

Labor
MILITANT
FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

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March 1984

**Hawke's
faction on
offensive**

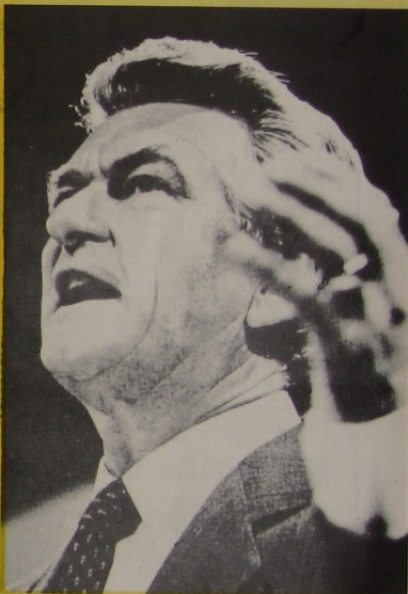
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Labor MILITANT

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 interests. 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 \$6 for 10 issues. We can also make arrangements to have a bundle of any size mailed or delivered for your branch or for you to sell. There are high costs involved in the production of a publication like *Labor Militant* so any financial contribution will help to ensure its continued regular appearance.

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Grenada

The Editor
Dear Comrade
Why did Gall Lord in her otherwise informative article on Grenada (via Labor Militant Oct-Nov), fail to name the origin of Bishop's assassins.
If it was the CIA, then her criticisms of Bob Hawke and Bill Hayden could be valid to some degree. Conversely, if those murderers of Maurice Bishop flowed from manifestations of Stalinism emanating from Cuba and the USSR, Gall should bite the bullet and say so.

It's my view that Maurice Bishop was developing into a Caribbean Tito and just as the Soviet Union waged a bitter underground conflict against Yugoslavia in the 1950-60 era, recent happenings in Grenada are a replay of that earlier political period.

When I returned from a trip to Yugoslavia during the earlier period in question and reported to the Sydney Trades and Labor Council exposing the aggressive role of the USSR against Yugoslavia, whose anti-fascist role was beyond reproach, I was jeered by CP leaders. Nowadays, of course, Tom Wright, Rupert Lockwood and other erstwhile apologists for Stalin's imperialism, being on the verge of political senility, like to forget their monumental political errors of the past and, in contrast, my keen political perceptions.

If Gall Lord wants to gain credibility in the ALP she shouldn't "cop-out" when she faces unpleasant political facts. Comradely,
Tony Muirvhill

Two journals in one

If you have got this far you already know that this is a special issue of Labor Militant. It celebrates the amalgamation of this journal with Socialist Fight.

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

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

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

2) By combining our resources we can improve the quality of our articles, the range of material covered, and the distribution of the finished product. We will now be moving to a schedule of producing a 28-page journal on a regular monthly basis.

3) This amalgamation demonstrates that we are serious about building a strong Left current. Although we have differing differences of opinion on a number of questions, we believe we have been able to reach agreement on the most important issues facing the Left of the ALP in the current circumstances (see box). By seeking such an agreement we hope to stimulate further discussion about the basis for unity of the socialist Left.

In August-September issue last year Labor Militant carried an editorial on "The Demise of the Left" which focused on the failure of the Left at the top levels of the Party to oppose the rightward course of the Hawke Government.

It pointed out that the Left's acceptance of the pro-capitalist course of the Government has led to an inglorious retreat for the Left. It commented "What we have not seen is any consistent development of a left-wing alternative platform, or left-wing alternative political positions which put perspective of the Labor leaderships of the traditional Left and Right." It concluded with the call for a "revived and strong Left in the Labor Party and Labour movement."

The supporters of Socialist Fight responded to this editorial and initiated the discussions that led to our amalgamation.

We agreed that the capitalist crisis is posing very sharp alternatives for the labour movement: accept substantial sacrifices to help capitalists restore their profit levels, or take advantage of this crisis to campaign for socialist solutions.

We could see that we needed to redouble our efforts to build a united socialist current. Yet most of the "official" Left has been following Hawke to the right. It is

falling to meet the challenge. It has accepted the view that to obtain and maintain office the Party must adopt a "pragmatic" pro-capitalist program. But in a period of crisis such a program involves sharp attacks on the working class.

There have been a number of occasions in history when Labor has come to power in this country in a period of political or economic crisis for capitalism. The Fisher and Hughes Governments in World War I, and the Scullin Government during the Great Depression and the Curtin Government in World War II are examples that come to mind.

Partly this is because more people hope that Labor will defend their interests in such periods. But it is also partly because the capitalists hope these Governments will obscure class antagonisms. Hawke's talk of consensus and reconciliation serves this purpose and he has said that he models himself on Curtin.

All these Labor Governments have accepted responsibility for restoring stability to the capitalist system, rather than lead struggles for socialism.

There have always been battles between the ranks of the Party and the Parliamentarians over the failure of Labor Governments to implement progressive aspects of Party policy. The most powerful socialist movement the country has seen—the Socialisation Units of the early 1930s—sought to force the Party to get serious about the Socialist Objective first adopted in 1921.

This problem remains. It is not enough to campaign for socialist policies. It is also necessary to campaign to transform the structures of the Party so that it will fight for the implementation of adopted policy.

We believe that the points of our agreement provide a good starting point for developing a socialist strategy for the Labor Left. But much more discussion is needed.

Are these the central points? What other should be added? The points we have made may need refinement. They all need elaboration. Our socialist strategy must be tested in action.

For these reasons we want to stimulate more debate in the pages of our journal. We are inviting contributions from those in the Left who have different views to those expressed by supporters of Labor Militant and Socialist Fight. We will set aside pages for ongoing debates on key issues. And we hope that readers will contribute their views and experiences by submitting articles, letters or even book and film reviews.

