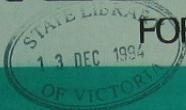


Labor MILITANT

Volume 3, Numbers 6-7
October-November 1983

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM



US invasion of Grenada

- Eye witness impressions
- Bishop speaks on revolutionary democracy
- ANZUS implications and the Party

Housing

The crumbling Australian dream

Uranium

Policy versus pragmatism

East Timor

Conflicting Reports

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Labor MILITANT

Labor Militant is published by socialists in the Labor Party. We have been producing this internal publication since June 1981, and in that time have built it up as the only left internal publication with a national scope and distribution.

We published 4 issues in 1981 and 6 in 1982. We now plan to publish monthly. To accompany this step up in production *Labor Militant* has changed its format from a newspaper to a magazine. We think this change makes *Labor Militant* more attractive, more convenient, and easier to read.

Labor Militant 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 to discussing the Prices and Incomes Policy over the past year. In our view the Accord signed with the ACTU last February is no different to the social contract that proved so disastrous for British workers under Labour Governments in the 1970s.

Labor Militant looks at the nature of the capitalist economic crisis and the socialist measures

needed to confront a crisis of this depth. This crisis is not caused by wage rises and wage cuts will not help resolve the crisis in the interests of the working class.

We also devote a lot of attention to the threat of war and the wars that are already going on. From Central America to the Middle East, the United States and its allies are determined to block progressive movements in order to protect their economic interests. This drive to war by Ronald Reagan increases the danger of nuclear war and Australia's participation as part of the US war machine must cease.

We also insist that progressive policies must be advanced by Labor on the liberation struggle in El Salvador, on Solidarity's fight for socialist democracy in Poland, on the Israeli aggression in the Middle East and the rights of the Palestinian people, on the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and on the need to make reparations to Vietnam.

Labor is in Government in four States and federally. Yet never before has there been a bigger gap between stated Labor policy and Government performance, let alone the gap between performance and working class in-

terests. This gap is reflected in the important debate and discussion within the Party Branches and at Conference. We seek to develop a broad coverage of this process.

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

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

If you agree with these aims we encourage you to help finance and distribute *Labor Militant*. You can get each issue sent by mail at a cost of \$5 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 below.

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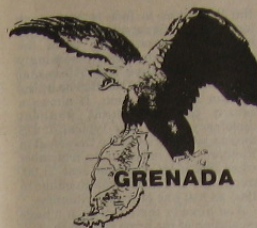
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US imperialism rampant in Grenada.



Reagan collaborating with right-wing Lebanese leader Gemayel.



Delegates at the Socialist International Congress.

Labor MILITANT

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For further information

If you want to contact *Labor Militant* in your area write to:

Newcastle
PO Box 166
Newcastle, NSW 2300

Queensland
PO Box 88,
West End, Qld 4104

South Australia
PO Box 152
Unley, SA 5061

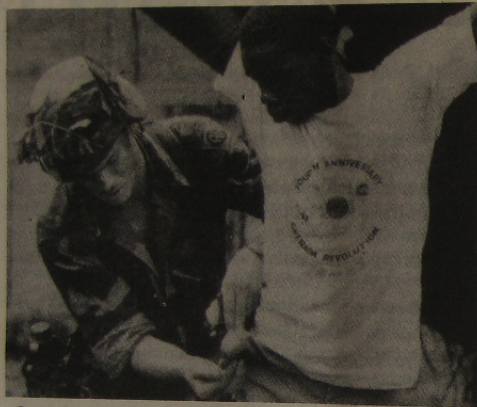
Sydney
PO Box 372,
Broadway, NSW 2007

Victoria
PO Box 319
Sth Carlton
Vic 3063

Western Australia
GPO U1925
Perth
WA 6001

Wollongong
PO Box 155,
Port Kembla,
NSW 2505

The wake of the invasion



Over the period of one week the US military invasion of Grenada has increased to 5,600 troops plus a naval task force of 11 ships.

The initial invasion force was made up of 1100 US Rangers, the "Black beret" shock troops who were later replaced by 5000 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division and about 600 marines.

These forces are armed with the latest in automatic weapons and accompanied by heavy artillery, howitzers, mortars, shoulder-held rocket launchers and the latest model of cobra gunship.

Naval forces comprise a carrier battle group and five ships in an amphibious assault group.

The carrier USS Independence carries nine squadrons of aircraft; about 89 fighter jets, fighter reconnaissance planes, light-to-medium attack aircraft, anti-submarine planes and planes with electronic jamming and surveillance equipment. The carrier-based F-18 jets have continually pounded the Grenadian countryside.

Backing her is the cruiser USS R. K. Turner, one guided-missile frigate and two destroyers.

The five ships in the amphibious assault group are USS Guam, an amphibious helicopter carrier that carries 24 Sea Knight helicopters used for vertical assault, one amphibious transport dock, one landing dock ship

tank landing ships.

All this against a small Caribbean island with a population of 110,000.

The US invasion of Grenada in the early hours of Tuesday, October 25 is a shameful event. It has grave consequences for world peace and for the right to self-determination of any nation large or small, particularly those in what the US considers to be its "legitimate sphere of influence"—Central and South America and the Caribbean.

But there are also grave consequences for the Australian Government and the Labor Party. These are the consequences of the US alliance—the ANZUS Treaty.

The US invasion shows very clearly how the US treats its allies. The Thatcher Government in Britain, one of the US's oldest and most reliable allies, is reeling under the political blows of being misinformed and not consulted about US intentions to a country tied to Britain by Commonwealth links.

In Australia we have never been, nor have expected to be treated as equals under ANZUS. The question of being informed about what goes on in the US bases in Australia, about when B-52 bombers and the US fleet armed with nuclear weapons use Australian facilities, let alone for what purpose—these "courtesies" (lets not speak of rights) are not available to us.

The question the Government and

the Party has to face is how much longer can we tie ourselves to the major imperialist power which is in the process of stepping up an increasingly aggressive war drive. The US invasion of Grenada is part of the step-up by the Reagan Administration. It shows a return to the blatant gunboat diplomacy which was typical of US foreign policy prior to the US defeat in Vietnam. One only has to remember when President Johnson sent 21,000 troops into the Dominican Republic in 1965 as just one of many examples.

And already there has been a huge escalation of the arms race by the US. There have been the plans for the massive missile build-up in the NATO countries which are now taking effect at the insistence of the US. The placement of these missiles has led to the huge anti-war demonstrations in Europe over the past month when millions of people have taken to the streets to demonstrate their opposition.

US military spending is skyrocketing and this has its effects around the world. In the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, the estimates for military spending for the next five years are around 3 trillion dollars. That is three thousand billion dollars—a spending of 1.6 billion US dollars per day.

We should take heed of this escalation and the Grenada invasion and get out of ANZUS immediately. Our hands are already bloody by our association as allies.

But there is another effect of ANZUS and what it stands for—the effect inside the Party. This was highlighted by the Grenada events.

What was the Hawke Government's response?

It took one week before any official position was taken by Cabinet. And even then it was a very guarded statement "... the Government finds it hard to justify the use of force ..."

And whilst a firm position has been taken about Australia not participating in any "peace-keeping", the question is open about participating in a "policing" force or as "observers".

Up until October 31 Hayden had made "wait and see" statements and Hawke, especially after his 15-minute phone call with Reagan on October 27, gave cautious support to the US. These were the only Cabinet members who spoke out.

Meanwhile within three days of the invasion (i.e. the same time when Hawke was still stating his support) most countries had come out firmly against the invasion. France spoke out on the very day of the invasion to be closely followed by many Organisa-

Continued page 4

Whither the "special relation"?

Bob Hawke, Bill Hayden, Paul Keating and the rest of the Labor leadership have done much in the first six months of Government that has seriously harmed the working class in Australia. Under the ALP/ACTU Accord workers have been forced to accept wage cuts, high unemployment and tax increases in return for the most paltry of social welfare improvements.

In the process of carrying out the bosses' austerity program in the guise of the Accord, the Party leadership has further deepened the rift between the working class and official leadership of the Labour movement.

The Parliamentary leadership sees the Accord as a key instrument of economic policy. According to Hawke the usual methods of fiscal and monetary control are insufficient to deal effectively with the current economic crisis.

By Coral Channells
Member of Preston (Vic) branch and the Amalgamated Metal Foundry and Shipwrights' Union

The Accord, in the eyes of its champions, creates a 'special relationship' between the ALP Government and the trade union movement, the likes of which would have been impossible for any Liberal Government to achieve.

The signing of the Accord was the subject of much fanfare during the February election campaign. At the ACTU Special Unions Conference only one out of 300 voted against it. It was hailed as a new era of consensus between the Labor Party and the Union movement.

But it was precisely this rhetoric that should have alerted more people in the labour movement that something was amiss.

Hasn't the union movement always had a special relationship with the Labor Party? Don't unions have an overwhelming say in policy formation in the Labor Party? Who set up the Labor Party in the 1890s?

The trade unions did. The Labor Party was established as the political arm of the union movement just because workers realised that industrial action had to be supplemented by political struggle in the fight against capitalism.

This fact cannot be emphasised enough in 1983 because Bob Hawke



and the rest of the leadership are set on a course which is breaking this relationship down.

The bosses have never hesitated to express their hatred of the fact that the Labor Party is the party of the unions. At every turn their press has conjured up the hoary spectre of "Government by the unions."

Hawke's reply in 1983 has been to deny any union influence over the Government and has held up the Accord as his proof of who is calling the tune. The bosses for their part gathered at the National Economic Summit in April and nodded their approval for the agreement.

The subsequent record of the Government has confirmed that the Accord is essential to the capitalist class as a weapon against the workers in the middle of a recession. Ruling class support to the Labor Government is there as long as its policies back up the capitalists' efforts to make workers pay for the crisis.

Workers didn't have to wait long after the March 5 elections to feel the effects of the Prices and Incomes Accord. Within two days of devaluing the Australian dollar was devalued against an estimated 2 per cent to the inflation rate.

The May mini-budget scheduled increases in taxes and charges to be paid for by workers. Company taxes were, on the other hand, lightened while Hawke refused to allow the introduction of a capital gains tax.

The August budget showed absolutely no improvement for workers. Indirect taxes were indexed but direct Pay as You Earn taxation levels were not. Neither are workers wages to be indexed unless the Arbitration Commission agrees to do so.

A recent report on the achievements of the Accord drawn up by Ralph

Willis, Employment and Industrial Relations Minister, and presented to the ACTU Congress in September, had the effrontery to tell unions that much had been gained in the first six months. In the following 66 pages there was little joy for working people to recompense the losses in wages, jobs, social benefits and working conditions.

The Government had created three new bodies with minority union representation such as the Economic Planning Advisory Council, the Advisory Committee on Prices and Incomes and the Prices Surveillance Authority—all of which have no power whatsoever nor do they have guidelines that would ensure they serve the interests of the working class.

The Industrial Relations Bureau was abolished but only to be replaced by an Arbitration Inspectorate. The Arbitration Commission which has been left in charge of making sure that redundancies are not made at the detriment of unions or workers — though exactly how this is to occur is hard to imagine let alone reconcile.

Medicare is the only solid reform in the pipeline. Yet even here it is being introduced in such a way as to damage workers living standards. The system will not be free but will cost every wage earner one percent of their income.

This one percent will not be added to the CPI figures and as the existing health insurance costs drop from the CPI in the new year, any indexation hearing next year will not pass on the amount because of this accounting sleight of hand.

The recent 4.3 percent increase in wages granted by the Arbitration Commission in the National Wage Case is supposed to compensate for

inflation over the past six months but totally and callously ignores the fact that many workers have not received a wage increase for over eighteen months.

At the same time the 9.1 per cent lost during the wage freeze has been written off by the Commission. As well, restrictions and erosions to the shorter working week campaign have been ratified into the agreement. The national wage package has tightened up every possible loop hole to ensure that wages will move only according to the decisions handed down by the Commission. And the Commission has not guaranteed full CPI indexation.

Bob Hawke is turning the ALP-union relationship upside down. Instead of the Government using whatever powers are available to them to fight for the rights of the working class in the face of the bosses' attacks, the Government is now trying to impose a rigorous, new discipline upon unions.

The Government insists that trade unions "sign on the dotted line" for a two year period not to pursue any new claims outside the Wage Case guidelines. Even the major left unions like the powerful AMFSU have agreed to this sort of pressure.

Building workers face new delays by the Government in the ratification of the amended award after the bosses had already signed the deal for better pay and conditions.

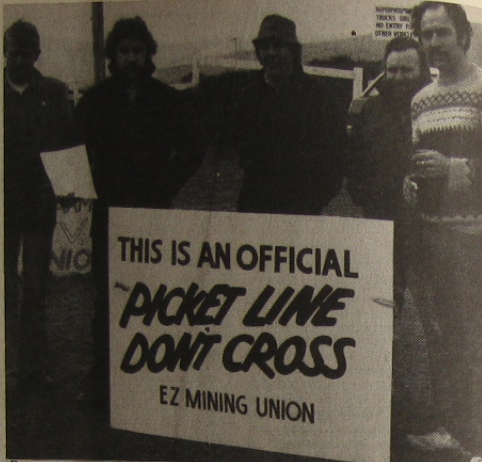
And now Senator Button has opened the way for attacks on penalty rates and holiday loadings—all under the umbrella of the Accord.

Cynics might point out that the unions have only themselves to blame for this state of affairs since they entered freely into the agreement in the Prices and Incomes Accord.

However, the point must be made that the union leaderships were hardly representing their members interests when they signed this deal in February and then went on to sign up to the concrete application of the Accord in the National Wage Case in October. Those interests represented in the Accord are of a small layer of officials who find that comfortable working relations is a softer option to take than the hard struggle that independent working class defence would require.

While the unions themselves debate the problems over the Accord the Labor Party itself must seriously start to replace the strategy of the Accord with a class struggle perspective.

The Party must correct this pro-boss and anti-worker policy. It has a responsibility to the workers who make up its membership and who put it in office. If it does not re-orient itself then the split between the Party and the trade union base may become a reality.



Recent struggle by the Rosebery miners in Tasmania saved jobs and maintained conditions.

Social Rights Campaign continues

There have been further developments in the Social Rights Campaign since the Forum of the Progressive Unions Group in the Victorian Trades Hall adopted a *Draft Program for the Social Rights of the Working Class* last May.

Subsequent discussions of the *Draft Program* by various progressive labour movement activists resulted during August in agreement upon a *Manifesto of Social Rights*, which has already been endorsed by 150 Australian trade union delegates, shop stewards and officials.

To seek further rank-and-file working class support for the *Manifesto*, resolutions have been taken to union branch meetings, ALP meetings and labour movement forums. Below is the motion passed by the Brunswick ALP (Vic) Branch at its October meeting.

This branch resolves to:

- (1) Endorse the rejection by the *Social Rights Manifesto*, of the ALP *ACTU Prices and Incomes Policy Accord*, which is based on discredited ideas of austerity against the working class.

- (2) Condemn, as an undemocratic hoax, the Economic Summit in which the Australian Government applied the *Accord* to impose an economic strategy favoring private corporate profitability.

- (3) Point to many cases, like the

defeated Callaghan Labour Government in Britain, as proof that austerity policies such as the *Accord* and other "Social Contracts", cannot solve the economic crisis in favor of full employment and protection of living standards.

- (4) Warn that these regressive policies, in failing to end the poverty of the millions of Australians affected by low income and unemployment, will confuse, demoralise and divide the labour movement, thus jeopardising continuation of the ALP in power at all levels.

- (5) Affirm the argument of the *Manifesto*, that an uncompromising fight is needed against efforts by the employers to solve the economic crisis through imposition of unemployment and income cuts against working people.

In view of points (1) to (5), we add the support of this branch to the 150 labour movement activists who initially endorsed the *Social Rights Manifesto*. We do this without rejecting the idea mentioned in the *Accord* of a better Social Wage, since we believe that advances in the Social Wage should be part of a genuine overall Social Rights Campaign, not be used, as in the *Accord* to put a trade-off, in which wage cuts are the real outcome.

Impressions of Grenada

The following interview is with Gail Lord, a member of Penrith North (NSW) branch. Gail and her family visited Grenada earlier this year during April and May. She was interviewed during the week of the invasion, before the Government took a position on Grenada.

Q. What was your reaction to the US invasion of Grenada?

A. I was very upset and angry. When you've visited a country, talked to the people and made friends, attended a May Day rally where most of the people who spoke are now dead, of course it affects you. But what made me even angrier was the response of Bill Hayden and Bob Hawke. I was so angry I rang the Prime Minister's office in Canberra to tell him what a disgrace I thought his position was.

I rang Bill Hayden too. I finally tracked him down in Ipswich and expressed my dismay that the Government hadn't even offered condolences to the people of Grenada on the deaths of Maurice Bishop and the other Ministers. I also told him how angry I was that the Government hadn't condemned the US invasion.

