three Vice-Presidents, State Secretary, the Leader of the State Parliamentary Party, the State Treasurer (who has speaking but not voting rights), and 20 members at least 50 of whom shall be women, to be elected by State Conference by proportional representation.

Administrative Committee meetings are held once a month.

Party Committees — A number of standing committees exist. These include: A Rules Committee; and Organising and Planning Committee; a Finance Committee; Labor College; Labor Speakers Panel; a Management Advisory Committee; a Fund Raising Committee; and a number of Policy Committees.

Regional Conferences — There is provision for Regional Conferences, generally held annually, unless decided otherwise by the State Council.

One area of concern in the Queensland Party Constitution and General Rules is the section regarding "Circularising Party Units and other Party Organisations." This section has a number of provisions which tend to limit the autonomy of Party Branches and other Units in considering and circularising resolutions.

This includes the following section: "Party units and other party organisations shall not consider any resolutions originating outside the Party affecting the platform or policy of the Party, or its general welfare, which does not reach it through the Administrative Committee or State Council."

Senator Ruth Coleman: Where does the Left go from here?

The 36th National Conference of the Australian Labor Party provided the media with enough fodder for fuel headlines and news reports for a full week... and more!!

As the Australian Financial Review succinctly put it on July 10: "The press and the media generally have become obsessed with the National Conference of the Australian Labor Party. . . ."

Senator Ruth Coleman
Western Australia

As an observer from Western Australia, I found that obsession particularly disconcerting. As a member of the Left I found the attention of the press gave to the "disintegration" of the faction extremely disturbing.

According to the press, the Left was destroyed and humiliated at the Conference and has been "left floundering in the wilderness without leadership or focus".

However, as Joan Coxedge has correctly pointed out, a lot of progressive initiatives were defeated at the 1982 Conference, yet the Left is still around, gaining strength, and the sky hasn't fallen in.

We are all well aware that three issues of great concern to the majority of rank and file members were: The continued mining and export of uranium, the U.S. bases, and the visits to Australia by U.S. nuclear-powered and nuclear armed-warships, so something needs to be said about those issues.

Yes, the Left did lose on all three, but only after what the media described as much debate and intense pressure within the new "Centre Left" faction. All of those votes had to be "locked in" on a variety of issues to ensure that the Left was beaten.

In other words, what the Conference proved was the ability of the Centre and the Right to marry. There would have been few people in the Left who were surprised at that successful union.

Uranium

Rank and file Party members have consistently adopted a clear anti-uranium position. Five States and two Territory Branches voted for an anti-uranium stance at their conference prior



Senator Ruth Coleman marching at Perth protest against U.S. nuclear warship visits.

to National Conference (even though SA provided an escape clause because of the State Government's commitment to Roxby Downs).

In a poll of ALP Branches taken immediately before the Conference it was quite evident that the overwhelming majority of responses expected an anti-uranium position to be adopted.

In other words of the National Secretariat report to the Uranium Subcommittee:

"The clear intention of the process of distributing the draft membership was to obtain their views concerning the uranium draft which should go before the National Conference. If scepticism is not to be engendered amongst the Party membership, then their views and submissions must be seen to be taken into account.

"A reading of those submissions which came to the Secretariat as a result of the Subcommittee invitation makes it clear the final submissions, although often roughly put together to arrive before the deadline, resulted from serious discussion of the issue. The overwhelming number of these submissions was against the mining and export of uranium which the final draft proposal of the Committee should reflect."

We are all well aware that the report of the Subcommittee did not reflect the majority view of the Party membership and it was that combined with the "locking in" of the Centre Faction which enabled the current policy to be determined.

The Left's position was to oppose uranium mining in Australia and not to allow any new contracts after July 1st, 1984, including Roxby Downs.

U.S. bases

This is another area where the Left were defeated by a union of the Centre and Right Factions.

The Left called for a policy which recognised that the presence of U.S. bases could commit us to an undesirable involvement in a nuclear war and make us a target in such a conflict.

In essence, Conference adopted a policy which does not change current practice, with no permanent basing of foreign military bases on Australian soil. What remains in doubt of course is the definition of a military base.

Nuclear ships

This is an issue which affects Western Australia in particular and is strongly supported by the rank and file.

The Left put forward two motions prohibiting any nuclear-armed ships from entering Australian ports. Both were defeated, with a concessional policy being adopted to stop naval visits to Australian ports constituting home porting of such vessels.

Concern was also expressed by WA delegates about the frequency of visits by nuclear-powered nuclear-armed ships to WA ports, and the WA Branch is to examine this matter.

Although the Left was defeated on all these motions, this was not due to any lack of coherent policy. Left positions were not taken on all issues at the Conference because the majority of the Parliamentary Party are dedicated to conservative government and maintenance of their power base, at any cost.

I am aware that there are many disillusioned Party members. I know that some of them have already left the Party because of the capitalistic policies adopted at Conference.

However, I believe that if we are to turn the Party around and back onto the original course of democratic socialism, then we have to strengthen the Party at the Branch, Electorate Council and Parliamentary level.

The ideology of the Left does not coincide with the interest of big business and will always have to fight the forces of the Right. We can only do that if we have the strength at the rank and file level.