We believe that Labor Militant can become an important forum for debate in the socialist Left. But we also aim to make it a useful aid for activists. We will strive to report important meetings and developments in the Party and notify future events. And we will carry contributions

editorial comment

Turn back the enemies of Labor

The anti-Labor forces of the National Civic Council are on the offensive inside the labour movement.

They have recently won a position as national organiser of the country's largest union, the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union. They are challenging for control of the Tasmanian branch of the ALP. And they are trying to take over the Victorian branch by seeking affiliation for NCC-dominated unions. Most of the unions involved split with the Party in 1954 to help found the right-wing Democratic Labor Party.

The AMFSU has been a target for the NCC for two years. An NCC front, the "Reform Group" challenged for top positions in the union in 1982, falling only narrowly to defeat National Secretary Dick Scott and Assistant National Secretary Laurie Carmichael.

In Tasmania the NCC has already taken control of the AMFSU. Another Tasmanian union dominated by the group, the Federated Ironworkers Association, has recently reaffiliated to the ALP and sought a rule change such that unions could appoint non-ALP members to the Party's State Council.

The Tasmanian Branch is resisting this move in order to defend itself against anti-labour forces. The State Secretary of the Federated Storemen and Packers Union, Paul Lennon, has had his application for ALP membership blocked on the grounds that he has campaigned for the election of the NCC-linked Labor renegade Senator Brian Harradine. And a former State Secretary Kath Venn has been censured for the same reason.

The extreme right's campaign to win control of the Victorian branch of the ALP is probably the most serious of all. For here it is out to destroy the Party's most important left current, the Socialist Left, and impose the kind of rigid machine that has long suffocated the NSW branch of the Party.

The leaders of the Socialist Left are correct to point out that the current leaders of unions like the FIA and the Federated Clerks Union are the enemies of Labor.

They are grouped in the NCC splinter, the Industrial Action Front. They, or their factional predecessors played a big part in splitting the Party in the 1950s and thereafter kept the ALP out of government at the State and Federal level by supporting the DLP. It should never be forgotten that the DLP directed its preferences to the Liberals and that this alone kept anti-Labor governments in office on a number of occasions.

No doubt these "leaders", whose undemocratic practices in their own unions are notorious, do not reflect the predominantly pro-Labor views of their members. But they intend to use their bureaucratic control over these bodies as a base to once more wreck the labour movement, turning it into a replica of the U.S. trade union federation, the AFL-CIO, with its CIA-dominated leadership.

Hawke's Labor Unity faction, which invited the unions to apply for affiliation, has accused leaders of the Socialist Left of being on a McCarthy-type witchhunt in keeping out such unions. Long-time leader of the Victorian Right, Frank

Crean, has said that "if they are fit to sit on the Trades Hall, they are fit for the Party."

But if these forces gain control of the Victorian branch they will stamp out all semblance of internal democracy.

One union seeking reaffiliation (after splitting in 1954) is the Victorian Operative Bricklayers Society. The secretary of this union, Bill Giles, told the Melbourne Age: "The Prime Minister invited us to rejoin and we are happy to support him."

This is the crux of the matter. Hawke himself is heading up the campaign to wipe out the Socialist Left and muzzle further debate about the rightward course of his government. In recent years he has set out to create a clone of the NSW machine in Victoria through his Labor Unity faction. But he cannot get the numbers unless he can smuggle the NCC back in.

For its part the NCC is happy with the pro-boss policies of the Hawke government. It can see that it can pursue its objectives most effectively inside the Party.

The fact that the NCC operates as an agent of the capitalist class inside the labour movement has been well documented in the book Pattern of Deceit: The NCC and the Labor Movement published by the Committee to Defend the Victorian ALP. Adopting the same methods as CIA-front groups in the US, the NCC has infiltrated unions and sections of the Labor Party to sow any signs of militancy and take out key positions.

In the 1950s the group took different paths in Victoria and NSW. In Victoria it promoted an open split. In NSW it remained inside the Party to seize control of the central apparatus and create the awesome machine Paul Keating has now inherited.

Now that the DLP has collapsed, the Victorian wing of the NCC wants to get back into the action and imitate the longer-term "success" of its NSW counterpart. Keating's "enforcer" Senator Graham Richardson has been given the assignment of pulling together an effective, national Centre Unity faction behind Hawke and Keating.

The factional manoeuvres by the extreme Right are causing concern among the "moderate" Right. Hayden, Young, Walsh and Blewett have responded by building their own "Centre Left" faction. Hayden has done nothing to distinguish himself politically from Hawke. He supported the Keating budget. He supported the overturn of uranium mining policy. And the

Continued on page 16



Laurie Carmichael

Brian Harradine

Letters to LM should be sent to Labor Militant, P.O. Box 372, Broadway, NSW 2007. Please keep letters reasonably brief so we can print as many as possible

from organisations or committees campaigning around a particular important issue. For example, in this issue we have included an article from a leader of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in Victoria and some material reprinted from the national newsletter of the Committees in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean.

In this way we hope to provide ideas and resources for those who wish to pursue these issues through various forums of the Party.

If you like Labor Militant: If you want to know more about our ideas and plans; or if you want to send a donation to help us in this project please write to us at PO Box 372, Broadway 2007

Points of agreement

1) Opposition to the Prices and Incomes Accord. This is primarily a wage-cutting mechanism which makes the union movement responsible for policing its own members. We support the Socialist Rights Campaign which is seeking to develop a strategy for the labour movement opposed to that of the Accord.