Q. Obviously you were very impressed by your visit to Grenada. What impressed you the most?

A. The most impressive thing was the gains the people had made there in such a short time. I'm not talking about the gains made by any one group. I'm talking about the majority of the Grenadian people. For example take the question of unemployment.

After the revolution when the New Jewel Movement took over, unemployment was at 49 per cent. Within three years this had been slashed to 14 per cent. In the same time free medical and dental care have been introduced, the number of doctors doubled, dental clinics have been set up.

Education has reduced illiteracy to 2 per cent and secondary and tertiary education has been made available without cost. The Government has set up adult education programs to combat the effects of functional illiteracy.

Housing programs, electricity extensions, running water services, agricultural projects, nutrition programs to improve people's diet, road building, in fact a whole range of basic services have been provided for the majority of the people for the first time.

A. I'm not talking about luxuries. This is a third world country with 400 years



10,000 workers turn out for May Day. colonial experience, but I'm talking about providing the basics for an adequate living. That's the most impressive thing.

Q. So Grenada was beginning to cope and overcome the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, starvation, disease, malnutrition, etc?

A. Yes, the Government was turning the economy around to serve the needs of the people. The gains made in Grenada showed just what is possible in the poorest of economies when profits are ploughed back into the people.

You know they spend 37 cents out of every dollar on health and education. And the economy is expanding in Grenada. Ed noted and praised this growth occurring in the middle of the world recession. Last year alone the economy grew by 5.5 per cent. Just think of the same period in Australia!

At the same time old age pensions increased by 10 per cent last year, wages increased by 10 per cent while the inflation rate was 7 per cent. That's a 3 per cent growth in real wages as well as the increase in living standards through increased social spending. It's very different from the cutbacks to public services and wage freezes at present in Australia. It makes you realise what socialism can do for the working population.

Q. When you were in Grenada, did you think the Government was popularly supported?

A. I certainly did. I was there for the May Day celebrations and 10,000 people turned out to the march and rally in St George's, the capital. That's a pretty big proportion out of a popula-

tion of 110,000 scattered over three islands.

It was at the May Day rally that Maurice Bishop announced two new legal steps forward for women—better situations for rape victims, legal anonymity, and the abolition of the stigma of illegitimacy.

The revolution was really starting to take steps to overcome the backward situation for women in Grenada.

Don't get me wrong, Grenada is a pretty macho place but real steps were being taken. A National Women's Organisation had been set up, women were the greatest number of un-

employed and had the highest rates of illiteracy so those programs really helped them. Nursery, pre-school and child care centres were being organised through the local community structures. Occupational programs, including apprenticeships and training in traditional male jobs, were already established. Things that women are fighting for in Australia were being set up and extended in Grenada.

And women were taking a greater political role as well, taking leading positions in public life. For example the President of the Trade Union Council, the ACTU equivalent, was a woman, Jeanette Dubois. She spoke on May Day and she wasn't a "token" woman. She was a trade union leader.

It's ironical really. Her speech on May Day was all about the mounting attacks on the people of Grenada by the US. For example she told how the US had violated Grenadian airspace some 30 times between March 1 and March 25 this year alone. And the US ships were stationed around Grenada off the coast out to sea when she was

talking.

She talked too about the attacks the US were making on their own workers at home. She was a real working class internationalist.

It's terrible to think that the US threats she outlined have actually happened.

Q. What do you think about the reasons the US gave for invading?

A. Which reasons? They keep on changing them.

First it was in response to Bishop's murder. Well that was a turn around. The US Government had worked against Bishop and the Grenadian Government ever since the revolution. They'd tried economic destabilisation and military intimidation, they'd tried to block international loans to Grenada, they refused to establish diplomatic relations with Grenada under Bishop. It's a bit much to use his death as an excuse to invade.

Then there's the one about protecting US citizens, namely the 800 students at the medical school. Even after the coup their safety was guaranteed by the Military Council. The Canadians accepted the guarantees for their citizens and their safe exit if they so desired. Why did the US refuse the guarantees.

It was much more dangerous for the students in the middle of a full scale invasion and none of the Grenadian forces attacked them in retaliation. Don't you think the US would have their bodies or their wounded on display if such a danger had been real.

And then there's the really dishonest one about the international airport being a Russian or a Cuban military base. What a lot of poppycock!

It was a civilian airport being built by a range of international companies — British, Swedish, Cuban, etc. The British company that designed and was in charge of the airport construction, Plesseys, put paid to that particular lie. Reagan has been trying to peddle that one for years. I believe the US was approached to help with the airport but its refusal was part of its attempt to undermine the revolution economically.

Q. Well why did the US go in?

A. In my opinion they went in because Grenada was doing so well. It was such a success that it was serving as an example to the other Caribbean islands. It was saying that it doesn't matter if you're small, poor and black if you've got a pro-people Government. One that puts into action what it says it will do, and involves more and more of the people themselves in the planning and decision-making process. That way you can make it go steps forward in the living conditions for everyone instead of the wealthy few.

That's why the US invaded Grenada, to stamp out that example.

grenada

Revolutionary democracy

Below is part of a speech given by Maurice Bishop on August 5, 1983, at Hunter College in New York City, USA.

It was to be his last visit to the US in an attempt to improve the poor relations between the two countries.

The speech was a very comprehensive informational report of what was happening and had been achieved in Grenada since the revolution.

The part excerpted below concerns Bishop's explanation of the type of propaganda attacks made on the revolution. He noted that it is usually attacked on the grounds of human rights violations or that it poses a threat to the "national security" of other countries.

This is how he answered these charges against democracy in Grenada

(The excerpt is reprinted from Venceremos, the publication of the Committees In Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean. See the ad on page 35.)

They give all kinds of reasons and excuses—some of them credible, some utter rubbish. We saw an interesting one recently in a secret report to the State Department. I want to tell you about that one, so you can reflect on it. That secret report made this point: that the Grenada revolution is in one sense even worse—I'm using their language—than the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions because the people of Grenada and the leadership of Grenada speak English, and therefore can communicate directly with the people of the United States. [Applause]

I can see from your applause, sisters and brothers, that you agree with the report. But I want to tell you what that same report said that also made us very dangerous. That is that the people of Grenada are predominantly Black. [Applause] They said that 95 per cent of our population is Black—and if we had the correct statistic—and if we have 95 per cent of predominantly African origin in our country, then we can have a dangerous appeal to 30 million Black people in the United

States. [Applause] Now that aspect of the report, clearly is one of the most sensible.

But, sisters and brothers, how do we evaluate other sides of the report? Like when they say that Grenada violates human rights. When they say to us, how come you have detainees, what about the press, what about elections? When they say to us, Where are your elections?, they don't turn around at the same time and say to their friends in South Africa, where are your elections? [Applause]

Salvador Allende of Chile

When they say to us that elections must be held, and if you don't have elections you can't expect support, and unless you have elections we can't give you the normal treatment, we say, Salvador Allende of Chile. [Applause] Salvador Allende of Chile was elected in September 1970 by the people of Chile. Allende did not take power through a revolution. Within 24 hours were in his election, Richard Nixon, [Henry] Kissinger, and [Richard] Helms sat down and devised their plan, "Operation Make the Economy Scream." And even in the first three months after Allende was elected, before he was inaugurated as president, they already tried to kill Allende once. They couldn't even wait for him to be formally inaugurated.

Allende did not form a militia. Allende did not grab any land or property. Allende had no political detainees. Allende did not crush the press. He did not close down the parliament. He did not suspend the constitution. He played by every rule they wrote. But they killed him still.

These people understand very well that a revolution means a new situation. A revolution implies a fracture. It implies a break with the past. It implies disruption of a temporary character. Revolution means that the abuses and excesses of the violent, and disruptive minority have to be crushed so that the majority's interests prevail. [Applause]

No revolution that does not have a dislocation can be called revolution. That is an impossibility. When the British had their revolution in the 1650s, it took them 200 years to call their first election. When the Americans had their revolution in 1776, it took them 13 years to call their

In the first week of the American revolution, 100,000 fled to Canada. Thousands were locked up without charge or trial. Hundreds were shot. And the counter-revolutionaries after the American revolution had no right to vote. They had no right to teach. They had no right to preach. They had no right to a job. Their land was confiscated without payment.

Revolution was no tea party

So when the falsifiers of history try to pretend that the American revolution was a Boston tea party—it was a very bloody tea party.

The fact of the matter is, sisters and brothers—if we are to be honest about this question—whenever revolution comes, the same questions face the leaders of the revolution. One question always is: what do you do with the bloody-minded murderers, the criminals, the ones who propped up the dictatorship. The ones who led to disappearances of our people. The ones who were beating the people, who were killing the people.

Revolutions answer that question in different ways. Some people take them out in the streets, line them up, and shoot them down. That is one answer. Some other people pretend that they were in the bush as guerrillas, they shoot them down too. Some other people create special courts to deal with them. I am not passing judgement on any of these three models.

The Grenada revolution did not have the appetite for any of those three models. So we took what we say was the humanitarian course. We detained them and treated them well.

And you know it is highly significant that of the 400 to 500 people picked up by our masses on revolution day, on the 13th of March, not one of these Mongooose Gang* elements arrived in the jail with even a scratch on them. And the only reason that happened is because our people at home understood the principled position that a revolution takes on no revenge, no victimization, no torture, no ill-treatment of anyone, regardless of what they have done. It is because our people understood this, something that very often happens in all revolutions—the spontaneous up-heaval of the masses—did not really happen in Grenada.

A church-based organization in Washington called EPICA wrote a book last year on Grenada. They called it, *Grenada: the peaceful Revolution*. We can understand why.

A revolution must survive

So when these elements come and



Maurice Bishop

make these statements we understand only too well where they are coming from. Because they understand that the processes and procedures for review are ongoing procedures. They understand that in Grenada, they never interfered with for what he says. No one is ever interfered with for what he writes. In fact, today criticism is deeper than ever in the society in a constructive way.

Our people also understand that the first law of the revolution is that a revolution must survive, must consolidate so more benefits can come to them.

And because of this fact, the revolution has laid down as a law, that nobody, regardless of who you are, will be allowed to be involved in any activity surrounding the overthrow of the government by the use of armed violence. And anyone who moves in that direction will be ruthlessly crushed. [Applause]

But we also feel, sisters and brothers, that the time has come for us to make another step along the way toward institutionalizing the process that we have been building for four years. And that is why only yesterday in Grenada the new chairman of the constitutional commission arrived in our capital city, St. George's, from Trinidad and Tobago, to announce the formation of the constitutional commission that has now undertaken the task of drafting a new constitution for our young revolution.

This constitution is not really going to look like the one that the queen gave us in 1974. That constitution, as we remember was one of the main reasons for the struggles of '73 and '74, when so many of us were beaten and jailed. When our families and compatriots

were being murdered, one of the main reasons for that struggle was because our people were saying we wanted to be involved in the process of drafting the new constitution. And Gairy did not allow us that right. And the queen of England could have stayed in Buckingham Palace, put it in an envelope, put a stamp on it, and posted it to Gairy. That was the total involvement of Grenada in that constitution.

Our people have input

This time around, the constitution is going to come out of the bowels of our people and out of our earth. Our people will have their input and will decide what they want to see go into that constitution. This time around, the constitution will not just entrench empty rights, but will entrench rights and also provide remedies for enforcement of those rights.

Chapter 1 of our present constitution has 12 freedoms, fundamental freedoms. But anytime those rights are infringed and you go before the courts to see if you can do something about that first of all you can only go by way of a constitutional motion. Secondly, you can only go in the high court, that means you can only go in the court, not the magistrate's court, which of course means money. And thirdly, once you reach the high court, even if the judge agrees with you and you win your case, the most the judge can give you is what they call a declaratory order, which declares your rights.

Now when you bring your declaratory order to the government, you then discover another maxim of the law. You cannot enforce against the Crown. In other words, you have a paper judgement in your hands that you can do nothing with.

We are going to want to put rights into the constitution, rights which can be enforced in a way that the people can themselves manage, and rights which, once the remedies are provided, will in fact be allowed by our government. A constitution with real teeth.

Our new constitution also is certainly going to institutionalize and entrench the systems of popular democracy which we have been building over these past four years in our country. Apart from the usual national elections, which will of course be there too, we are going to ensure that these embryonic organs of popular democracy continue to have a place.

Because to us, democracy is much, much more than just an election. To us, democracy is a great deal more than just the right to put an X next to Tweddledur or Tweedledee every five years.

The second principle of democracy for us is responsibilities. So the elected officials must at all times ensure that the mandate they are carrying out, if mandate it is, is the mandate the people want. And part of that responsibility means that the right to recall those we elect must be entrenched.

No presidents-for-life

We don't believe in Grenada in presidents-for-life or elected-people-for-life. We believe in service for life. And when you stop serving, you must be recalled and get out of the way for somebody else to serve.

The third principle of democracy is participating mechanisms, popular participation. We accept the well-known definition of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln said of democracy that it is government of, for, and by the people. I accept that, it's a good definition. But if it is government of, for, and by the people, then it cannot be just government of the people you elect. It also has to be for the people and it also has to be by them. They have to have a way of participating—that is what the word "by" means. And if that is absent, you don't really have a democracy.

So we are saying we need to have mechanisms that ensure that the people have a way of giving expression to their own feelings and concerns.

In some of the more developed, industrialized countries that have had hundreds of years to build a democracy, a number of things have developed that are perhaps helpful. Some of them have genuinely free and responsible press. Some of them genuinely allow all sections to express their views. Some of them have very effective lobbies where virtually every interest in the society can find a way to get their matter raised in congress or parliament. Some of them, of course,

have a highly literate people and a highly developed public opinion, a people who can interpret for themselves, to some extent.

One form or the other of democracy may or may not be correct in those situations. Westminster parliamentary democracy, let us say, may well be acceptable to the people of England. I cannot speak to that.

But I know that for the people of Grenada, at this stage in our history, Westminster parliamentary democracy is really Westminster parliamentary hypocrisy. [Applause]

Mass organizations

We believe that it is very important for the people to have a voice in running their affairs. One way is the creation of mass organizations of our people: the National Women's Organization, the National Youth Organisation, the farmers union, and, of course, the labor unions.

Before the revolution, Gairy had passed a law in 1978, the Essential Services Act, which took away the right to strike from the workers of our country. We not only repealed that law, but instead we passed a new law, Recognition of Trade Unions Law, under which anytime in any work place 5 percent of the workers indicate that they want to form or to join a union of their choice, that union must be recognised by the employer.

Not only were the women of our country without work before the revolution, the women of our country were also the most harassed and victimized of any section of our population. Those few who were granted jobs from time to time, many of them were given those jobs only on the basis of a sexual favor. Our women were being sexually exploited in return for jobs.

The very first decree of the revolution was to outlaw sexual victimization and exploitation of our women in return for jobs. [Applause]

And going on from that, sisters and brothers, the revolution then passed a law, which applied to all workers in the public sector, of equal pay for equal work for all women. We also then passed another law more recently, a maternity leave law. And by this law is pregnant woman who works three months maternity leave—two months full pay and one could be without full pay—and a guarantee of return to employment after the pregnancy.

It is because of these laws and because of the new environment in the country that so many women have begun to stop forward, have begun to assert themselves, have begun to get out and find new jobs, have begun to get fully involved in production. And that is why so many of them have joined their mass organization, so that

today, at this point in time, one in every three adult women over the age of 16 years is a member of the National Women's Organization.

Women acquire confidence

And in this organization, the women are able to experience training in democracy, training in self-rule training in acquiring a new confidence. Once every two months they hold their parish meetings. They are also broken up into groups around the country where, among other things, they conduct political education and provide training opportunities.

Once in every two years at their congress, all the women have the opportunity of electing delegates. For six months before the congress, they have the opportunity to discuss the new program for the next two years. And then on the day of the congress, they elect their entire new leadership by a secret ballot.

So, within our mass organizations the principle of electorality is already entrenched. And for the people in general there have been organs of popular democracy that have been built—zonal councils, parish councils, worker-parish councils, farmer councils—where the people come together from month to month. The usual agenda will be a report on programs taking place in the village.

Then there will be a report, usually by some senior member of the bureaucracy. It might be the manager of the Central Water Commission. Or it might be the manager of the telephone company or the electricity company. Or it might be the chief sanitary inspector, or the senior price-control inspector. And this senior bureaucrat has to go there and report to the people on his area of work, and then be submitted to a question-and-answer session. And after that, one of the top leaders in our country, one of us will also attend those meetings, and ourselves give a report, and usually there is question and answer time at the end of that also.

In this way, our people from day to day and week to week, are participating in helping to run the affairs of their country. And this is not just an abstract matter of principle. It has also brought practical, concrete benefits to our people.