2) Labor governments in Australia have always implemented pro-capitalist programs, often in periods of capitalist crisis. This has placed these governments in opposition to the interests of ALP members, members of affiliated unions and the majority of ALP voters. We are committed to developing a socialist strategy for Labor that will take economic and political power out of the hands of the capitalist class. For workers power and socialism!

3) For unilateral disarmament! We oppose the ANZUS alliance; the U.S. bases in Australia; the visits of U.S. warships and planes; the Australian war "defence" budget; and the export of Australian uranium. Current military planning and the U.S. alliance increase, rather than decrease, the likelihood that Australians will be involved in war.

4) For solidarity with struggles for national liberation and against imperialist intervention. We identify U.S. imperialism as the major threat to world peace. The war drive of the Reagan Administration is linked to the economic crisis; the search for markets and sources of cheap labour and raw materials. The war drive is being escalated now to prevent more countries escaping U.S. economic domination.

In the wake of the invasion of Grenada, we fear a U.S.-inspired invasion of El Salvador and/or Nicaragua and will campaign to prevent the outbreak of a Vietnam-type war in this region. We identify the Middle East as the other major region where imperialists are seeking to defend their interests by military means.

5) Australia is an imperialist power in its own right and a junior partner of U.S. imperialism in the Asia and Pacific region. Australian companies, operating in the region, exploit cheap labour and benefit from favourable



For your collection

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also a pretty good offer for those who just like to keep themselves well informed. The back copies of our journals make a good reference library. Ideal size for a Mercury box. But you had better hurry as supplies are finite.

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trading relations. Australia gives economic and military aid to repressive regimes in the semi-colonial countries where Australian capitalists have vested interests.

6) Australian nationalism is not progressive. Australian workers have no interests in common with Australian capitalists and imperialists. We have far more in common with the working people and peasants of all countries.

The ALP has a sorry history of seeking to blame the problems of this country on "foreigners." The White Australia policy blamed immigrant workers for problems of unemployment and declining living standards. Support for protecting Australian industry through tariffs is supposed to safeguard our living standards. But such measures only boost company profits.

As the present crisis has shown, they do not prevent sackings and wage cuts. They do not solve the problems of capitalism in this country. Only socialist measures directed against the

Australian capitalist class will defend our living standards, especially in a period of capitalist crisis, such as the present.

7) The need to build a campaigning socialist Left in the ALP nationally. Only a strong and united Left with a clear, alternative strategy will be able to counter the pro-capitalist course of the ALP. This strategy must begin with the defence of the immediate interests of the working class and project a fundamental reorganisation of this society.

The socialist Left must become involved in the day-to-day struggles of the working class to defend jobs and living standards. It must rely on the organised strength of workers inside the unions and in the ranks of the Party. A militant Left current must be built simultaneously in both wings of the labour movement. It must seek to popularise socialist solutions and campaign for internal democracy to enable debate and implementation of such measures.

industrial relations

Hawke threatens job losses

'Australian people . . . have to have a longer view, being concerned not merely for today's jobs but tomorrow's children'

If 1983 was the year of the economic summit, then 1984 appears to have been earmarked as the year of restructuring Australian industry.

Both initiatives by the Hawke Government have been portrayed as major steps toward resolving the economic crisis. Yet behind the razzmatazz of a national consensus and short-term sacrifices for long-term benefits lies the same stark message—the workers have to pay.

Debra Stewart, member of Marrickville East (NSW) Branch

In the interest of national reconciliation, the union movement last year was required to forego a 9.1 per cent wage catch-up, sign a two-year no-extra claims agreement and accept a wage fixing system that in reality does not fully compensate for inflation.

This year, in the interest of restructuring, the union movement is being asked to sacrifice jobs and make even more concessions to employers.

It may be cynical to ask why Bob Hawke waited till he was a few thousand kilometres away to announce the formation of a Cabinet sub-committee on restructuring policy, but it did little to bolster the image that Hawke's main concern is jobs for our children.

Hawke cited the 1983 Steel Plan as a model for the type of restructuring that Australian industry is required to make to be more competitive and hence more profitable.

Certainly, BHP's 116 per cent jump in profit for the half-year ending November 30, 1983 attests to the success of this plan for the employers. For BHP employees, however, it has been a different story.

According to managing director, Brian Loton, increased consumer demand was only a small factor in the steel division's \$68 million profit. The prime factor was cost containment and rationalisation.

According to the February 6 Financial Review, over the past two-and-a-half years, BHP's steel division has

shed some 17,000 jobs. As a result productivity has jumped from below 200 tonnes/worker/year to an average of 234 tonnes.

BHP has a long-term aim of a productivity of 350 tonnes and hopes the "agreements" with unions will pave the way for reaching that goal.

If this then is the model on which further restructuring of industry is to be based, it seems a strange method of job creation for future generations.

For the employers, however, this is exactly the type of model that they must follow to maintain their profits new technology, efficient work practices and resulting higher productivity are required to stay competitive.

But this is only part of the problem facing Australian industry. Hawke also addressed another major problem on his Asian tour, that of markets. Returning to the example of BHP, there is a limit to the role that any recovery in the domestic market can play in maintaining profits.

International markets are also needed. Hence the China deal for the export of pig iron.

It appears, however, that for such deals to be viable our export image has to change to one of being a reliable supplier. So further concessions are to be demanded from workers in export-oriented industries around their right to take industrial action which may disrupt supplies.

In response to Hawke's "grand plan" for industry, many sections of the labour movement have unfortunately fallen back on the old standby of calling for protectionism. But in the current economic climate, inefficient Australian industries can no longer afford to shelter behind tariff barriers.

Those enterprises that have not yet embarked on some restructuring program of their own be it wage cuts, retrenchments, new technology etc, will soon be forced to in order to stay competitive. It can only be naive to assume that any profits gained through protectionism would be used to maintain employment levels.

Acceptance of the Prices and Incomes Policy by the union movement has also left it in a weaker position to resist the consequences of any major restructuring program. In fact it was the acceptance of this policy and the restrictions it places on the union movement which has allowed Hawke to embark on this course.

There is a fundamental problem that Labor Party members must address. Having worked for a Labor victory in 1983, we must now question whether the economic strategy of that Government is designed to benefit those whom Labor is meant to represent.

We can accept the current situation, or we can begin to develop economic policies that pose solutions from the viewpoint of benefiting workers.

To say that we must accept economic reality, a phrase often heard in the Party, is to say that we accept that BHP has the right to a massive profit while thousands have lost their jobs. Do we begin to challenge the vested interests that control this society, or do we say that they have the right to dictate economic reality to us?



Socialist Left activist attacks Accord

The following is the text of a leaflet distributed at a recent meeting of the Socialist Left in Melbourne by Ian Mill. Mill is an executive member of the Socialist Left and a former junior vice-president of the Victorian ALP Branch.

The two important issues of our times are the preservation of the peace in a nuclear scenario and the transfer of economic power in a socialist way to the wage and salary earners.

These two major considerations are complex in their various components but inseparable, finally. Without one the other cannot arise.

Within the framework of capitalist society the struggles associated with the many aspects of economic differences including the social wage give rise to questions of great political import.

Trust in correct leadership is an essential ingredient for publicising the continuous economic involvement of the organized working people.

To mislead, either through theoretical ignorance or by deliberate choice, is to leave the workers defenceless on the political plane as well as with respect to their economic needs.

In my view there is much in the present Australian scene which falls into the category of misleadership.

We come to expect that the right wing of the Labor movement, A.L.P. and other, will attempt to cajole working people into false positions. They have the precise job of supporting the capitalists in a period of deepening crisis. Theories of consensus with the employers, of wage reductions, of support for militarist ventures overseas and the like fit maturely on the shoulders of our right-wing lieutenants of capitalism, in and out of the trade union movement.

Comrades, no matter how we gloss over the fundamentals there does still exist a class struggle. Any advance on the part of working people has to be fought for. Increased profits do not result in any increase in the worker's share. We do nothing for the movement towards socialism by running into positions of bolstering up the unbolsterable framework of capitalism.

The crisis is not transient but permanent and workers should be told this. In spite of allegations about recovery it is now again obvious that unemployment has increased from what is said, we expect the right wing to mislead but what is of greater concern is the tendency for many leadership figures in the left to accept the false arguments of the conciliators and therefore mislead workers into the position, whereunder they begin to believe such lies as that higher wages cause unemployment.

The capitalists, through their media, have left nothing undone to present Hawke as the saviour of all Australian society. He suits them admirably—he suits that insane hero Reagan and therefore, automatically he is bad for the Australian working class.

The greatest manifestation of misleading class collaboration arises from an acceptance of the Accord between unions and the government. The prime result of the Accord is a straight transfer of wealth from workers to sections of the overseas and national capitalists. B.H.P. hasn't done so badly, doubling profits and issuing bonus shares at a premium after massive government intrusion to support their profit structure.

We should be organizing public pressure to take on people's ownership of many of the larger enterprises instead of bailing them out.

The theory put forward is that acceptance of the Accord will have a positive effect on unemployment. This is founded

on false premises and has not arisen anyway.

One of the chief components world wide of the high inflation, high unemployment crisis is the inordinate waste of resources on preparations for war. In this country a significant advance in employment could be engendered by a reduction of ill spent and unnecessary defence budgets. The aim of improving living standards "over time" is unrealistic. All the weight has been given to retarding wage growth while prices have continued to rise. The current estimate is that workers are some 15% worse off than before the Accord. Medicare as a self supporting enterprise does not greatly alter this position.

By the agreement "criteria will be designed to ensure that enterprise does not earn profits beyond levels necessary for the maintenance and the expansion of the enterprise, that real wages of employees are protected and that unnecessary cost increases are not reflected in higher prices." Fine words but not in any way borne out by subsequent history.

When one considers the recent antics of specialist doctors and lawyers, it is indeed hollow to consider the pious comment in the Accord about non wage incomes.

We can all agree, again, with the plety of the claim for an "extension of a capital gains tax to catch speculators and tax avoiders". It seems the capitalists simply won't let that happen.

Comrades, the Accord is a direct wage cut and founded on fallacy. Similar things happened under Labor leaders in 1931. We have not the excuse of historical ignorance.

We in the Left have to provide a credible alternative to the pro-capitalist Hawke philosophy.

Some of the basic short-term policies we should espouse include:

1. The immediate introduction of a capital gains tax.
2. A review of indirect taxes affecting the working man.
3. An overhaul of unnecessary defence expenditure.
4. An end to profit subsidisation.
5. Massive increases in public expenditure to create jobs.
6. Reduction of tax on low income earners to increase consumer demand.
7. The abolition of agreements which restrict industrial action.

The inevitable conflict which the intrusion of such policies would set up within and beyond Australia just has to be faced.

The alternative program means a permanent acceptance of a depressed capitalist Australia, trailing on the coat tails of the war monger Reagan.

Building in the expression of radical policies leading to a building of socialist consciousness is the way forward.

Many of the left have little vision, they continue to crawl around the fringes of problems operating on pro-capitalist, minor reform positions. To coin a phrase "over time" capitalism simply cannot be reformed to our advantage—it has to be transformed. The state or government apparatus cannot be viewed impartially or as a sympathetic umpire arbitrating between workers and bosses. Capitalist government, Labor included, inevitably takes sides to protect and strengthen the employing class.