I remember a worker-parish council in August 1981. The workers were in a real storm that night. They were complaining about the [private] bus drivers. And they were saying that the problem with the bus service is that all

Continued page 34

* The Mongoose Gang was a band of thugs organized and under the control of Grenada's former dictator Eric Gairy.

housing

The crumbling Australian dream

"52,000 in public housing queue" screamed the front page headline in the *Sydney Morning Herald* September 20, 1983. This figure for NSW is one of the highest since the Housing Commission's formation in 1945 and represents more than half the number of people on the public housing waiting list nationwide. Applicants for public housing are faced with a minimum waiting period of two and a half years and if the housing is sought in the Sydney metropolitan area, the waiting period is "indeterminate" according to Housing Commission officials.

By John Butcher
Member of the Summer Hill (NSW)
Branch

This is a pretty desperate state of affairs but according to NSW Housing Minister Frank Walker reported in the same *Sydney Morning Herald* article "under the new Federal Government the people of NSW can rest assured of a big increase in housing."

But can they? The Federal Government housing initiatives announced in the May mini-budget and in the August Budget while providing a boost to the public housing sector still direct their major emphasis to private sector provision of housing. Housing Minister Chris Hurford's statement on 19th May announced a 50 per cent increase in public sector housing funding under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) rising from \$333 million in 1982-83 to \$500 million in 1983-84 but the document also restated the Government's belief in a system under which "90 per cent of Australians meet their housing needs in the private market. Hence most of the thrust of the initiatives were directed at providing support for low to moderate income first home buyers.

The basic tenet of the Federal ALP's housing policy is that home ownership is the only acceptable way to provide decent, secure housing for the whole population. This continues a bipartisan political position, which was reinforced in the 1950s cold war period, and which saw home ownership as a source of social satisfaction and stability and as a bulwark against communism. Hence comments such as the following:

"One-half of our people already have



their own homes. We aim to see the proportion increase, and we aim to see the quality of all homes improve. The average man aspires to own his own home, particularly the man in poor circumstances. The true objectives of a well-conceived housing policy are among the noblest works to which any government or any community can set its hand. For the home is the cradle of our race, and the quality of our race will largely depend on the quality of the homes in which it is nurtured. . . . The very foundations upon which, in the last resort, our national strength will rest, are the character, stamina and contentment created in the home, which is the basis of family life" (B.S.B. Stevens, UAP Premier of NSW in the 1930s)

"The majority of homes are mortgaged to financial institutions and proper care should be taken that in an endeavour to pay off their homes. Better homes mean better citizens. People will sacrifice little things in order to make their homes more comfortable. When they have homes, they will fight for them."

This bipartisan approach is evident in the implementation of the CSHA which was introduced almost forty years ago and which has dominated public housing policy in Australia. Although in its first ten years of operation the whole emphasis was on rental housing, in 1956 and subsequent agreements the stimulation of home ownership has dominated its implementation.

But this myth of home ownership has been challenged and its reality

exposed in a leaflet produced by Shelter (Victoria), and reproduced in the June 1983 issue of *Tenant News*, the newsletter of the Tenants Union of NSW. With 100,000 households on Housing Commission waiting lists and over 2 million Australians living in poverty, an expansion of public housing is the only realistic way of enabling these people and all working people to obtain decent, secure housing.

The current schemes by Federal and State ALP Governments to subsidise first home buyers, and to provide mortgage and rent relief basically benefit the banks, finance companies, and landlords. Australian banks are now the most profitable in the world. Of the world's most profitable banks in 1982, the ANZ ranked no. 1, the Bank of NSW no. 5, and the Commonwealth no. 6. These profits are largely due to their activities concerning home ownership. And whereas average weekly earnings in Australia increased by 12.6 per cent from 1980 to 1981, bank profits in the same period increased by around 30 per cent. That banks and other lending institutions are the major beneficiaries of private sector housing subsidies can be seen from the fact that a family taking out a home loan of \$30,000 over 25 years would actually pay \$84,136 at bank rates of 10.5 per cent and \$91,397 at rates of 11.5 per cent from a non-bank lender according to a current Commonwealth Bank leaflet. "Save thousands of dollars on a \$30,000 housing loan!"

The financial commitment involved in purchasing a home has two important political consequences according to Jim Kemeny in *Arena* no. 46, 1977. The first is that it helps to give substance to the commitment of young people to the system by placing them in a form of tenure in which they must work hard to save an initial deposit and to keep up mortgage repayments. Second is the effect of home-ownership on old age. As the Henderson Commission of Inquiry on Poverty in Australia showed, the incidence of poverty among the aged is very much greater among renters than owners. Home-ownership therefore acts as a source of self-help to cater for old age, which alleviates a category of poverty which the Government might otherwise have to deal with directly.

An important consideration in the light of current attacks on superannuation benefits, assets tested pensions etc.

Certainly Labor Governments elected by working people, hopefully to represent their interests, would do well to reverse the current priorities in housing policy. Rank-and-file members would be well advised to see that their parliamentary representatives get this message.

turkey

Campaign against repression

On July 7th, 1983, over 2,500 political prisoners started hunger striking in prisons around Turkey in protest of the inhumane conditions which they were subject to. The strike spread over most prisons fairly quickly with the number of strikers reaching over 6,000. The demands of the political prisoners were:

- Withdrawal of prison uniforms and return of civilian clothes.
- An end to torture, oppression and all prohibitions in interviews with lawyers, families, going out to fresh air, books and writing articles.

● The abolition of the single cell system which is established for torture demand to return to the system of wards.

● Recognition of all rights of political prisoners.

To support the hunger strike and to be in solidarity with the political prisoners, a committee was established. The Committee, named the

Solidarity Committee with the Political Prisoners on Hunger Strike in Turkey, fully supported the demands of the political prisoners. It also had demands for the Australian Govern-

ment:

● To take a firm public stand on the issue.

● To cease all its relations with Turkey.

● To sponsor a resolution to the United Nations, raising the demands of the prisoners and protesting the Turkish Junta.

● To send a delegation to Turkey.

With the above aims 6 people in Melbourne started hunger striking in the City Square on 10th August, 1983. The strike continued for nine days and concluded with a big rally. There were

numerous activities held outside the tent during the hunger strike.

Similar activities were held all around the world and in Sydney as well. The world activities and the report of a delegation that went to Turkey are printed below.

Of the four demands above mentioned, relating to Australia, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hayden, after seeing members of the Committee has agreed to take a stand publicly, ie, he raised the matter in Parliament and this was broadcast on 3LO. He also agreed to take the matter before United Nations. He would not agree to the other two demands. (see box)

Since then the Committee's name has changed to CART, Committee Against Repression In Turkey. The Committee is now working towards sending a delegation to Turkey and raising funds. The Committee also organised the 11th September Rally—

against the Juntas in Chile and Turkey in conjunction with the Free Chile Committee.

For further information contact

CART
P.O. Box 84
Moreland Vic 3085

Bill Hayden's response

I am very concerned to hear of your hunger strike.

Thank you for your letter of 16 August received today 17 August. You may be aware that the Australia Ambassador in Ankara has previously made representations to the Turkish Authorities about political imprisonments there. I have asked the Australian Embassy in Ankara to report to me urgently on the matters you have raised in your letter.

I should say that as regards your three requests, I do not hold out any hope that a delegation in the terms

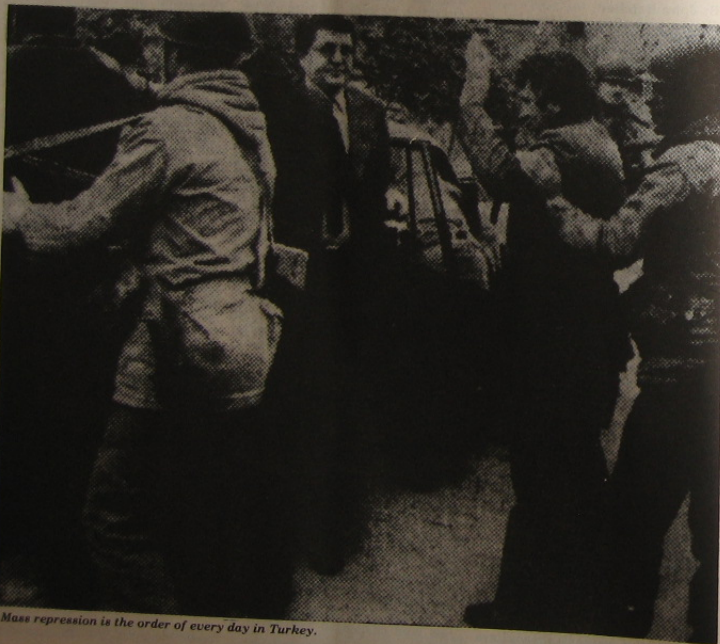
you propose would be allowed to enter Turkey to carry out the sort of mission that you envisage. This would be seen by Turkey as an interference in their internal affairs.

You also called for the breaking of all diplomatic relations.

This could be counterproductive because it would close off all channels for the Australian Government to put its views on human rights issues to the Turkish Authorities as has been done in the past.

Finally, you mentioned the possibility of taking action in the United Nations. As you know the General Assembly does not convene until later this year. It may be preferable to wait until nearer that time before the Government makes any decision on this question. When I have received a report from the Australian Ambassador in Ankara I will be in contact with you again.

Bill Hayden M.P.



12 Mass repression is the order of every day in Turkey.

Activities in Europe in support of the hunger strikers in Turkey:

WEST GERMANY:

The social democratic SPD and the Green Party (Members of Parliament) have established a Committee to deal with this issue.

29/7/83—10 associations organised a hunger strike with 50 participants.

30/7/83—(Bonn) 150 go on hunger strike—6 are German Members of Parliament.

31/7/83—(Kassel) 50 people start hunger striking.

11/8/83—(Wuppertal) 60 people start hunger striking. The SPD and the Green Party have sent telegrams in protest to all the Turkish Consuls in Europe and have demanded that the economic aid given to Turkey cease immediately.

Five European countries including Belgium have made representations to the Human Rights Commission about the situation in Turkey.

10/8/83—a delegation was sent to Turkey from Belgium to investigate the situation.

HOLLAND:
(Amsterdam)—a Committee supported by many Associations is established and 50 people start hunger striking. Also the Union of Trade Unions, Catholic Trade Unions and all the political parties protest the Junta and they demand that their Government take a firm stand against the Junta. Hundreds of telegrams in protest are sent to the Turkish Consulate and the Junta.

SWEDEN:
(Stockholm)—4/8/83—60 people start hunger striking. A delegation was sent to Turkey. The Government called on the Turkish Ambassador and gave him an ultimatum.

DENMARK:
31/7/83—80 people from Spain, Turkey, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, France, Holland, Greece and Colombia start hunger striking.

SPAIN:
The Government, united churches, trade unions and the leading Archbishop take a joint stance against the Junta and thus send telegrams of protest.

GREECE:
8/8/83—43 people start hunger striking. All trade unions and the party in power, Amnesty International, Youth and peace associations, teachers trade unions, members of the staff etc. of the University of Athens, Athens City Council take a joint stance and protest the inhumane atrocities committed by the Junta.

ENGLAND:
23/7/83—Amnesty International apply to the Turkish Embassy and demand an end to the oppression and torture in Turkey.
3/8/83—a delegation of 30 people including many members of the British Labour Party went to the Turkish Embassy to deliver a petition urging the demands of the prisoners be granted. The Embassy refused to accept the petition and a demonstration followed.

21/8/83—A delegation was sent to Turkey to investigate the situation.

AUSTRIA:
(Vienna)—Picture exhibitions were displayed exposing the face of the Junta and in 7/8/83 20 people start hunger striking.

REPORT OF ONE DELEGATION:
A delegation consisting of one doctor, three lawyers and one priest went to Turkey on 5/8/83. The delegation had three German, one Swedish and one Austrian member. They stayed in Turkey for 8 days despite all the obstacles. They managed to interview the relatives and lawyers of the prisoners. The delegation attempted to attend a couple of the court cases and were told to go out. The delegation organised a press conference on arrival back to Germany. They asked their Governments to protest the Turkish Junta and to make representations to the Human Rights Commission.

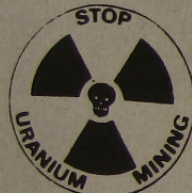
According to interviews with the relatives of the prisoners, the prisoners are being tortured, the conditions. When the prisoners are being broadcast over the sounds of their moans and screams are broadcast over loud speakers for other prisoners to hear.

Uranium — policy versus pragmatism

The uranium question touches a raw nerve in Bob Hawke. At this stage, even more than economic policy, it can split the Labor Party. It's an issue that blurs the lines of party factions. That's why Hawke has deferred for a further month the Caucus meeting which was to decide the exact implementation of the Party policy on Roxby Downs and the new mining contracts.

By Chris Slee
Member of Springvale (Vic) Branch
and the Tramways Union.

A special meeting of the Victorian Branch was held on Sunday, September 18 to discuss recent



Labor Militant, October, November 1983

14 Anti-Roxby Downs demonstrators.

statements by Bob Hawke. It was attended by Federal and State parliamentarians, including Frank Willis, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Brian Howe, Minister for Defense Support as well as the Administrative Committee and members of the Anti-Uranium Policy and Conservation Policy Committees, about 40 people in all.

A unanimous decision was taken on the following motions:

1. No new mines should be allowed to operate and no further contracts entered into for the export of uranium from existing mines.

2. On the matter of Roxby Downs the widest debate should be set in train within and without the Party before any decision on this issue by Cabinet and Caucus.

3. All exports of uranium to France should immediately cease.

Centre Unity organiser Senator Robert Ray who was present, pointed out that the meeting did not have the power to direct Caucus members how to vote. Nevertheless, the unanimous decisions put pressure on the Hawke faction and newer members if they want to retain their seats.

It's not clear who has the numbers in caucus. The Left can count on 35 votes out of 105 in the Federal Caucus. If the Victorian Centre Unity Faction vote with the Left on this issue, it will make the final count very close. As Gerry Hand, MP for Melbourne said, "It puts the numbers pretty much in line ball."

Hawke's delaying tactic gives right-wing Senator Graham Richardson of NSW more time to get on the phone and threaten or cajole the swinging votes. If the green light is given for Roxby Downs, MP's are afraid of the repercussions it will have amongst the rank and file. Certainly it will provoke a storm of protest, and will expose the present situation where ALP policy means nothing unless it suits the needs of the Centre Unity controlled Kitchen Cabinet.

At Sunday's meeting, people were also angry at Hawke pre-empting the debate by declaring publicly that he wants the new mining contracts for the existing Northern Territory mines, Ranger and Nabarlek to go ahead. This has been a running sore in the Party for some time that Hawke hardly ever consults the Caucus and sometimes not even the Inner Cabinet before such a decision is announced.

In this case, he announced his decision to the world when he told the Business Council of Australia that Roxby Downs would proceed. On September 21, Hawke repeated the same thing to Ralph Nader, the US consumer affairs lawyer from the US. Nader later told the National Press Club in Canberra that Hawke also said that "Australia owes it to the world" and that it was "immoral" to keep uranium in the ground.

Hawke's statements are totally in contradiction with the National Policy of the ALP. Clause 12 of the policy amended in July 1982, said "... an Australian Labor Government will adopt the process of phasing out our involvement in uranium mining, and certain conditions will be imposed upon the producers in accordance with this policy."

The central plank of the policy is that uranium mining will be phased out. However one other amendment allowed the Government to consider the Roxby Downs mine. Clause 10c states that "An ALP Government will consider applications for the export of uranium mined incidentally to the mining of other minerals on a case-by-case basis and on the criterion of whether in the opinion of a Labor Government the mining of such minerals is in the national interest."

Roxby Downs is one of the largest uranium mines in the world now estimated at one million tonnes, enough to supply the entire Western world for 40 years. It also contains small amounts of copper. It's hard to see how the criterion of "incidental mining" can be applied to an expansion of mining activity in one of the world's largest uranium deposits.

If the question of "national interest" is raised then clearly the Party policy represents the ranks' interests and the mass anti-nuclear marches represent substantial public opinion. Even if "national interest" is taken as profitability (the way it usually is) then there are problems as well. The price of uranium on the world market has fallen so low that pricing requirements by the Government cannot even be met.

The Commonwealth Public Service bureaucrats have added fuel to the fire by recommending to the Government that new exports and an extension of the industry be permitted.

Senior members of the Party are reported to be working on another report on extra contracts and on Roxby Downs can't be fudged. The policy is clear. It's up to the Parliamentarians to carry it out at the coming Caucus meeting. The rank and file should find out how their representative voted and hold them responsible for their actions.

Victorian budget — profits over jobs

On September 21 the Cain Government's second budget was presented by Treasurer Rob Jolly who claimed that the budget's main aim is to create "more jobs in Victoria". The 1983 budget, like last year's, was welcomed by big business and its media mouthpieces. This happy response alone was enough to cast suspicion on Jolly's claim.

By Garry Walters
Member of Brunswick (Vic) Branch
and the Australian Railways Union

The Age Editorial described it as "cautious Keynesianism", but behind the progressive facade this "responsible mix of humanitarianism and restraint" will not even significantly ease the increasingly harsh impact of the capitalist crisis upon the working class.