When the left should be attacking massive public support holding its own and being subjected to stronger outside attacks.

To me, the embracing of the Accord and more especially the Summit Communique by some of our left unions can only retard the understanding of workers regarding the true nature of current events and act as a fetter on the proper political development of the rank and file.

'Critical that SL rejects Accord'

The following is an interview with Kevin Healy, a founding member of the Socialist Left in Victoria and editor of its journal Action. He is also an alderman on Fitzroy Council. The interview was conducted by Paul White.

Question: Kevin, there is a great deal of discussion in the ALP Left at the moment, nationally, about the need to develop an alternative economic strategy. What's your view of the general direction of this discussion so far?

Answer: I think the discussion so far has been encouraging in that it has been held. There are some problems with the document that has come out of the national discussion so far. There is a tendency to accept the Accord. It makes the point that wages have been a cause of inflation, and I think there are questions that we certainly have to challenge and not accept.

I guess in the ongoing discussions we really have to resolve fairly quickly, and as a first step, our attitude to the Accord, because if the Left discussions are going to proceed on the basis that the Accord is acceptable, then I don't think they are really going to get very far. They may well come up with some reasonable reformist propositions, but I doubt if they will really get down to challenging the system as such.

I think it's pretty critical at the start that the Socialist Left reject the Accord. It is sensed as a so-called left body accepting something that is a wage restraint measure, and I guess there has to be a further understanding of what wages are all about, because if they are going to start making statements like wages cause inflation, I think it indicates that people who write such things have no idea of what wages are all about, and what happens with wages in a crisis.

Question: Do you think that measures such as increased protection, increased subsidies to industry will help the manufacturing sector, and therefore help the workers in that sector. Do such measures benefit the community?



Comeng workers in Sydney used industrial action to save jobs

Answer: I don't really think so. We had the example recently, when the Government scrambled to give BHP a magnificent handout for its steel industry and the company immediately turned around and announced record profits in that area. The massive handouts just don't help. I believe that if the governments are going to give handouts of that sort to those industries, then we ought to be saying, we shall not give it to you as a grant, we shall use it as an investment in your company, and we shall own that percentage of the company. It seems reasonable to me, that if companies can't operate under capitalism without assistance from the state, and it is their system after all, then the state has every right to take them over.

We should certainly not do what was done to BHP and just hand them straight profits on a plate.

Question: You mentioned the argument that wage rises cause inflation. Do you think that they make it harder for Australian industries to recover from the recession?

Answer: Well that's absolute crap of course. Look at the figures in the last quarter of the Whitlam Government for instance. Inflation rose by .08 per cent and because of the indexation system of the time

unions were going soft on wage pushes. There was effectively a six month period when there was no wage push whatsoever, and yet in the next quarter we went back to the double digit annual inflation figures. Wages hadn't caused this. Prices kept rising but wages had nothing to do with that.

So what did cause the inflation? It is part of the system. It is endemic to capitalism. If wages don't increase at the same rate as inflation at least, then workers are going to fall behind in their standard of living.

And that's what happened with the Accord last year. We accepted a 9.1 percent loss for the year and over a three year period workers have in fact lost about 20 per cent.

In the United States inflation has been dropping recently. It actually got down to zero in one month. If in fact it is true that wages cause inflation, and inflation causes unemployment then clearly if inflation is coming down unemployment ought to be coming down. But at the very time when US inflation got to zero, the experts in the United States (and there's never any shortage of experts) never any shortage of experts in the United States) were all predicting that unemployment would not decrease, and would in fact increase for a

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DEBATES

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long, long time. So if there is a connection there, it certainly doesn't work in reverse. I would argue very strongly that there is no connection, that wages are but a price of labour and they should never be seen as anything else.

Question: So, you don't support the Accord? How about the weaker unions like your own, the Australian Public Service Association and the unemployed and the pensioners? Some of the Left in the Labor Party claim that these groups will be left by the wayside without a centralised fixation system. Brian Howe recently said that we must look at the Accord as a whole and not just look at isolated aspects like wage restraint. What's your view on this?

Answer: I'll begin by taking the point of the Accord as a whole. Quite clearly the ALP has social policies, and policies reflecting the social wage, which ought to be implemented regardless. It seems to me to be quite unrealistic for the Party, which is, historically anyway, the party of the unions, to go to the union movement and say "You must do a deal, sacrificing your right to strike, your right to full wage increases and in return we will give you improvements in social wage."

It is quite wrong, and certainly those areas of the Accord that are supposed to benefit workers should be things a Labor Government would do as a matter of course and not by coercing workers into giving up one of their basic rights.

On the first part of your question. Again I would say a Labor Government should automatically adjust wages when CPI figures come out. All benefits should also be adjusted. Benefits should be raised to a level where people can live decently and then continually be indexed as well.

Indexation in itself isn't an ultimate answer of course, because workers ought to have a right to fight outside of that as well, for additional increases, because if you are just keeping up with the CPI, then you are not really going forward at all. But at least it's a start, and I don't believe that it's correct to say weak unions will fall behind because they won't be able to negotiate. I believe, in fact, our

Labor Government should guarantee that all workers receive at least the indexed CPI increases as they occur, and not have to go crawling to some bloated judge on a bench, who may not give you the full amount even then.

Question: It has been stated in the course of the debate in the Left that we must recognise that our objectives have to be pursued in the context of the existing capitalist economy. How do you feel about this as a starting point for a Left economic strategy?

Answer: Quite clearly, we have to develop strategies that are reformist in some ways but I believe we can go further than that and start really challenging the system itself, because, it is getting to a critical stage where I think more and more workers are going to become aware of some of the things that we are talking about. Particularly if we start saying it much more publicly and challenging much more publicly the sorts of myths the system throws up, like the myths about wages, inflation, unemployment etc. I think we need to put up very challenging proposals that include taking over companies where they fail, or where they are no longer able to employ the workforce productively.