The private profit-oriented economic strategy which the Government sharpened up in this budget, will make the crisis hit workers even harder, despite some job creation that may keep Victoria a little better off than other states.

The budget, in its overall effect, is a "Robin Hood in reverse" exercise. It is in the spirit of austerity ideology now prevalent among union and government leaders.

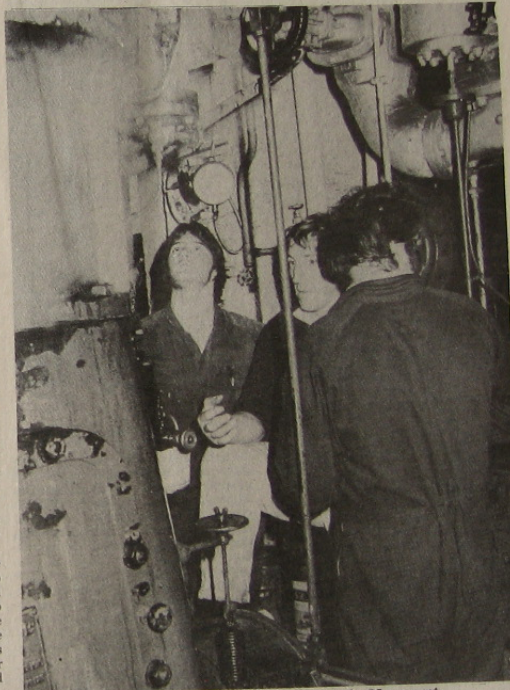
This philosophy, applied in the ALP-ACTU Accord, the Summit, the ACTU Congress and the latest National Wage Case, is to enforce sacrifices upon the working class, to provide more of the social wealth to the capitalists, who will supposedly then invest more, and thus provide more jobs and better living standards as the economy recovers.

It is instructive that Jolly linked the budget's weak job-creation aspect to such ideas, stressing the boosted capital works spending meant to create jobs will not be inflationary. He said this is ensured because "the Accord is in place" to stop workers using the stronger demand for labour to push for improvement of decimated living standards.

Before examining the maze of figures on revenue raising and allocation or debating their merits, two features of the budget must be noted. These demonstrate that the highest priority of the budget is private profits, not increased jobs or improved public welfare.

The first feature is the tiny number of jobs created by the increased capital works outlay. This outlay will benefit private sector areas like construction and manufacture, rather than build up a viable public sector.

The other related feature is a two



Unemployment up and apprenticeship training cut by 25 per cent.

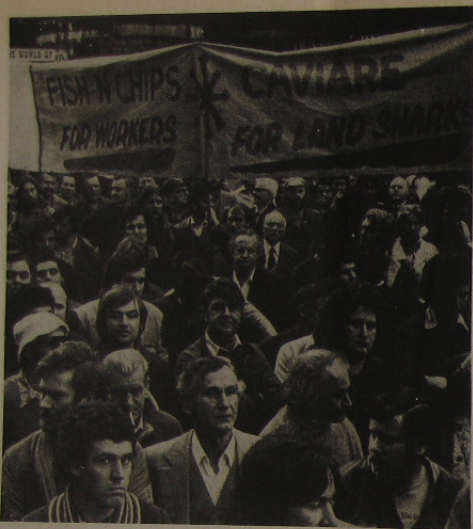
percent cut in all recurrent public sector spending, which will attack jobs on a big enough scale to just about cancel out the effects of the increased capital works job creation.

It is the budget's policies with regard to unemployment which clearly reveal its pro-business orientation.

Jolly said that the budget aims to create only 25,000 jobs. This is grossly inadequate when there was an average level of 148,000 jobless in Victoria last year. The rise for finan-

cial year 1982-83 was 41,700, a rise of around 40 percent, despite our first "job-creation" budget. If unemployment rises again by another 40 per cent, the official, very understated figure will soar over 200,000 by 1984. The Age may think that policies that don't prevent such growth are "humanitarian", but for a Government elected by the working class this is a disgrace.

Unemployment in Victoria was "only" 5.9 per cent as recently as 1981



82, the last years of the long Liberal era here.

The obvious question is, how come this disaster for workers has become twice as bad in the first two years of Labor rule?

It cannot all be a legacy of the Libs, the Fraser period in Federal Government and the global economic downturn. Nor can the Government hide behind excuses like Federal-State money arrangements under the Constitution, other legal obstacles to State revenue measures, or the recent droughts and fires.

The truth is that the Government refuses to intervene in the economy as much as it can and should in favor of its working class supporters.

This pro-capitalist Government is so committed to the bosses' divine right to profits that real job creating measures are out of the question. Instead of supporting an industrial campaign to reduce working hours without loss in pay coupled with nationalisation of big job shedding profiteers like BHP and GM-H until unemployment undermines even the 38-hour week reform and instead budgets for an increase of "only" 10,000 unemployed this year.

That estimate by Jolly is very optimistic at best, and it is cold comfort

to the 148,000 already written-off as lost to the workforce.

Consider a few more Victorian statistics: the average duration of unemployment rose during 1982 from 30 to 40 weeks, the rate for 15-19 year olds was 22 per cent, and the number of apprentices fell by 25 per cent despite profit-subsidising "job creation" programs.

In such a situation, unless the Government radically changes direction and fights to stop the profit-bludgers getting away with such anti-social and criminal treatment of people, Labor's long term electoral prognosis is not good.

The Government has tried to justify the "limited aims" of the budget with the old standby of crying poor, backing this with the litany of factors narrowing the State revenue base, recited ad nauseum in the media around budget day.

The federalism red herring came up yet again as the main diversion. So what if the State budget is 45 per cent reliant upon Federal funds? Instead of the ritual finger-pointing and divisive inter-state squabbling, why cannot the Victorian Labor Government push for progressive revenue policy federally? After all we do have a Federal Labor Government. Then the Com-

monwealth could raise enough money to better fund the States.

But State and Federal budgets so far show very little hope of our Parliamentary leaders opting for progressive redistributive policies and taxes at either level.

The Victorian Government has if anything intensified trends begun by the Liberals, toward heavier and mainly regressive taxation. State taxes almost doubled from \$1,800 million in 1979-80, to \$2,800 million in the 1983-84 budget.

Even discounting inflation, that is a massive rise, considering the shrinking base of workers and working farmers and small businesses to extract tax from.

The budget had some redistributive measures to prove that the Government "is not afraid to hit the wealthy." The biggest tax rise is 37.5 per cent more raised from land dealings, after a 20 per cent rise last year. The \$146 million extra revenue from the rich is very welcome, but like all taxes on the private sector, is easily passed on as a cost to ultimately make working people pay. Land is one of the more obviously social resources and means of production so why not exclude the profiteers altogether, rather than dabble with taxes they can evade, counter-act or pass on?

The land dealing tax and the bitterly disputed oil pipeline tax are two of the few progressive revenue raisers. But other than these the total tax impact is regressive. For instance, public transport fares are up an average 20 per cent, petrol, cigarette and wine taxes have all risen significantly, and the higher "dividends" taken from the statutory bodies will all flow on as various services for gas, electricity and higher charges.

The sale-and-lease-back of Government assets along with outright sale of public assets to the private sector, especially of public land, are short term revenue raisers. The Government has increased revenue by this method to \$380 million this year. Equally short term is the "hollow log" source of unfreezing excess reserves held by the statutory bodies.

But it is in the effects of the two per cent recurrent outlay, cut within the public sector areas, that the downright dishonesty of the Government most clearly shows.

Jolly and the various ministers emphasised how the 33 per cent real rise to \$170 million capital works spending will benefit health, education, housing, transport and so on. Kenneth Davidson to admit in his fine print that "the quality of the public services will decline". That is quite an understatement, given the crisis already existing in all public sector

areas due to the chronic understaffing. The further impact of axing jobs for the \$120 million involved in the two per cent cut will put the pressure on even more.

The greatest increase is in housing spending. It is up 19 per cent to \$271 million, which is 80 per cent more than it got from the Liberals in 1981-82. But the demand for public housing is increasing rapidly. The waiting list for public housing grew by 2,000 last year to 18,500. The Cain Government built 2,700 houses last year, and plans 3,500 this year, compared to an average 1,500 per year for the last three Liberal years. So the level of spending is at present greater than the rate of growth of demand. But that's cold comfort for the 18,500 on the waiting list.

Other areas have not fared so well. In health, the Government has been under intense pressure to do something about the awful conditions of care for the disabled. The response in the budget is to cut hospital funding in order to raise money for progressive-sounding "de-institutionalisation" programs. These will close the large institutions and put the disabled into "community care" without adequate provision of professional back-up care.

In transport, workers and the travelling public have already seen how Minister Steve Crabb aims to help finance the planned \$458 million in new capital works. Many of these plans are in the "Cinderella" pattern of public transport spending to improve the big business freight operation profits, e.g. the \$30 million Webb Dock container traffic rail link.

How can fare rises and the plan to cut thousands of rail and tram jobs "improve" service and encourage patronage" as Crabb often claims and our election platform promised?

Similarly, in education, the three teacher unions publicly stated that the two per cent cut would prevent the achievement of Government policies on the improvement of public education.

Meanwhile, capital works spending for the police is doubled to try and cope with the bursting criminal justice system. This is indeed a "growth industry" as the number of unemployed and those living beneath the poverty line mushroom. In a system which increasingly denies the legal means to a decent living, desperation will drive many to "illegal" means. But increased police spending is hardly a working class solution to the problems.

Most who voted ALP in April 1982 and March 1983 hoped for a fairer deal, but the economic policies behind a budget like we got on September 21 are a betrayal of that hope. The profit bias involved is no less part of the problem than when the Liberals are imposing it.

western australia

Anti-union legislation

Last December 5,000 angry workers held a militant rally in Perth. They marched to Premier Ray O'Connor's office and demanded that he stop his proposed amendments to the State's industrial laws which threatened basic union rights.

By Tony Mulcahy
President WA Branch, Federated Rubber Workers' Union
Balclatta ALP Branch.

Among O'Connor's amendments was one authorising automatic deregistration of unions that fail to follow an Industrial Commission order.

Brian Burke, the Premier-to-be, was advertised as a speaker at the rally but failed to show up. No explanation was given to the crowd so very few knew that he was at a "Decision Makers Luncheon."

These lunches are designed for businesspeople. They are party fundraising affairs as well as opportunities for the leadership to communicate with leading corporate figures.

Burke not only snubbed the unionists himself, he pressured all Party candidates to attend the meet-the-bosses luncheon as well.

Perhaps if more people had known Burke's priorities on that day they may have held reservations about his press statements that within two days of taking office the amendments would be rescinded.

After seven months in office the laws are unchanged and they are now being used against unions.

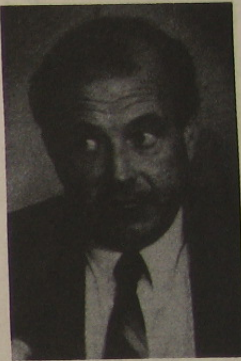
As this article is being written there are two big union battles being fought in WA's North-West.

Hammersley Iron workers are fighting to force the company to employ their graduating apprentices for six months. At Mount Newman they are fighting around the implementation of the 38 hour week they won last year but which was snatched from them by Fraser's wage freeze.

The vital importance of these issues is obvious and so far thousands of workers have lost money through strikes and stand-downs lasting months.

The Industrial Commission is exercising its power and is proceeding towards deregistering six unions involved in these struggles.

Our Party leadership has stood by



Brian Burke—broken promises.

quietly while the Commission has gone on with its union-bashing. Indeed Federal Employment Minister Ralph Willis went further. According to him the fight for the shorter work week breaches "the spirit of the Accord."

These workers may be in breach of the Accord but they are certainly not in breach of Labor principles.

They are fighting youth unemployment in the most constructive way and they are fighting the wage freeze.

Labor on office is meant to use its government powers to advance such causes not attack them.

Especially galling in this situation is the sight of a Labor Government hiding behind the skirts of the Industrial Commission instead of standing by workers.

The new Government still has a heavy legislative program to get through the first sitting of Parliament. Among these reform packages is the controversial ban on tobacco advertising.

Such items are quite good but the Government should stop affecting a militant pose by pushing such matters to the fore. The priorities need reordering. Union rights should come before all else.

The obnoxious provisions of the industrial laws should be withdrawn immediately pending next year's promised complete overhaul of the legislation.

south korea

Flight KAL007 — a review of the evidence

Several months have now elapsed since a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 was shot down by a Soviet fighter on September 1. The likelihood that the aircraft's flight recorder will be

By Val Edwards
Member of North Auburn (NSW)
Branch and the Australasian Society
of Engineers

recovered is now remote. It seems that the information that has been revealed to date about the incident is all that will become public for years. So it's time to assess how the Australian labour movement responded to the tragedy and how this stands up in the light of the available facts.

The Hawke Government's reaction to reports that the aircraft had been shot down was notable for its haste, for its uncritical acceptance of the charges coming from Washington, and for its vitriol. At a time when the Soviet Union had not yet acknowledged that it was in any way involved, Hawke declared on September 2 that his Government accepted that the Korean jet had been shot down by a Soviet aircraft.

Describing the Soviet action as "barbarous" and "an outrage," Hawke went on to accuse the USSR of conduct "incompatible with decent relations between civilised nations."

On September 6 the Prime Minister expanded on his earlier comments: "...there is no way they could not have known it was an unarmed civilian airliner and there is therefore no basis for excuse in the way in which the Soviet Union has consistently attempted to act since the time of the disaster."

On September 2 Foreign Minister Bill Hayden described the incident as a "further illustration of the consequences of continued hostility relating to the Korean peninsula," going on to "attempts to deny the Republic of Korea its legitimate place in the international community."

Before anyone had shown satisfaction that the jet had even been shot down, Hayden thus made clear that he knew they were attacking a Korean aircraft. He implied strongly that the Soviet leadership had made a

political decision to shoot down a Korean airliner as a blow against the Seoul regime.

In their rush to line up behind Washington, the Party leaders were soon followed by most of the delegates to the ACTU Congress, which met from September 12 to 16. Right and left-wing union officials combined to pass a motion condemning the Soviet action.

The ACTU was to go even further than Hawke. While the Prime Minister had cautioned that trade and other sanctions would not cure the "basic problem," and should be applied only as a last resort, nothing short of immediate bans would satisfy the right wing of union officialdom. The handling of documents for passengers or cargo for the Soviet airline Aeroflot was blacked for 60 days. An amendment seeking to delete any mention of local bans was lost by 103 votes.

The validity of the "facts" on which these decisions were based scarcely appears to have been questioned. It is now clear, however, that the labour movement leaders' indignant response to the tragedy was based on unwarranted presumptions and White House lies.

One of the unspoken presumptions has been that the South Korean jet really was an innocent stray. Of course, this cannot be "presumed" at all; every significant article written on the tragedy has conceded that given the sophistication of modern navigation equipment, and the rigorous checks required of pilots flying this route, it was extremely unlikely that a crew would unknowingly stray hundreds of kilometers of course.

If anyone argues that flight KAL007 did not fly over key Soviet military bases in Kamchatka and Sakhalin deliberately, the onus is on them to provide a detailed and plausible explanation of how this could have happened by accident. (Incidentally, it would be intriguing to learn how many of those who insist that modern aircraft navigation equipment often breaks down also argue that nuclear power plants can't blow up.)

The most impressive attempt to show that the overflight was accidental has come in the form of an article in the October 13 issue of the *Far Eastern*

Economic Review. This article suggests that the triple inertial navigation system that would have guided the aircraft along the correct flight path was not even switched on — that a failure to turn a vital switch to the required position left the aircraft proceeding along the great-circle heading it was following as it left Alaska.

According to the article, this hypothesis can be used to explain the aircraft's aberrant course in considerable detail. However, the theory also requires one to believe that both of the plane's highly experienced pilots showed appalling negligence. After setting out to fly along a corridor which takes airliners close to top-secret Soviet military areas, they are supposed to have failed throughout this time to check their actual position — a task which with the inertial navigation equipment requires no more than pressing a button.

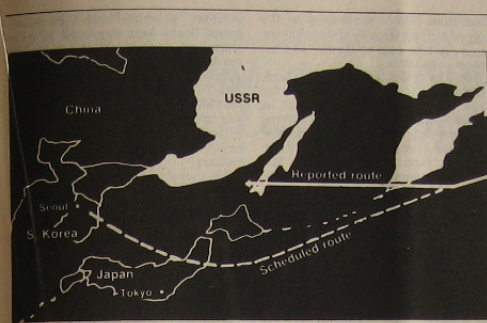
The article is more successful in answering the charge that the 747 was involved in a spying operation:

"There is no provision in a 747 for hidden cameras — which would require easily detachable hatches or windows in the belly — or for radar monitoring devices. Such gear in an aircraft which visits a large number of civilian airports in its normal commercial work, and which is liable to have the ground crews of many different nations wandering through it during turn-around checks, would be quickly detected, thus breaching security. Sheer practicality rules out this aspect of the Soviet arguments."

One suggestion that has not been refuted, however, is that the plane's two pilots, both former officers of the South Korean Air Force, were taking part in a deliberate provocation aimed at testing the effectiveness of the Soviet Air Defence System, or perhaps that could be used for reactionary political ends. This suggestion is considerably more believable than the claims of flight-deck anarchy and recklessness that must accompany Soviet air space was unintended.

The labour movement leaders' version of what happened to flight KAL 007 also contains another contentious element, that the Soviet Air Defence officers identified the intruder as a civilian airliner before shooting it down. Here, the known facts indicate quite the opposite.

According to a *New York Times* article quoted in the *Sydney Sun-Herald* on October 9, US intelligence experts "have found no traces that Soviet Air Defence personnel knew that South Korean jet was a commercial plane before a Soviet fighter shot it



down.

"The experts now believe the Russian SU-15 fighter was below and behind the passenger plane," the *Sun-Herald* reported, "and because it would be difficult to identify the plane from that position the pilot did not know what kind of plane he was shooting at." According to the *Times*, many of the analysts now suspect the Soviet Air Defence command thought the SU-15 was tracking a smaller RC-135 US Air Force reconnaissance plane and not an airliner.

"The US has already confirmed that an RC-135 crossed paths with the 747 on September 1."

What emerges from these statements is a scenario in which the Soviet military commanders acted not with the calculated savagery ascribed to them by Reagan and Hawke, but with a clumsy haste born of incompetence and panic.

The US intelligence experts' revelations show that the Reagan Administration was deliberately lying when it claimed in the days immediately after the tragedy to have "incontrovertible evidence" proving that the Soviet authorities knew they were dealing with an airliner. No such evidence existed.

When Hawke and Hayden placed their unquestioning trust in the White House, they seem to have forgotten about Watergate. Similarly, the Australian Government's uncritical acceptance of Reagan's claims recalls Hawke's blanket support for US policies in Central America. Like that position, the ALP leadership's backing for Reagan in this instance is a time-bomb for the Australian labour movement.

Trying to outdo the US President's anti-Soviet rhetoric might leave local reactionaries unable to score points off the Labour Government in the short

term. But Hawke has deflected these shots at the expense of throwing Australia's not inconsiderable weight behind a campaign of cold war hysteria which threatens the life of every human being.

If life has become dramatically more dangerous for all of us in the last few months, it is not because the Soviet Union has acquired the taste for "massacres in the air," but because the US leaders have leapt on the airliner incident as the excuse they need for a massive new round of war preparations.

Only two weeks after the airliner was downed, a Defence Appropriations Bill that was expected to encounter heated criticism in the US Congress sailed through with little opposition. The Bill provided for another major boost in war spending to a total of US\$187.5 billion. According to one calculation, this sum is comparable to the entire annual production of goods and services in all of Black Africa.

The Bill also overturned a 15-year-old ban on the production of nuclear weapons, including nerve gas.

Reagan now appears to have avoided the temptation to use the airliner incident as a pretext for scuttling arms-control negotiations. But it is evident that the Administration is profiting from the furor surrounding the downing of the airliner to push an intransigent line both in the Strategic Arms talks, and in the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) talks in Geneva. The US has threatened that unless there is a breakthrough in the latter talks, it will begin in December to deploy the first of 572 Pershing II missiles planned for Western Europe.

This action would arguably represent the most dangerous escalation of the nuclear arms race since the first

atomic bomb was detonated. The Pershing IIs would wipe out Soviet missiles within five minutes of being launched — meaning that if Soviet commanders receive signals suggesting that a nuclear attack is under way, they will not be able to wait around to determine if the alarm is false before retaliating.

The Reagan Administration has also been pushing for months to win congressional approval for building and deploying the giant MX long-range missiles. The hysterical campaign around the Korean airliner is being used to intimidate liberal opponents of this deadly scheme. As a result, *Newsweek* observed during September, "Reagan's plans to produce the MX missiles and beef up other defence programs... seem to be headed for friendlier hearings."

These "other programs" include the B-1 bomber, the initial funding for the "Star Wars" laser missile defence scheme.

The hate campaign against the Soviet Union has also been used as a bludgeon against the broader peace movement in the US and internationally, at a time when the Reagan Administration is stepping up its aggression in Central America. "Those who have been beating up on Reagan's freedom fighters in Nicaragua will be quieter for a while now," a key Congressional aide is reported to have said.

Obviously there is no way that any concession to such a campaign as this can be in the interests of the working class. But Hawke, Hayden, and the ACTU leaders have not merely approved this war fever; they have actually set out to spread it throughout the country. In the process, they have left the Australian labour movement in a much weaker position before the anti-labour forces than might have been the case.

If the Federal Government and the ACTU had reacted critically and skeptically to the media tub-thumping, and gone on to campaign against the imperialist arms binge unleashed on the basis of the airliner incident, they would have responded with howls of rage. But the mass of the labour movement would have received something which Hawke refuses to provide them with — a political education in the realities of how imperialist uses threats, provocations and slanders to press ahead in its drive to war. A great deal of popular confusion as to the cause of the war danger could have been dispelled. And when as has now happened, the Reagan Administration's lies came unstuck, the Liberal Party in this country would have been exposed as the ruthless war-

hawks they are.

This is not to say that taking such a stand on these matters would immediately or automatically swell the ALP's popular support. But in the longer term, the Party will only win and hold office if it fights for the interests of the class on which it is based.

Such principled struggles have a history of educating millions of people on the class realities of capitalist society, and inoculating them against being fooled by bosses' politicians. The outstanding example in recent decades of the ALP taking such a principled stand and eventually having it pay off electorally around the Vietnam war.

Working-class Australians haven't forgotten the lessons of Vietnam. But response by the leaders of the

Australian labour movement to the Korean airliner tragedy shows that the same can't be said of Hawke and his closest colleagues.

In terms of the lessons of Vietnam, Hawke and Hayden are still at the stage the ALP leadership was at in 1964, when the ranks had still to force the leadership to come out against the war. Like Gough Whitlam in those days, the Hawke government is formulating its foreign policy on the basis of the ANZUS Alliance, and of the policies needed to maintain and strengthen it.

The parallel with Vietnam includes one specific element which, in the months after the Korean airliner incident, appears particularly disturbing. To justify its massive escalation of the war, the Johnson Administration seized on the 1964 "Tonkin Gulf

incident," in which North Vietnamese patrol boats were supposed to have staged an unprovoked attack on US vessels. As the White House stirred up chauvinist outrage around the "at tack," Congress was induced to vote the Government an "open slather" on war in Indochina.

The "incident" was later revealed to have been fabricated by the US military.

Whether or not the "Korean airliner incident" was another imperialist set-up, the US ruling class has not lost the knack of screwing the last ounce of reactionary propaganda out of a development that appears to confirm its world view.

The labour movement in this country should be fighting against the warmongers' crusades, not falling over itself to join in.

tasmania

Left gains after intervention

After two years of Federal intervention control was formally handed back to the Tasmanian Branch at its State Council meeting in Hobart on October 8-9th. The State Council meeting marked a leftward movement in this State Branch. Much of this leftward shift comes from an influx of new members who started to move back into the Party after the massive defections caused by the South-West dams issue. In that period the Tasmanian Branch membership declined from over 2000 to less than 800.

By our Tasmanian correspondent

Condemnation of the Federal Government's watering down of the uranium policy was one area which indicated the leftward shift of the State Branch. Workers' health was another area that came under critical attention by Council. Asbestos especially was debated. Currently several major unions are campaigning to have asbestos removed from buildings.

The Left also took most of the Executive and Policy Committee positions elected by Council. This included removing ex-State Government Minister Terry Aulich from the State Secretary's position to which he had been appointed for the period of Federal control.

Whilst this leftward shift and the progressive policy positions are a step forward in the Party, some people

pondered just how "left" this section of the Party is? To understand why, we need to look at the history and composition of the "left" in the Tasmanian Branch.

The Left in Tasmania is currently organised into the Democratic Socialist group which has superseded the so-called "Broad Left". The Broad Left claimed to hold control over 80 per cent of the State Branch prior to Federal intervention. For instance at the July 1977 State Council the "Broad" took all but 15 of the 85 positions voted on.

The new Democratic Socialist grouping however claims to be "broader than the Broad". Yet when we look at the members, policies, and principles of this grouping in many cases those outside it hold far more progressive positions. These include questions ranging from abortion, affirmative action for women, conservation issues, questions of workers' control. Left positions on these questions are firmly held by many ALP members outside the DS.

Affirmative action is a case to note. With very few exceptions almost the entire DS grouping voted against a progressive interpretation of the 1/3 women affirmative action ruling. Many so-called left members actually booed women as she spoke on the issue.

Firmer and more wide ranging left wing policies need to be adopted in the future if the DS grouping is to gain any credibility as a real left-wing force in this State. Principled stands on policy issues rather than vote trading to



promote right wingers need to be the order of the day for the DS group.

Progressive stands on uranium and asbestos were welcomed by many people and gained much needed media coverage. Firmly taking up these and other issues is the only avenue toward winning back the confidence of workers in this State.

1983 Socialist International policy on Latin America



Nicaraguan unionists mobilize against attacks.

Printed below is one of the major resolutions and an emergency resolution adopted by the Sixteenth Congress of the Socialist International held in Portugal earlier this year.

The Congress was originally to be held in Sydney last Easter but had to be shifted owing to the early Federal election.

The ALP is a member party of the International. It is important for the Party membership to be aware of the content of the resolutions adopted by Congress.

Resolution on Latin America and the Caribbean

The Socialist International reiterates its support for the fight for democracy, social justice and human rights in Latin America.

The Socialist International reaffirms its increasing preoccupation with the widespread and dangerous crisis in Central America and the Caribbean.

The policies of the Reagan Administration have seriously aggravated an already difficult and dangerous situation. The Socialist International supports the forces in

the United States, inside and outside the US Congress, who oppose the policies of massive military assistance to the repressive regimes and favour a negotiated and peaceful settlement in the area.

The Socialist International reaffirms its commitment to political and economic democracy, human rights and social justice. The Socialist International condemns all human rights violations, whatever the political com-

Emergency resolution on Nicaragua

The Socialist International opposes outside intervention in the internal affairs of any state. It is particularly alarmed and concerned by the invasions of mercenary forces in recent weeks and days into Nicaragua from Honduras. It urges that these stop immediately and that all United States direct and indirect involvement related to this violation of the territorial integrity of Nicaragua cease. The Nicaraguan people must be left free to implement their commitment to non-alignment and a pluralist democracy.

latin america

plexion of the regime in question.

We support the struggle of the FDR and its leader, Guillermo Ungo, Secretary-General of our member party MNR in El Salvador.

We fully support the FDR/FMLN call for a real, negotiated settlement, in order to bring about an end to the killings, and to achieve real peace and democracy.

We reiterate our support for the Nicaraguan revolution, because we support the democratic aims of that revolution, ideological pluralism, non-alignment and a mixed economy. We hope that this country will be able to follow its own independent course.

Therefore, we firmly oppose and reject all the attempts to destabilise Nicaragua. We condemn the external aggression of which it is the victim today. We ask for direct negotiations between Honduras and Nicaragua to stop the incursions from Honduran territory into Nicaragua, and we support the Contadora peace initiatives of Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Mexico, which could bring a genuine Latin American solution to the many different problems which are facing the area.

In the case of Grenada, the Socialist International again adheres to the principles of self-determination and therefore opposes any attempts by the Reagan Administration to destabilise the situation in the country. The International gives its full support to a democratic development based upon economic recovery and social justice as indicated by the New Jewel Movement.

The Congress reiterates the recommendation made at the Bureau meeting in Basle in November 1982 to hold a Socialist International conference on non-intervention, stability and peace in Central America as soon as possible, and accepts with gratitude the offer made by the Socialist Party of France to host the conference.

Military and oligarchic regimes that exist in various Latin American and Caribbean countries such as in Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina have assumed control over the whole life of their countries, this control includes military tribunals and summary courts, the use of military procedures and arbitrary detention.

The Socialist International strongly condemns the dictatorships of Haiti's 21



Haitian refugees risk death to flee their repressive regime. US authorities return them to certain death.

Duvalier, Paraguay's Stroessner and the military regime of Guatemala, and pledges to increase its political and solidarity measures for the democratic forces in those countries.

The Socialist International is preoccupied with the grave human rights violations in Surinam, and urges a return to a non-violent process of democratisation in that country.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the brutal Pinochet regime, the Socialist International remains firmly committed to solidarity with the Chilean people, whose suffering has been further aggravated by the present economic crises in that country.

The Socialist International supports the struggle of all Latin American and Caribbean peoples subjected to oppressive regimes, and demands respect for the right of every citizen of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay to return to their homeland in liberty and with dignity. It is pleased to learn about the fighting spirit shown by the people of Uruguay during the recent so-called 'internal elections' of political parties. The Socialist International reiterates its solidarity with the people of Argentina and with the aims expressed by the 'Multipartidaria' for the restoration of democracy in that country.

The Socialist International welcomes the democratisation process in Bolivia and hopes that the political

'abertura' in Brazil will lead to a full consolidation of democracy. It congratulates the PDT of Leonel Brizola and the massive victory of the party in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and sees the advances of the PMDB as a step forward in this process of democratisation.

However, it views with great concern and alarm the prospect that democratic processes in Latin America and the Caribbean will be reversed if the present economic situation prevails, and denounces as anti-democratic the policies imposed by the IMF, which must be seen as an expression of economic oppression.

Massive devaluations have been imposed, thus further decreasing the standards of living of the peoples in the region. The cuts in public and social services by governments are not acceptable measures and must be repudiated as an economic aggression; the same applies to the decreases in export prices which are the main factors leading to ruin and misery in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Socialist International expresses its solidarity with its comrades in government, Luis Alberto Monge and Salvador Jorge Blanco, and its member parties, PLN and PRD, in their struggle to overcome the great financial difficulties they are facing, and therefore appeals that special attention is given by the developed

world to both countries, in order not to endanger the democratic institutions and the welfare of the people.

The Socialist International is conscious that most Latin American and Caribbean countries have reached their borrowing limits and therefore supports the initiative aimed at devising a multilateral formula to overcome jointly the external debt of the region, which already exceeds 300,000 million US dollars.

The Socialist International is fully aware that in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the Third World at large, there are discussions concerning strategies of confrontation—one of which could be a unilateral freeze of payments on external debts—which would produce a world economic catastrophe and which would have been provoked by sheer despair and dejection by the developing countries calling in vain for international justice.

Therefore, it fully supports the North-South dialogue leading to a new international economic order, which would not only promote justice and equality in the Third World but would also free the industrialised countries from the present stagnant world economy.

The Socialist International also calls upon all its member parties, particularly those parties in government, to support and to promote efforts in favour of the economic integration of Latin American and Caribbean nations, as well as the recognition of the right of each nation in the area to have its own form of government and society, as chosen by its own people.

In the Malvinas/Falklands conflict, the Socialist International calls for a peaceful and negotiated settlement, and believes that the United Nations should be involved in finding a permanent solution. The Socialist International expresses its agreement with UN Resolution 2063, which calls for a peaceful and negotiated settlement and a permanent solution to the question of sovereignty of the islands.

Similarly, the Socialist International calls upon all other nations in Latin America and the Caribbean which have border or territorial disputes to resolve their conflicts through negotiations and peaceful settlement.

The Socialist International supports the independence of Puerto Rico—a Latin American nation.

Finally, the congress of the Socialist International welcomes the new member parties, the Progressive Labour Party of St Lucia, the Working People's Alliance of Guyana, the Partido Independentista of Puerto Rico and APRA of Peru, which will enlarge the democratic socialist family in the region.

Two important reports concerning East Timor were tabled in Federal Parliament in early September. Both included dissenting minority reports, reflecting a deep division of opinion on the issue of self-determination for the people of East Timor.

By Debra Stewart
Member of Annandale (NSW) Branch
and of the Australian Railways' Union

The report of the bipartisan delegation that visited East Timor for four days as part of a trip to Indonesia in late July and early August, was presented to Parliament on September 6. In short, its main findings are most accurately described as fraudulent.

Months before the delegation had even left Australia, Jakarta had made it abundantly clear that the touring observers only. Under no circumstances would the group be considered as investigative, with the brief of a commission of inquiry. By a farcical 'act of free choice' in 1976 the rump parliament imposed by Indonesia decided to seek intergration into the Indonesian Republic, thus Jakarta maintains that events in East Timor are internal matters.

Also, given the membership of the delegation included four known supporters of Indonesia's claim to rule East Timor, it was predictable that the report would be little more than a cover-up. The delegation consisted of Bill Morrison (Lab. NSW), Don Dobie (Lib. NSW), Manfred Cross (Lab. Qld), Senator David McGibbon (Lib. Qld), and Senator Gordon McIntosh (lab. WA).