I think we need to start looking seriously at restructuring our industry, so that we start producing much more socially useful goods. We probably do have to look at the sorts of industries and the effect of them on society. For example is it good to go on producing cars that pollute and do all sorts of horrible things? Should we continue producing some of the chemicals we produce in our society or should we use the equipment that is available to produce something else that is far more socially useful?

They are also things we need to look at very seriously, and I think if we are going to stay in the context of capitalism, then you start talking about having to save jobs in the car industry without looking at what that means as a social problem, whereas if we can look at the social problems in the light of the workforce, and with the workforce, and come up with other solutions then the whole society is obviously going to be a lot better off. That will mean challenging the

right of capitalism to make its own choices about what it produces and what sort of factories it builds and where it builds them.

Question: In your view, how much of Australia's industry and resources need to be publicly owned or nationalised? Does it have to be just significant sections of key industries, or all key industries or all industries, or what?

Answer: I would say, off hand, about 100 percent. But it is obviously not realistic in today's society. But I think you have to start talking about restructuring. If the industries themselves simply can't maintain their workforce, or they are overproducing in certain areas. Those factories ought to be used for other purposes, and that might mean more capital investment, because many of the factories have been allowed to run down.

We certainly need to say, and I think it is a winnable argument, that where an industry, and a major industry, like the steel or car industry, starts displacing workers by the thousands, then the state has a responsibility on behalf of those citizens to take over the industry, take a look at what is being produced and decide if we can produce something better within the same area.

I think that it also important that if we find a solution that involves public funding for those companies then you take a percentage of ownership.

I believe there are steps you can take that are winnable within capitalism. If major industries continue to falter and come to the Government for help, then those major industries at least should be taken over.

Question: What should be the major components of a pro-working class alternative, if we are to tackle problems like wages and unemployment?

Answer: I've already talked about restructuring and state ownership as they affect these areas.

I also think you have to say that unemployment is not going to be overcome for a long time and therefore we have to ensure that people who are unemployed in this society, are given a decent benefit so they can survive without the embarrassment that unemployment

causes. And we need to structure things so that those people can feel useful.

Obviously, in the tax area, you have to start hitting the capitalist much harder. There are massive amounts of wealth hidden away by capitalists in Australia, and we really do need an inquiry to fish that out.

There is a massive need for a capital gains tax, for wealth taxes in this country. Companies are paying less in taxes than they are getting in handouts and perks of all kinds. All those perks should be cut back. I believe we should reverse the spending so that the bulk of public spending goes to areas of need for working people, and obviously you reverse the tax trend so that the rich pay more.

Question: What about campaigns for shorter hours?

Answer: That is obviously part of what we need. It's really quite obvious that we could get to the stage where everyone works 20 hours per week, we'd all have a job and society would produce just what it needs. If capitalism is prepared to admit that technology means less workers are needed and more can be produced more quickly then a benefit for working people ought to be much more leisure time and an ability to enjoy that. At the moment methods of technology are not being employed, they are simply creating poverty and misery and unemployment.

Question: Do you think that at the Branch level we can do much of practical significance for workers involved in industrial action?

Answer: I think that at this stage we can raise the debate around the Accord, and argue that the ALP should be opting out of it. At this point we can start suggesting to people that pretty strong measures are required and for that to happen then the Accord has to be thrown out. And we have to start putting forward some very positive alternatives which challenge capitalism and which ultimately will make things better for the workers.

I think we have to make people more and more aware of the sorts of reforms that this Government is not going to carry out. Looking at unemployment, the policies of the Government are not going to help because unemployment rates have been going up for five or six years.

Now if the Government is committed to eradicating unemployment it really ought to be changing the policies that just haven't worked. It ought to be trying something else.

Policies that simply put more profits into the pockets of the capitalists will not improve the employment situation, particularly in times of high technology.

Question: You have probably heard about the Social Rights Campaign which is opposing the Accord and trying to develop a program of struggle. It produced the Manifesto of Social Rights and is planning a conference against the Accord in Melbourne at Easter. What do you think of this campaign?

Facts you should know about the national wage deal

The national wage deal is a major step back for workers. It will mean that wages will be frozen for the next two years. This means that workers will not be able to keep up with the cost of living. The deal also means that workers will have to give up their right to strike. This is a major loss of power for workers. The deal also means that workers will have to give up their right to full wage increases. This is a major loss of power for workers. The deal also means that workers will have to give up their right to full wage increases. This is a major loss of power for workers.

Social Rights conference

A conference that will focus on the need to develop a strategy opposed to that of the Hawke government's Prices and Incomes Accord is to be held in Melbourne at Easter.

It is being organised by the Social Rights Campaign which has developed working committees in Sydney and Melbourne and contacts in all States. This campaign itself developed from the initiative of a meeting of union activists in Melbourne last May. The groups have so far been responsible for the publication of a Manifesto of Social Rights endorsed by about 140 union delegates from all States and a sprinkling of union officials up to the level of State secretary. They also produced a pamphlet entitled "Facts you should know

Answer: I think it's an excellent idea. We will be continuing the debate within the Socialist Left and I think that a conference where you get a good number of unionists together with other political activists in the labour movement will help a lot. We can discuss policies and how we can get them through on a political level and how we can make some publicity so workers will be aware of these policies.

It is really a pretty important conference and I would hope that a lot of the things we have been talking about will be clarified and hopefully we can go forward to the ultimate goal of working people controlling their own lives.

Manifesto of Social Rights

A new dimension

The national wage deal is a major step back for workers. It will mean that wages will be frozen for the next two years. This means that workers will not be able to keep up with the cost of living. The deal also means that workers will have to give up their right to strike. This is a major loss of power for workers. The deal also means that workers will have to give up their right to full wage increases. This is a major loss of power for workers.

about the national wage decision' after the Arbitration Commission announced the new restrictions that would apply to unions accepting the 4.3 per cent rise.

Letters about the conference have been sent out to a broad range of unions and labour movement activists. They have also been sent to many different welfare organisations.

These letters ask their recipients to sponsor the conference and volunteer speakers and topics for talks, panels, and forums. They also appeal for donations to help meet the costs.

Those who wish to find out more about this conference should write to the Social Rights Campaign, PO Box 383, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

National Labor Women's Conference



The National Labor Women's Conference in Adelaide held over the Australia Day weekend, highlighted many of the contradictory facets of the Party's attitude towards women.

Jill Hickson, member of Whitfords (WA) ALP Branch. President of WA Labor Women.

One facet was the many progressive reforms and spending programs initiated by the Federal Government on coming to office. Another was the attitude exhibited by some delegates that Labor Women exists to advance their careers within the Party rather than as a vehicle for the Party to reach out and campaign to improve the situation of women.

The most important aspect of the Conference was the overwhelming

hostility towards the top leadership for its sell-outs on uranium and foreign policies. The reserved response given by most delegates to Bob Hawke when he strode in to give his main address and the huge anti-uranium banner held up during his talk certainly indicated this. Yet outlined in his speech were many of the Government's initiatives that will be of enormous benefit to Australian women.

These include the Sex Discrimination Bill passed by the Senate and the possible addition of the Green Paper on affirmative action. The Green Paper was originally part of the Sex Discrimination Bill but was delayed for two years to allow community education about its benefits.

These reforms have drawn violent opposition from the Liberals and the media.

Other reforms referred to include:

- greater access to employment opportunities for married women through the Community Employment Program. Unfortunately the Government has not funded advertising to inform married women of the new openings for them.
 - an allocation of \$376,300 for consultation, research and information programs on the status of women.
 - \$4 million for the establishment of a National Women's Emergency refuges.
 - an extra \$20.9 million has gone to the Children's Services Program.
 - a promise of an extra \$30 million for Children's Services in the next budget.
- While childcare was mentioned and \$550,000 has been provided for childcare in association with the Adult Migrant Education program, no mention was made of any plan for Government-funded free community childcare

facilities. \$8.5 million has been spent directly to create jobs for women but the lack of adequate childcare prevents many women from fully participating in the workforce. Those who do so often have to pay expensive fees and cope with the problems of inadequate services, where they exist at all.

The Women and Families workshop took up this issue. Childcare was seen as a right and not as just one more welfare issue. Resolutions were passed demanding the setting up of childcare programs under a planned approach.

Significantly, abortion was one crucially important issue for women that was neither mentioned by the Prime Minister nor by Senator Susan Ryan in her address. But the workshop entitled "Our Bodies Ourselves" discussed this issue and mapped out a national campaign to rescind the conscience vote at the July National Conference.

It was also decided to try to have included in the Health Policy the sentence "Women's right to all forms of safe contraception including abortion." Conference also recommended to State Labor Women's organisations that they work towards the removal of all restrictions on the right of all women to access to safe, legal abortion.

Young Labor takes on Hawke

At the fourteenth National Conference of Australian Young Labor held in Sydney on February 4 and 5, a number of key issues facing the Australian labour movement were discussed—in particular, foreign affairs and defence, uranium mining, economic policy and industrial relations.

Anne McDonald, member of the Harris Park (NSW) ALP Branch and the Chiffey/Parramatta YLA.

Most notable in the discussions around foreign policy was the general dissatisfaction of the Conference with the continued disregard shown by the Hawke Government for adopted Party policy.

Motions were passed demanding that "the Federal Labor Government reaffirm Labor Party policy in regard to denying aid to Indonesia until Indonesian troops withdraw completely from East Timor"; that the Labor Government "implement ALP policy on Vietnam and restore aid to that country to at least pre-1979 levels"; and that "this Conference condemns the unilateral an-



In his address Hawke threw out a challenge by saying "The Government is looking to this conference for an authoritative statement of the contemporary needs and interests of women in Australian society." He added that "... women's interests are as broad as the nation's interests."

Delegates took up this challenge in the discussions mentioned above and in workshops on topics ranging from the problems facing older women to the effects of technological change. There was discussion about the role of women inside the unions and the ALP. The majority of delegates considered that the threat of war was one of the most important areas to be discussed. The

threat of nuclear annihilation was seen as inextricably linked with uranium mining. And it was around this issue that many delegates expressed their hostility towards the Hawke Government over its approval for the Roxby Downs mine.

In foreign affairs, Conference took a strong stand in support of the rebel forces in El Salvador. It called upon the Federal Government to recognise the FMLN in El Salvador as the legitimate opposition group to the ruling military dictatorship.

In addition Conference decided to involve Labor Women in every State branch in the women's peace movement.

nouncement by Bob Hawke about the 'inappropriateness' of the policies on East Timor and Vietnam), made without consultation with, and against the wishes of the vast majority of ALP members."

The Conference took a strong stand against Australia's ties with U.S. imperialism. Adopted motions criticised the ANZUS Alliance and the presence of U.S. bases on Australian soil, as well as criticising U.S. intervention in Central America and requesting the Government to publicly condemn this U.S. aggression.

There was fierce opposition to the Government's moves which sell out Party policy on the mining of uranium. Conference called on the Government "to stop all uranium mining in Australia, both present and new contracts, and that the ALP National Conference rescind the Hogg Amendment and make ALP policy totally anti-uranium." A further motion supported the involvement of the South Australian Young Labor Association in the coming Roxby Downs blockade.