Senator McIntosh issued a five page dissenting statement in which he described the main report as "tendentious, superficial and at times misleading in its evaluations and observations". McIntosh quite properly asserted that the report was impressionistic and failed to reach soundly based assessments because of the short period of time spent in East Timor and the way the visit was stage-managed by the Authorities. For example official interpreters and escorts provided by the Indonesian Government accompanied the delegation the delegation wherever it went—hardly a move designed to encourage free and uncensored speech.

The majority report blandly announced that the military situation was "quite relaxed" and that Indonesia was making admirable progress in improving the quality of life in East Timor. Importantly, it also recommended that an Australian vote in favour of any resolution at the

east timor

Self-determination — conflicting views



1975 Fretilin mobilisation in Dili.

United Nations supporting independence for East Timor not be made because it "will make no difference". In this cynical style the report dismisses the inalienable right of the Maubere people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.

There is no body or forum of international opinion that considers a free act of self-determination to have taken place in East Timor. In its founding charter the United Nations holds this principle to be one of the most fundamental human rights to be guaranteed to any people and it has consistently called for such an act to happen in East Timor. Yet, on the basis of dubious evidence, these four parliamentarians have argued that this principle is of no particular significance to East Timorese. The attitudes expressed in the Morrison report are essentially a rationalisation for maintaining good relations with the Suharto regime.

There are four main arguments used in the report to misrepresent the situation in East Timor.

1. Indonesian Authorities are in full control while Fretilin has been eliminated except for small nuisance value groups.

2. The development of the territory's food production, and health and education standards were impressive and

higher than in many other parts of Indonesia.

3. There were no signs of severe food shortages or famine conditions.

4. Most East Timorese consider they have never been so well off.

All of these assertions are suspect and based on a highly selective range of information.

Since 1976 Indonesia has claimed complete effective control over East Timor and has annually announced the demise of Fretilin. For the delegation to accept such a statement from local authorities at face value earns them at best the label of uncritical observers.

Earlier this year a cease-fire was arranged between Fretilin and Indonesian forces. If Fretilin's strength was of nuisance value only then the Indonesians would certainly have no reason to negotiate with them. The cease-fire was still in place when the delegation visited. Fretilin had also guaranteed the safety of the party during its visit. However, to conclude from this that the situation was "quite relaxed" was false.

On August 8, only a few days after the delegation's departure, a whole unit of Indonesian army officers were wiped out by former Fretilin guerrillas in the Viqueque district. Fifteen troops were killed in an uprising by detainees



Victims of the Indonesian regime in East Timor.

opposition and the situation is anything but "relaxed".

The delegation's discussion of health, education and welfare standards are based on information provided by local administrative officials. Almost all of this information was impossible to verify. The object behind the provision of social services is, in any case, to replace the traditional cultural values of the Maubere people.

In Suai, for example, the delegation was told there were 27 primary schools, yet there was no way this could be checked. Students in schools in East Timor are forbidden to speak in either Portuguese or Tetum, the local language. All conversation must be carried out in Bahasa Indonesia. Many students have been punished for not speaking in Bahasa.

A large number of teachers are army personnel who ensure that no aspect of Timorese culture or history is taught in the education system. The Authorities have closed down all mission schools.

Since the invasion nearly all the population has been forced to abandon their villages and live in resettlement zones. Here they are unable to produce sufficient food for their needs on the tiny plots of land available. They are thus forced into a dependency situation upon the army who distribute all food and supplies from overseas. The potential for widespread hunger and starvation is constant.

The delegation recorded that in Quelicai at least 10 per cent of the children they saw were severely malnourished. Many had distended bellies.

The military's strict control over the supply of food and medicine is used to enforce their rule. The International Committee of the Red Cross recently announced that it was suspending its operations in East Timor because of restrictions placed upon its movements by the authorities.

The development of roads and housing are cited as projects which have benefited the people yet it is widely known that the roads are of primarily military value and most of the houses are for use by Indonesians and their collaborators. People are restricted from moving freely around the territory so it is clear that roads are of no use to them.

The delegation did not stray away from the large centres of population which are under Indonesian control. They made no effort to reach areas dominated by resistance forces. On the single occasion that the delegation members (accidentally) met Fretilin guerrillas, the opportunity to have further contact was lost because of an inaccurate translation and lack of interest by Bill Morrison.

The most serious failure of the delegation was that it did not in-

vestigate the attitude of the Maubere people to Indonesian control. This crucial question was quite deliberately ignored in the report's findings. Had they done so it is apparent they would have found that there is little support for the annexation of East Timor into the Indonesian republic.

The second report, from the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, was tabled on September 8. The terms of reference of the Committee were to investigate the human rights and the conditions of the people of East Timor. The recommendations contained in this report contrast sharply with the findings of the parliamentary delegation.

The Committee concluded that the invasion and annexation of East Timor by Indonesia was an illegal act. It denounced the so-called act of self determination by which Indonesia claims East Timor was incorporated in 1976 as failing to meet "accepted international legal criteria for such an act". Accordingly, it recommended that Australia vote against Indonesia at the United Nations on the question of East Timor. It further recommended that until an internationally supervised plebiscite occurs, Australia should oppose any action which endorses Indonesia's claim to rule East Timor. It noted that military operations by invading forces led to the extensive famine in 1978-79, and that the East Timorese have been subjected to systematic and brutal violations of their basic human rights.

During the course of its inquiry, the Committee received 218 submissions, including 28 from overseas. Three of the six Committee members—all the Opposition members—presented a minority report. This was the first time

that any Senate Committee had split down the middle on an issue since the introduction of the Standing Committee system in 1971. The dissenting report described the tabling of a report as "irresponsible" and "detrimental to the national interest". The deaths of some 200,000 East Timorese are thus dismissed as inconsequential.

Much evidence to the Committee was given in camera by Timorese refugees who feared reprisals for their families and relatives still living in East Timor. By their consent excerpts of their submissions have now been made public. Especially interesting are comments about the way visits to East Timor are stage managed. One person referred to a document he had seen which specified which army units were "to take responsibility for each area when the ambassadors and journalists came to Timor in 1978. It also said that army members would dress up in plain clothes—this was to keep the Timorese under watch and to make up the numbers to welcome the delegation and yell out "Viva Indonesia". Another person testified that "The Indonesians are skilled in outwitting the foreign delegations that come to see", who are shown only what is intended and not the reality. We do not know for certain who the Indonesians fool but they have no success with the Timorese. . . . War tanks, armoured cars and other war material is carefully hidden outside (Dili) in village centres that will not be visited. The population is forced at gunpoint to go and make displays of happiness and give 'hurrahs' agreeing with Indonesian integration."

Especially poignant are the words of one refugee who complained that

"People who come to Timor for only two or three days cannot understand all the things going on in Timor. They see only good things which the Indonesians point out to them. They do not see the bad things which the Indonesians have buried at the back. They do not understand all the evil which the Indonesians have done since the day of their arrival. . . . People should know which of their words are lies, (like) when the Indonesians shut the hunger inside Timor, so that all the world will not know, especially everyone in Australia. . . . Now in this time of difficulty for Timor, Australian visitors united their words with the Indonesians, making the people of Timor suffer even more."

It now appears certain that there will be no debate on East Timor at the United Nations this year. According to the resolution adopted by UN General Assembly last year the UN General Secretary, Javier Perez de Cuellar, was to report to this year's meeting of the UN on the developments concerning East Timor. Instead he decided to postpone his report for one year because of unspecified "recent developments". Following this the Assembly's Steering Committee proposed that debate on the item be held over until next year. On September 23 the full Assembly ratified the decision. The "recent developments" referred to are the ceasefire arrangements which have now broken down.

Even so, it is clear that the UN hopes that the cancellation of debate at the General Assembly will assist in the resumption of negotiations which it believes may create a peaceful settlement.

Australia-East Timor Association

The most effective way of supporting the people of East Timor is through joining the Australia-East Timor Association and participating in its activities.

The Secretary

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central america

Nicaragua threatened

The following speech was given by Maurice Keane, a Labor parliamentarian in NSW, at a public meeting to defend the people of Nicaragua, held on August 21 in Sydney.

We are here today because we are appalled and outraged by the intention of the Reagan Administration to subvert and overthrow by violent means the Government of Nicaragua, a government that represents the Nicaraguan people and was responsible for the defeat of the detested dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in 1979.

We are also here because we are confident that the war plans of the Reaganites do not represent the wishes of the majority of the American people and we want to express our support and oneness with those Americans opposed to the Reagan administration's militaristic adventures in Central America.

We wish to stand with the 62 per cent of the American people who in public opinion polls have stated that they are opposed to the US being involved in trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan Government. We want to demonstrate to the 20 per cent of American people who support Reagan's policy in Central America that they are wrong and on of step with majority world opinion and the opinion of respected American leaders, such as Dean Rusk, Cyrus Vance and Ed Muskie who have publicly expressed opposition to Reagan's plans to destroy the Sandinista Government. Out of step with former President, Jimmy Carter, who, for example, has described the El Salvadoran Junta as the most blood-thirsty in the hemisphere. Out of step with former Vice President, Walter Mondale, who has stated that Reagan's policies in Central America are leading the American people into war.

We are here today to show support for Australian political leaders, such as Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, whose statement made in Washington called for the right of all Central American countries to live in peace and security, free from outside interference. Bill Hayden also said that military action will not solve the problems of Central America and that the Nicaraguan Revolution stands for principles which have received wide international support.

We meet today to applaud and

support the official policy of the Australian Labor Party on the crisis in Central America and we call upon the Australian Labor Government to faithfully implement that policy. The Conference of the ALP expressed complete support for the political solution proposed by the Governments of Mexico and France in the case of El Salvador and called for the restoration of respect for human rights of all people in Central America. The ALP Conference referred to the vast inequalities of wealth which are the cause of the injustices suffered by the poor, and of the violence in the Region. It called for the withdrawal of interference and the provision of military assistance by all external groups, and reaffirmed that the people in each of the countries of the Region have the right to determine democratically the political system under which they wish to live.

Here is an example of the "vast inequalities of wealth" referred to in the ALP policy, as it occurred in Nicaragua prior to the revolution of the Sandinistas.

Dictator Anastasio Somoza who was installed by the American Administration in 1933 held the country in vice-like grip for 46 years until the Sandinistas overthrew his blood-thirsty regime in 1979.

During that 46 years of vile dictatorship, Somoza amassed an enormous personal and family fortune by seizing for himself 25 per cent of Nicaragua's arable land. Somoza also had a controlling interest in six beef importing companies located in Miami, USA. These companies annually purchased beef worth more than 30 million dollars from cattle ranches in Nicaragua controlled by Somoza. Yet in Central America as a whole, 93 per cent of arable land is

owned by 7 per cent of incredibly wealthy landlords. In Guatemala, 70 per cent of the agricultural land is owned by 2 per cent of the population. More than 50 per cent of rural families in Central America either own no land at all or too little to support their families. Yet these conditions of gross inequality are those which the Reaganites wish to perpetuate and in the case of Nicaragua to restore, because there the Sandinista's land reform policy has given land to thousands of previously landless peasants.

Today we come together as Australians to also express support on an international basis for the proposals of the Contadora Group of countries—Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama—that call for the withdrawal of all foreign military advisers and bases from Central America, a freeze on the arms build-up and the creation of demilitarized zones. We meet also to express support for the 6-point Peace Plan proposed by the Government of Nicaragua.

Friends, is it not abundantly clear that the Nicaraguan Government, and the Governments of Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and France as well as the Australian Government are all sincerely proposing a course of action that should bring peace to the country of Nicaragua and its people, and justice with democracy.

Is it obvious that by contrast the actions of the Reagan administration will result only in further bloodshed and suffering by people who have known nothing but horror, privation and starvation for centuries? How can the arming and training of Somoza mercenaries by the C.I.A. to kill and terrorize civilians bring democracy to Nicaragua? How can the incitement of the Honduran Government by the C.I.A. to invade Nicaragua bring can the despatching of a flotilla of American warships to Central America and Honduran troops

stabilize the area and create a climate of trust and goodwill?

Of course, the reverse is true. The action of the Reagan administration is designed to heighten tension, increase the casualties, destabilize the region and when the time is judged to be ripe, let slip the dogs of war. Intervention by successive American Governments in the internal affairs of Nicaragua is by no means novel. The United States first sent troops into that tiny country in 1853. Then followed further invasions in 1854, 1857, 1896, 1899, and 1910. From 1912 to 1925 American troops occupied the entire country. Then in 1926 until 1933 when the Americans installed dictator Somoza and supported him until the Sandinistas were victorious in 1979.

Now in 1983 the Reaganites intend to pursue the same interventionist and illegal policies to overthrow a poverty-stricken people desperately struggling to establish a democratic and humane society.

Why is it that successive American administrations always support the most reactionary and blood-thirsty tinpot dictators who mercilessly oppress their people and impose corrupt and repressive regimes? Why whilst professing their love of democracy, do they always act to destroy it?

The reason, friends, is that although for a short period of time the rich and powerful elite of America may wield the power of the American State, they do not represent the will of the great American people. They did not in their shameful military occupation of Vietnam—and they do not now in their deceitful and devious plots to overthrow the peoples' Government of Nicaragua.

The American people will not tolerate another Vietnam in Central America. The peoples of the World will not tolerate another Vietnam in Nicaragua.

As the Spanish people fought against fascism in the 1930s, so did the people of Vietnam from the 1940s to the 1970s. Let no one be under the misapprehension that fascism was

finally defeated in 1945. True it suffered a most significant defeat in that world conflict, but the forces of reaction have never ceased to plot and plan their revenge for that humiliation.

The wars in Korea and Vietnam were rehearsals for World War 3. The war planned for Nicaragua by the same reactionary forces is part of the World War 3 scenario. If the peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile are crushed by the fascists, so much closer will the day be for the unleashing of the nuclear first strike, Armageddon, against the peoples of the World.

When the peoples of Nicaragua, El

Salvador and Chile rise up against their oppressors and fight and die for democracy, they are fighting for us also. Their defeat will be our defeat—their victory will be a victory also for Australian democracy.

Let us not forget that although the Reagan forces of reaction are very powerful they are also very isolated. They do not represent the mainstream of the American people. They do not represent the majority of the World's democratic Governments. They certainly do not represent the views of the World Council of Churches. Its governing assembly just concluded in Vancouver, overwhelmingly condemned U.S. policy in Central America and praised the Nicaraguan Government.

Delegates representing 301 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches with 400 million members approved a statement accusing the Reagan Government of trying to destabilise the Nicaraguan Government as part of an attempt to contain the aspirations of the Central American peoples. American churches were urged to intensify their efforts to bring about a radical change in their government's Central American policies. The WCC also praised the Nicaraguan Government for its life-affirming achievements and called attempts to destabilise the regime in Managua an affront to life.

So friends, in our expressions of support today for the peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile we do not stand alone, as voices crying in the wilderness. We are an integral part of a world-wide movement of support for the implementation of democratic governments and opposition to fascist dictatorships in Central America.

Our task must be to build public support for Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile and all countries struggling for freedom in Central America.

The mobilisation of support in the Australian Trade Unions, the Parliaments, the churches, the universities and the workplaces must proceed apace. Our cause is just. It is the implementation and the preservation of democracy and the defeat of fascism at home and abroad.

Let me conclude with the words of an American former Under-Secretary of State, George Ball, who recently said: "By the year 2000 there will be 600 million people in Latin America, more than 60 per cent under the age of 25. Thus we must co-exist in the same hemisphere with a swelling population of increasingly disenchanted young people rebelling at their inheritance of poverty, discrimination and repression. So long as we continue our arrogant interference to preserve frozen patterns of corrupt past, we shall remain their enemy."



Left: US troops occupied Nicaragua between 1926 and 1933 when they installed the brutal Somoza dictatorship. They had previously invaded in 1855, 1857, 1896, 1899 and 1910.

Right: Part of the Sandinista militia mobilised to prevent another US-backed invasion.



industrial

The nationalisation debate

With the Hawke Government having recently handed down its multi-million dollar assistance package to BHP, the question of nationalisation is once again sharply posed.

To many this is an academic discussion, a leisurely political debate, but to those who live in the "steel cities"—Wollongong and Newcastle, it has a grim reality.

"12,000 jobs lost, should BHP be nationalised?" was the title of a public forum organised in Newcastle by the Labor Resources Group and the Militant Action Campaign.

By Jane Beckman
Member of the Newcastle (NSW)
Branch

The forum was an attempt to open up debate among the forces on the Left, inside and outside the Labor Party, to get some discussion in the Labour movement of events already taking place.

Should a company like BHP which has for years milked profits out of their steel division and invested in promising areas like gas and oil, now separate off the steel division losses from the more profitable expanding areas? Should BHP then threaten to close down its steel division unless huge Government subsidies and a near-monopoly internal market are guaranteed? Should a Labor Government, after years of Liberal handouts, concessions and subsidies to BHP, extend these even further in the face of BHP's blackmail even though no guarantees are given that further jobs will not be slashed? Who benefits from such protectionism, and who from nationalisation?

These were some of the issues raised in discussion.

According to the first speaker Christine McDonald, an ex-member of the British Labour Party, it is just such a company as BHP which should be nationalised. Drawing from the experience of the nationalisation of the steel industry in Britain she pointed out that the way nationalisation is organised is very important.

"Australian workers have to take control of nationalised industry and run that industry in a way that benefits the workers themselves—that's the lesson of the British steel experience."

Nationalisation in Britain was a farce. Instead of an industry run by

workers in their own interests the industry was run by the same big business interests as before and therefore had the same problems. They ran British Steel in the way that would yield the best profits to private enterprise. Their methods included the investment of huge sums of public monies to rationalise some sectors whilst slashing thousands of jobs; the separation of profitable from unprofitable processes and the denationalisation back to private industry of the most profitable sectors; etc.

She contrasted the experience of British steel with the example of the workers at Lucas Aerospace with whom she had worked closely when she had been a County Councillor in Britain.

These workers, faced with a rationalisation plan from the company that threatened thousands of jobs, set up a Combine Committee of all workers on the plant to decide how they could run the industry effectively.

This was a workforce that produced high technology equipment. In a short time these workers had devised a corporate plan to produce 150 products that would meet the needs of people in Britain and underdeveloped countries. These included equipment for crippled children, a portable life support system, energy conserving fuel cells and a new kidney machine.

The process of setting up the Committee and devising the plan involved the highest technology experts with the workers on the shop floor and deliberately drew in other workers and the trade union movement. The plan wasn't taken up by the bosses, of course, but it proved that workers could plan, create and produce products that serve the real social needs as well as saving jobs. These are the lessons of the British experience Christine McDonald stressed.

Jim Comerford, an ex-miners' leader and author, the second speaker at the forum, made the point that it isn't in the interests of Australian workers to only nationalise the BHP's steel industry. That would mean workers taking on an unprofitable industry. Instead, all of BHP enterprises had to be nationalised by workers and this process had to be part of changing the whole economic system.

Central to this, he pointed out, was establishing genuine workers' control. Australian workers didn't want the type of nationalisation that has been carried out with British steel or the

Australian railways.

The last speaker was David Sampson, from the Militant Action Campaign, a rank and file grouping which challenged the right wing leadership of the Federated Ironworkers Association last year.

Central to their platform was the demand to nationalise all of BHP's enterprises under workers' control. While putting forward demands for shorter hours, safer conditions and a fight back on wages and for a democratic union, they argued that there was no real solution for workers if they wanted to protect their jobs and conditions, other than nationalisation.

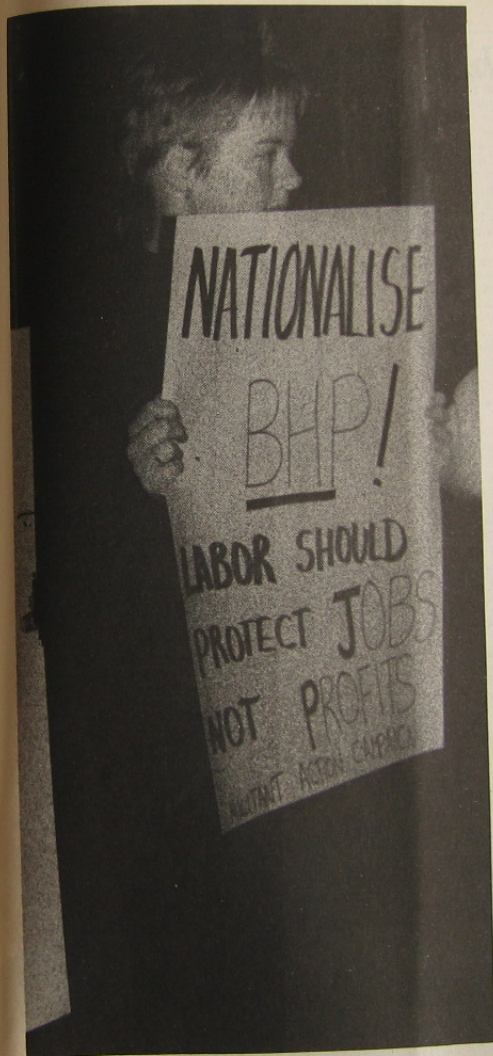
Sampson pointed out that because nationalisation is the only solution the task confronting progressive forces in the unions and the ALP is to unite and build support for nationalisation among workers. Many workers felt that nationalisation could not work after being told of the failures like British steel.

This had to be reversed. As he said, "Even if we can't immediately win this policy for Australian workers, we can immediately win Australian workers to this policy."

Discussion that followed the three talks reflected some of the major issues of concern to workers when they consider the question of nationalisation of BHP, and centred around Labor's assistance package.

Daryl Dawson, spokesperson from the Communist Party of Australia, typified a common viewpoint where the argument goes something like this: Yes, we are for nationalisation under workers' control but you have to be realistic. At present workers aren't prepared to fight for nationalisation, therefore if you raise this demand it only falls on deaf ears and you are wasting your time, worse in fact, because you are being unrealistic, you are in fact aiding forces like the right wing FIA leadership. Workers will not listen to you, so they will listen to them. What we have to do is accept the assistance package as an "impressive compromise" because at least we still have a steel industry and some workers still have jobs.

Others argued that this is a very conservative viewpoint because it panders to the doubts, fears and weaknesses of the shop floor at the very time when decisive, confident action is needed to defend workers from attack. Instead of mobilising and strengthening the workforce, it



demobilises and disillusions workers into accepting whatever the BHP bosses give out. It's just such a viewpoint which went along with the job loss that has occurred in the steel industry and which welcomes the assistance package.

This package is one of the biggest handouts by Government to big business in Australian history.

Bounties of up to \$72 million a year will be paid by the Government—by taxpayers' money—over the next 5 years to secondary steel processing companies most of which are BHP subsidiaries.

These bounties are to ensure that BHP's share of the market does not fall below 80 per cent. It guarantees BHP a virtual monopoly of the Australian steel market.

The Government's stated goal in providing this massive pay-out of taxpayers' money is to provide a "safety net" to enable BHP to proceed with its steel modernisation program. It will introduce new machinery and technology that requires a reduced work force.

BHP has an investment plan. The aim of this plan however is not the creation of more jobs but is to raise productivity of its steel division to 280 tonnes per employee. Currently the productivity level is 250 tonnes per employee.

The government, BHP and those who support the assistance package claim that it will save workers' jobs. This is simply not true. BHP has already announced that it will be cutting a further 4000-6000 jobs over the next ten years.

As the editorial in the August 11 *Financial Review* noted: "The question must be asked whether BHP has any real intention of undertaking the massive investment program in the longer term despite what has been peddled for public consumption. The unions should also wonder if they have been sold a pup, for the package will not increase employment in the industry. In the absence of such an investment program productivity rises, if they are to be significant, will have to come from reducing employment by rationalising work practices..."

Of course this is what BHP will do, using public monies as a launching pad.

As was made clear in discussion, protectionism is a very short term, short sighted policy. As a solution to rising unemployment, it provides no guarantees. If unemployment is to be effectively countered then nationalisation is the policy which must be pursued. Discussions like the Newcastle forum begin the process of raising this in the labour movement.

western australia

Women's rights

The Burke Labor Government in Western Australia announced the appointment of a Women's Advisory Council on September 17. *Labor Militant* spoke to one of the members of the Council, Judy Siddins, a final year apprentice fitter and first class machinist, a delegate to the ALP State Executive and a *Labor Militant* supporter.

Q. Judy, what exactly is the Women's Advisory Council?

A. The Women's Advisory Council consists of twenty women from a very broad cross-section of the community. Its function is to advise the Premier on matters of concern to women and as such it has quite wide terms of reference.

The Council can take up issues either upon request or on its own initiative. This allows us to take up literally any issue of concern to women in Western Australia.

As a Council we also have the power to convene forums, seminars and conferences throughout the state and to produce newsletters, pamphlets and other publications as part of our work.

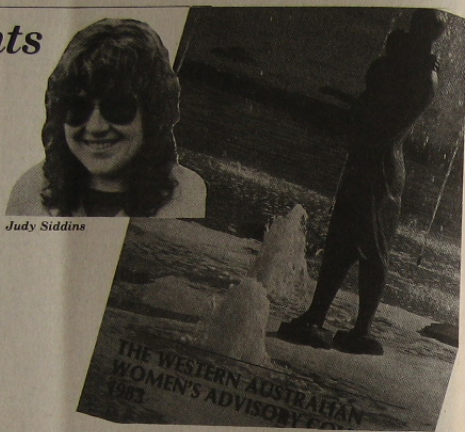
Q. What issues do you see as being a priority for the Women's Advisory Council to involve itself in?

A. Well, one very important issue that is currently very controversial in WA is the question of repealing the laws relating to abortion.

This has been one of the central issues in the women's movement for many years and it seems to me that any moves to improve the lives of women would be shallow without ensuring that we have that very basic right to control our own bodies and therefore be able to plan our own lives.

Actually the WA Branch of the Labor Party has a very good policy on abortion. It calls for the repeal of all those sections of the criminal code relating to abortion and this policy has the support of the majority of women. It also binds Caucus members to vote for this policy which means that the conscience vote can't be used as a cop-out by Parliamentarians.

Unfortunately the State Labor Government has refused to carry through this part of our platform and there is considerable unrest in the ranks of the Party on this issue. In fact a number of motions calling on the Government to act to repeal the abortion laws have been before the State Executive from the branches and more



Judy Siddins

are on their way, including one from Labor Women.

Q. Do you think this will be a very controversial issue within the Women's Advisory Council?

A. Perhaps. The Council is very broad and it is possible that some of the women oppose abortion being taken out of the law books and put onto the same level as any other medical procedure, but I hope not.

Brian Burke has certainly made it clear that he does not intend to move to repeal these laws.

However, a number of the other Council members have also fought hard inside the Labor Party to achieve the very good policy we have. And others are certainly committed to the repeal of these laws through their membership of groups such as the Abortion Law Repeal Association.

Really, if the WAC is to truly act in the interests of women then we can't sidestep this issue. We have to take a firm stand in favour of the repeal of the abortion laws and advise the Government to do the same.

Q. Judy, obviously this isn't the only issue you are concerned that the WAC takes up.

A. No, it isn't. I believe that getting good anti-discrimination legislation enacted is also very important. We need the sort of laws that go some way to overcoming the years of discrimination we have faced. This should include measures such as affirmative action for women, both in getting into jobs in the first place and in

promotions and seniority once employed.

We really have to break out of the last hired, first fired cycle where it at present operates in a discriminatory way, for example in areas which have been male preserves traditionally excluding women.

Of course, legislation alone won't change our situation. But without it we can't even get to first base. Along with anti-discrimination laws we need a good campaign to promote the idea of equality of opportunity for women and explain why these laws are needed and how women can use them.

And there are many other important questions the WAC needs to look at, including the effects on women of new technology, which is drastically affecting the range of employment, and the very immediate problems of occupational health and safety.

Q. Finally, Judy, what are your hopes for the WAC?

A. The Women's Advisory Council is something many, many women have worked for a very long time. A lot of these women have very high expectations of the Council.

If it decides to stand firm on issues that will enable women to move forward and take control of our lives, then it could be a very progressive Council that women everywhere can look to.

I hope that is what we do, and I will certainly be working for that to happen.

Central America tactics debate

I would like to comment on the letter by Leon Parisi in *Labor Militant* Aug/Sept '83.

Parisi claims to be making a contribution to debate, and also implied that Joan Baxter is opposed to debate. What Parisi apparently does not understand is that his contributions are not in terms which assist debate. His *Socialist Fight* article was an outright attack on the Sandinistas and Castro. Such committed opposition does not facilitate discussion. A lack of constructive attitude shows at several points.

First, the so-called CISCAC split he poses as an organisational question. But what was at issue were political questions. Was the formation of a national organisation, a full time worker and office important steps in advancing solidarity work, or not?

The FDR and FMLN are examples of coalitions of various groups, an important step in non-sectarian cooperation and unity of groups with diverse ideologies. Does Parisi reject that? This isn't ironic, just good political tactics.

That is what was at issue. I think the step-up in attacks on the Central American revolutions since that time demonstrates the correctness of building a national structure with a regular national publication *Venceremos*.

Parisi states that it is ironic that CISCAC and RACLA now work together. But what is ironic about that. The fact is that two groups now exist. No matter how much you may deplore the waste of resources and some duplication, two groups exist. Isn't it an important step forward to combine the solidarity work of groups with the similar aims especially given the gravity of US imperialism's intervention?

Allegations that the Sandinistas and Cubans rely politically on Stalinism stems from ignorance. Flouting such ignorance in terms of bold assertions does not help debate.

Exactly how are the Sandinistas coming in to Stalinism? Parisi fails to distinguish the political programme of the Sandinistas and FMLN from their international diplomacy.

In writing her letter Joan Baxter was not trying to stifle debate, contrary to Parisi who jumps to that conclusion simply because he is criticised. Are assertions without explanation, on the outlawing of strikes and jailing of socialists similar to right-wing propaganda or not?

You have to look at the concrete incidents and make judgements about the nature of the strike and the context it occurs in. Not all strikes are progressive, in some cases they are counter revolutionary—just think of the "pots and pans" strike in Chile which were used to destabilise the Allende Government. And not all self proclaimed socialists necessarily act in a progressive manner. Their actions have to be judged in the concrete context.

Would Parisi prefer that, in order to maintain abstract "democracy", strikes and political activity by sectarian groups of "socialists" undermine the revolution by damaging the economy and destabilising the emerging social changes thereby assisting the counter-revolutionaries within Nicaragua?

Evidently Parisi believes that the ceremonies giving land holdings to Nicaraguan peasants are just for show. Again some facts would be helpful. Just where have peasants been stopped from claiming land? Is it true or not that some factories have been nationalised? Is it tactically necessary that some factories stay in private hands in order to ensure badly needed imports and exports, especially in the face of an imperialist trade embargo?

Parisi will have to write much more clearly and factually before he convinces me that what he has to say contributes to debate and struggle.

Comradely,
Ross Hampton.

British elections

It is always necessary to analyse election results and the recent ones in the United Kingdom are no exception, so it was pleasing therefore, to read in last month's *Labor Militant*, the excellent article giving so many definite facts and figures about the General Election there.

Especially so because of the many distortions about these elections, which have appeared in the capitalist press.

For the truth is the actual drop in the Conservative vote; a vote overall which is just over 42 per cent. But nevertheless, many more Conservative Members of Parliament were elected, and there are several reasons for this which should be examined.

Firstly, there are the recent boundary changes which have altered voting patterns so much; Tony Benn himself was a victim of these boundary

letters

changes and his loss is a real tragedy for the Labour Party, as well as for his electorate, which he has served so well and faithfully for over thirty years.

As well as the boundary changes, there has been a split in the more conservative vote, caused by the formation of the Social Democratic Party; right-wing Labour members who now ally themselves and feel closer to the Liberal Party, but are, in many respects, more to the right of the Liberal Party.

But this split would not have affected the Labour Party if it had been united; the Right-wing has consistently undermined voters' confidence by verbal attacks in the left-wing members and publicly disassociating themselves with many aspects of the Labour Platform and openly suggesting that they would not be obliged to honour Party decisions and resolutions passed by Conference.

This behaviour was the single, most devastating blow to the Labour Party, and combined with other aspects, ensured a Conservative victory in a country where the majority of voters rejected Mrs. Thatcher's Government.

For the voting system is not compulsory and allows people the democratic right of withholding their vote if they are dissatisfied with the choices, and in this case, many traditional Labour voters felt this lack of cohesion and clear cut election programme, and exercised their option.

Winning is only successful if it is accompanied by clear cut socialist policies, and now is the time to work towards these with a united effort, and one voice, so that when the first by-elections are held, Labour will make a start towards gaining control.

But a united effort and one voice means honoured Conference decisions and being seen to work towards these resolutions; never has the time been more urgent than for these decisions to be put into effect, for when the first one, that of unilateral disarmament is taken, the rest, including withdrawal from the common market will follow automatically.

For if the yoke of the US war machine could be lifted from the shoulders of the British people, economic conditions would immediately improve, and welfare, instead of warships, would be the priority.

These are the goals for the Labour Party and their supporters and the good fight is only now beginning.

Irene Robson
Coburg Branch,
Victoria. 31

n.s.w.

Party democracy strangled

At the end of 1982, the ALP National Executive set up a sub-committee to investigate the systems of preselection used in the NSW Branch for the selection of candidates for upper and lower houses of both State and Federal Parliaments. Now the sub-committee has finished its hearings and prepared its report and the National Executive is expected to decide by the end of the year.

By Martin Tuck
Member of Leichhardt (NSW) branch

This tentative form of Federal intervention in the affairs of the NSW Branch follows years of faction fighting within the Branch over moves by the rightwing Centre Unity group to swamp the State Parliamentary Caucus with rightwingers from the upper house (Legislative Council).

In 1977 the system of proportional representation for the preselection of ALP members of the Legislative Council was replaced by a system of winner take all, which naturally favours the dominant Centre Unity faction.

In 1979, a rule change was rammed through State Conference opening the way for the entry of the upper house members into the existing Parliamentary Caucus — although large scale protests by Party members resulted in this move being delayed until 1984.

In 1979 the leaders of the official "left" Steering Committee Faction accepted the compromise on delaying the entry of the upper house members to Caucus on the understanding that they would continue to have proportional representation restored as the method for selecting the ALP candidates for that chamber.

It seems very likely that the National Executive sub-committee will recommend a return to PR. But its terms of reference are broader than that. It will also investigate the current systems for preselecting candidates for State and Federal lower house elections and may recommend a college system, similar to that operating in Victoria, in place of the branch membership ballots currently in use.

So the setting up of a committee raises a number of important questions. What sort of preselection system would be a step in the right direction of opening the party democracy? Does this degree of

Federal intervention represent a significant victory for the Left in NSW? What does it say about the strategy of the Steering Committee?

In the first place, it is important to point out that the issue of what system for preselecting candidates for the upper house is hardly central for radically transforming the nature of the ALP. Certainly a more democratic system than the current jobs-for-the-boys procedures would be an improvement. But upper houses are already widely discredited—especially since the sacking of the Whitlam Government showed what they could be used for. The ALP Left should really still be campaigning for the abolition of all such chambers—a goal achieved in Queensland many years ago.

The truth is that the Steering Committee leaders want to retain the Legislative Council as long as it can be used as a channel to get them into parliament. And that is why they are campaigning to get more Steering Committee representatives into the Legislative Council, rather than having it abolished.

The question of how lower house candidates are preselected is a more important one and raises a number of important points about the nature of the Party.

On the face of it, the current branch preselection system might seem more democratic than a college system. However, an important inadequacy of the current system is that members of trade unions affiliated to the ALP do not have any influence at all on the choice of the parliamentary candidates.

A system which gave union members the right to vote in electorate ballots, or a college system which contained some component of trade union opinion could therefore be an advance.

The parliamentary representatives of the labour movement should be selected by both wings of the labour movement. But the exact mechanism for how this might best be achieved, and which would represent a desirable balance of the opinions of both Party branch and union members is something that deserves widespread debate in the Party and union ranks.

Whichever system is used for selecting the candidates, the more important point is that the labour movement loses control over these individuals once they are elected to Parliament. The experience of the first

six months of the Hawke Government shows this up clearly with the blatant flouting of policy on Sinai troops, aid to Vietnam, East Timor etc, etc.

Parliamentarians must be bound to carry out party policy—as determined by democratically-structured conferences—and should be subject to recall if not performing to the satisfaction of those in the labour movement whose interests they are supposed to represent. This is a fundamental feature of a democratically functioning Party.

The fact that a form of federal intervention in NSW has now taken place indicates that the National Executive has been put under a lot of pressure to clean up operations in NSW.

The organisational offensive of the Centre Unity Faction, launched by its leading figure, Paul Keating, in late 1981, met significant resistance in the ranks of the Party branches. The most blatant component of that offensive was the withdrawal of the charters of several inner-city branches that were beginning to escape rightwing control. And this led to a campaign, including a couple of sizeable membership meetings, which lobbied for Federal intervention to overturn the bureaucratic manoeuvres of Keating and his allies.

The rank-and-file ALP Membership Defence Committee which grew out of that campaign was eventually and deliberately sabotaged by leaders of the Steering Committee. These careerists were disturbed by the independence of the Committee and thought it might prevent them negotiating a compromise deal with the leaders of Centre Unity.

The strategy of the Steering Committee in the face of rightwing attacks has traditionally become one of waging a short campaign in the Party ranks in order to establish a bargaining position to strike a deal with their Centre Unity rivals. On each occasion they lose more ground and see further anti-democratic practices institutionalised. But they maintain their own positions as "official" leaders of the Left.

In this instance, the Steering Committee strategy has resulted in limited federal intervention. Yet, the suspended inner-city branches have now been incorporated into other branches, many Party members driven out by the purge will not return, and the right wing is already preparing for a new round of attacks. Right wingers have



An old Qld ALP poster symbolises only too graphically the reality today—a battered working-class platform about to be scuttled and prosperity and equal opportunity sinking with it.

reasserted themselves in a number of key branches and in the Elizabeth State Electorate Council.

At the 1983 State Conference a further round of rule changes designed to strengthen the dominance of the Centre Unity Faction, were pushed through. These include a dual set of membership credentialling procedures.

In order to join the NSW Branch today, prospective members have to go through a complex "rite de passage" designed to discourage rather than encourage membership. Firstly they must be credentialled by Head Office to be admitted to the Party. Then they become members "in Limbo"—they aren't attached to any locality branch and are isolated from the normal functioning of Party life. To get out of this second-class membership they have to apply to their residentially

appropriate branch, be credentialled yet again, and finally, after the passage of a minimum three to four months, may be admitted to full Party life.

You don't have to be a genius to see the possible abuses of such a system.

The implications for such rule changes are clear, particularly when it is taken into account that 18 months ago the Centre Unity officers gained themselves the right to expel any member of the Party who raises questions of Party practice or policy in public. (This rule has already been used to expel one member for defending Party policy against the sending of Australian troops to the Sinai when the local ALP Member of Parliament took the opposite stance.)

The latest Centre Unity democratic abuse came with the round of preselection nominations for State seats in

October this year. The Administrative Committee, voting on straight factional lines, refused endorsement of the nomination by Belinda Weaver for the Sydney seat of Elizabeth against the sitting member, the Minister for Industrial Relations, Pat Hills. In order for Hills to re-nominate the retiring age restrictions had to be waived.

Weaver, the only left nominee and sole opposition for Hills, was not refused endorsement because of any breach of Party rules, but simply, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, because, as Steve Loosely, the NSW State Secretary stated:

"information in a pamphlet issued by Ms Weaver constituted a direct, deplorable and unsubstantiated attack on the Wran Labor Government and as such is totally unacceptable."

"In the pamphlet Ms Weaver summarised 'Wran's record' as Australia's highest unemployment, savage cuts in spending, attacks on trade unionists, support for the wage freeze and prices and incomes accord, raising Housing Commission rents and increasing subsidies to private enterprise."

The offending pamphlet was part of Ms Weaver's election campaign and was circulated *only inside* the Party. So now it seems that political debate and differing opinion are to be outlawed within as well as outside the Party—a very dangerous political precedent.

When the gas rule was adopted by Conference in 1981, leading members of the Steering Committee announced that they saw no difficulty in living with it. That may be true for them but genuine pro-working class political opponents of the ruling Centre Unity clique have many reasons to fear the growing arsenal of anti-democratic procedures that is being built up.

With the Wran government supporting wage freeze policies, attacking rail workers, cutting health services, education, community services, selling out on Aboriginal land rights, and generally promoting pro-capitalist measures, now is the time for a campaign for decent policies and for Party structures and procedures that would enable the implementation of such policies.

The Steering Committee is often willing to vote "left" but it is not even able or willing to mount a defensive campaign for maintaining the status quo. That is because the leaders of the Steering Committee who have participated in the Wran Government and long praised the style and program of that Government, are completely committed to the anti-labour policies it is pursuing. They are helping to insulate that Government from labour movement criticism of its pro-capitalist course.

Continued from page 4

tion of American States (OAS) countries, the NATO countries and even the UN Security Council voted overwhelmingly against the invasion.

So during that time and even today the Labor Government's position is to the right of Maggie Thatcher and several of the extreme right military regimes in the OAS.

Yet the Party has policy supporting Grenada and the New Jewel Movement (NJM) Government, and we have clear policies in support of self-determination. As well, the NJM is a sister organisation in the Socialist International and the policy passed at the last Congress this year in which the Labor Party participated, is very supportive of Grenada and the socialist course it was following there. (see page 21.)

Yet it took a big push by the Party ranks and branches to get the Government to take even the mildest critical stance.

In the past the Left was quick to speak out and condemn such events. But in response to Grenada the Left was hard to find. Some brave individuals stepped out after the first few days had passed. But the Federal Parliamentary Left, particularly those in the Cabinet, were very cautious and very silent. The union movement response was much quicker and stronger. Even right-wing dominated Trades and Labour Councils like the NSW TLC condemned the invasion.

The position that the Cabinet finally took was not a victory for the Left but just its opposite. It showed the degeneration of left leadership in the Party. When Cabinet finally adopted a position even blind Freddy could see that the US action could not be supported or condoned in any way—not even by silence or by stalling. Even so there has been no condemnation of the invasion.

The Grenada events show just how dominant the right-wing Hawke leadership of the Party has become. In our editorial in the August/September issue of *Labor Militant* we commented on the demise of the Left in the Party.

We noted that Hawke had thrown down the gauntlet of procapitalist policies nationally with policies like the Accord, and internationally as well and that no one in the Left had taken it up. As we said then "with each move he takes more and more." The Grenada events demonstrate just how much Hawke has taken.

What has been hearing has been the response of the Party ranks. Their willingness to speak out, to take action and to put pressure on the leadership to do the same, has been the only positive aspect of a shameful performance by the Labor Party.

Wran on rail

With NSW having the dubious distinction of being the state with the highest unemployment, and with a state election looming next year, something obviously had to be done around budget time 1983.

So like the proverbial white rabbit Premier Neville Wran has produced a \$282 million rail construction scheme to run over the next three years.

The program includes the building of an additional passenger rail link in Sydney, cutting 15 minutes off the trip from the outer suburban centre of Campbelltown, as well as the construction of two new country lines to facilitate coal haulage.

At a press conference on September 15, Wran claimed that up to 1800 jobs, would be created directly by the scheme, with a further 200 created indirectly.

Funding for the scheme is to come from deferred payments to the construction contractors while the Government assists them in obtaining loans to carry out the work.

While the projection of major capital works schemes to expand services and create jobs are to be welcomed, this particular project needs to be subjected to some critical analysis.

The Wran Government's track record in providing jobs in the public sector has been abysmal. Its policy has not been one of job creation as would be expected of a Labor Government, but rather one of job cutting.

Take the example of the State Rail Authority. In the three years up to 1982, the railway workforce was reduced by some 2500. In addition, as a result of the Government staff freeze, in October last year, there was an estimated 2000 unfilled vacancies in the rail system.

Over the past year, the SRA has been engaged in a major rationalisation program which has already seen a reduction in staffing levels among,

for example trading and catering train crews, station assistants, and train examiners.

Hundreds of other railway jobs are also under threat in the immediate future. It is the SRA's intention to reduce all three-person crews on loco-hauled trains to two, to send more and more work normally done in its own workshops out to private industry, and where ever possible to introduce new "labour-saving" technology.

Behind each new project undertaken by the SRA there lurks job cuts of some kind.

Not surprisingly, many railworkers view the new rail construction scheme with some degree of cynicism, labelling it a "pre-election gimmick." After having the threat of retrenchments held over their heads for the past year if they didn't "co-operate" with the SRA's rationalisation plans, railworkers are unlikely to be impressed with the Wran model of job creation.

Yet the NSW rail network has plenty of scope for improvement and expansion. Many new and permanent jobs could be created providing a better passenger service and a freight service run in the public interest, rather than being tailored to the needs of TNT and the other private freight forwarders.

Surely this is what Labor transport policy should be about. Instead we have the spectacle of a supposed job creation scheme, that at best could only replace jobs that have already been lost or are soon to be lost on the rail system.

It may help in the next election, and it will certainly be welcomed by the private contractors but what of the future when the proposed scheme has been completed and the contractors' deferred payments had to be made.

Will there be a net gain for the community, or will the Wran Government simply have plugged a few gaps temporarily, instead of developing a real job creation program to benefit working people?

children, so the children had to walk to school in the rain or the sun. So they insisted and demanded that we get some buses to start a public bus service.

Now that is August '81. The financial year is already eight months gone. The budget has been set. But because of the pressure and the demands, we were forced to go and find money wherever we could and buy 26 new buses to start a public transport service for the people. [Applause]

So this concept of democracy and our approach to human rights is one that has stressed solving these problems and the involvement of our people in a participatory way from day to day and week to week.

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- HOBART: PO Box 532, Sandy Bay 7005.
- MELBOURNE: GPO Box 5421 CC, Melbourne 3001.
- NEWCASTLE: PO Box 254, Newcastle 2300.
- PARRAMATTA: PO Box A431, Sydney South 2000.
- PERTH: PO Box 118, Victoria Park 6100.
- SYDNEY: PO Box A431, Sydney South 2000.
- WOLENGONG: PO Box 1976, Wollongong 2500.

Sinai troops out now!

Since this article was written the bombing incidents which killed some 300 US and French troops have occurred. While such a tragic loss of life is regretted, it does not change in any way the political content of this article. In fact it makes it even more urgent.

The US now threatens to increase the military activity of its forces there. Before the bombing there had been an escalation of the type of military action the US allowed their troops.

The marines had permission to return sniper fire. Their rules of engagement also allowed them to call in naval gunfire and attack aircraft to defend their positions. In the weeks just before the bombings the White House authorised the Navy to fire in support of a Lebanese Army unit — not just to defend American soldiers under attack.

Clearly these are strange military powers to give a "peacekeeping" force.

By Irene Robson
Member of Coburg (Vic) Branch

It would be easy by watching our television, to assume the so called "peacekeeping" forces, are in Lebanon to protect and support the majority of the civilians there.

But nothing is further from the truth, for these forces, who we must remember, are not a United Nations force, but one constructed by the US Reagan Administration, are in fact, trying to impose a quasi-fascist regime on an unwilling population. For it has been estimated that at least seventy-five per cent of the population there, certainly all the working people, the poor, and the dispossessed, regard the Gemayel Regime as their enemy, and one which Israel helped to install less than a year ago.

But the Druze (who are led by Walid Jumblatt and his Progressive Socialist Party) victory over the combined ultra-right Phalangist and Lebanese armies have alarmed Gemayel, forcing him to show his hand, by openly combining his family militia (the Phalange or Lebanese forces) with the army, and making it more difficult for the Reagan Administration and their allies, to continue their subterfuge.

In an article in the *Australian* on September 16 from a *Times* report by

journalist Robert Fisk, President Gemayel's role is clearly spelt out when the report states:

"In open cooperation and contradicting President Gemayel's claims of the army's total impartiality — Phalangist militiamen and Lebanese army troops now control Damour, co-operating in setting up checkpoints and firing positions.

"The Lebanese army is fast adding to the tension in the region. Not only is it fully co-operating with the Phalange at Damour, but further south, it and the Phalange are co-operating with Israeli armoured patrols."

And Michael Grati, military correspondent for the Israeli daily 'Haaretz' confirms initial Lebanese radio reports of Israeli re-deployment patrols beyond the Awaili River; patrols equipped with tanks and armoured personnel carriers.

Before the Federal election, both Mr. Bowen and Mr. Hayden highlighted the dangers of our involvement with this so called "peacekeeping" force in the Sinai and called repeatedly for their withdrawal. Our Prime Minister too, promised this in the days leading up to the election.

For our presence there does nothing to contribute to peace in the area; on the contrary, it is helping to destroy any hope of peace in that area, by backing a fascist-like unpopular regime.

And as well as betraying democratic Party policy, it is betraying

progressive Jewish people in Israel who, in recognising the reactionary nature of Zionist policies, are more and more demonstrating for a complete withdrawal from Lebanon.

This Jewish opposition to the Zionist policies, started when Israel first invaded Lebanon; it grew during the first few days of the invasion when it became known that thousands of civilians had been killed, many dying horribly from the effects of phosphorus bombs which burn on contact with air and stick to the skin, and cluster bombs, which are full of tiny bomb-like mines. Children died in their hundreds from these because they picked them up thinking they were balls, and had died or been horribly maimed.

Israeli soldiers started to refuse service when they could no longer stomach the genocidal Zionist purpose employed in Lebanon and our presence in the Sinai is a betrayal of these soldiers, who are at present being held prisoners for their opposition.

It is a betrayal to the brave Palestinian people who refuse to give up their fight for their homeland; their aim for a secular, independent, democratic State to be established once more, where Moslem, Jewish and Christian have equal rights and duties.

If we in the Labor Party do not raise our voices to demand Party Policy is adhered to, and our troops withdrawn, we jeopardise any hopes for the people of Lebanon, for peace in the Middle East, and for peace in the world.

Australian helicopters "peace keeping" in the Sinai.