On the subject Economic and Industrial Relations, the key area of discussion was the question of the ALP-ACTU Prices and Incomes Accord. The

1983 NSW Young Labor Conference adopted a report that fully condemned the Accord, seeing it as merely another form of wage restraint. However, at this Conference, the motion put up by the NSW YLA, which stated that "any package deals such as the Prices and Incomes Accord which can be used as a wage cutting mechanism should be condemned as an attempt to make Australian working people pay for the economic recession," was defeated. Instead, a much more ambivalent motion was passed supporting the concept of the Accord but calling on the Govern-

ment to maintain wage levels. However, alongside this motion, and in contradiction with it, two other motions were passed in this session. One called on the Hawke Government to nationalise BHP and place it under workers control. The other stated that the ALP should "implement a programme whereby central control of the key industries would pass from private ownership to workers and government control."

Until such contradictions are resolved the clear socialist thrust of these latter motions will be undermined by the class collaborationist, anti-worker policies of the Accord.

The fight over foreign policy

This article begins a series leading up to the National Conference in mid-year. Each part of the series will examine a policy area to be debated at Conference.

When Bill Hayden returned from the Middle East in early February and announced he would present a case to Cabinet for rejecting Party policy opposing Australia's participation in the multinational force in the Sinai, he said: "In the past I have been an articulate and active opponent of Australia's involvement. I now see that both sides are committed to a settlement and the presence of the peacekeeping force makes settlement possible."

Martin Tuck,
member of Livingstone (NSW) ALP branch

What a clumsy attempt to justify yet another foreign policy somersault.

Hayden has always known that both sides (ie Egypt and Israel) support the presence of the troops in the Sinai creating a buffer zone between the two countries. This was an outcome of the infamous Camp David Accord that the Governments of both countries signed, under the supervision of the U.S. in 1981.

The Egyptian Government wanted the Treaty so it could recover some of its lost territory without having to fight for it. And the Begin Government in Israel could see that Egypt's defection from the ranks of Arab unity would severely weaken its opposition. Furthermore, it realised the military advantage in having its southern border tied up. Just two months after the various components of the Sinai force took up their positions, the Israeli tanks rolled into Lebanon in their attempt to exterminate the PLO and partition Lebanon.

Hayden, himself, has in the past pointed out that the Camp David Accord has done nothing to resolve the fundamental problems of the Middle East and that Australia should not add to the illusion that it had. Now we are supposed to believe that a quick jaunt to Egypt and Israel has convinced him he was mistaken.

In reality, both Hayden and Hawke have long been preparing to dump the party policy on the Sinai. Hawke signalled this during the election campaign when he stressed there "would be no precipitate withdrawal".

As Foreign Minister Hayden has parried questions on the subject by saying the matter had to be reviewed. However, the two-year commitment is due to expire in April so he could delay his announcement no longer. Before leaving for Egypt he told the journalists he was to accompany him that he would be recommending a change in policy. If he could satisfy himself that the Egyptians and Israelis appreciated the role of the Australians and if the morale of the troops was all right.

Hayden already knew the answers to those questions, so it said to be already satisfied the Australian troops had provided "excellent service".

This is not the first time Hayden has taken advantage of an overseas trip to announce a policy reversal. In fact he and Hawke have made this something of a standard procedure. They seem to feel that they have extra authority when they represent Australia outside the country. So they make use of this to undermine adverse reaction to any announcements of a change of course.

Both Hayden and Hawke have visited Indonesia to assure General Suharto that the East Timor policy will not stand in the way of good relations. Hayden has used several trips to Asia to try and justify a back-down on restoring aid to Vietnam. And Hawke went to the White House to proclaim his Government's loyalty to the policy objectives of the Reagan

Administration in Central America.

Hawke has used his recent trip to Asia to cement closer ties with some of the reactionary regimes in the region and to prepare the Australian labour movement for a "restructuring" of the Australian economy and trading relations to boost profits at the expense of jobs and the living standards of the majority.

The Hawke Government has adopted pro-capitalist policies at home and abroad. Yet it has been in the foreign policy area where this has led it most often into conflict with the constraints of progressive (anti-imperialist) Party policies. Therefore the gap between Party policy and Government practice has been most notable in this area.

The explanation for this is the fact that at the Party's 1982 National Conference both Hayden and Hawke set as their priority the lining up of domestic policies behind the Prices and Incomes policy which they could then present as a strategy for resolving the capitalist crisis. They did not campaign as hard in the foreign policy area.

But they had no intention of implementing foreign policies that did not fit into their framework. Some examples will illustrate this point:

1) **East Timor.** Federal party policy begins: "The ALP recognises the inalienable right of the East Timorese to self-determination and independence and condemns and rejects the Australian Government's recognition of the Indonesian annexation of East Timor."

"The ALP opposes all defence aid to Indonesia until there is a complete withdrawal of Indonesian occupation forces from East Timor."

But Australian corporations and banks have extensive investments in Indonesia and a favourable balance of trade. Implementation of the policy could have placed their interests in jeopardy. So one of Hawke's first actions as Prime Minister was to summon the Indonesian Ambassador to explain that the policy was not serious. As mentioned earlier, both Hawke and Hayden have visited Jakarta to repeat this message and they sent a delegation, headed by the right-wing Labor Parliamentarian E Morrison, to East Timor to aid and build a case for supporting the annexation. Military aid to the Indonesian Generals has continued unabated.

2) **Central America.** The published Party platform contains a policy statement which

- supports the political solution proposed by the governments of Mexico and France in the case of El Salvador; people in Central America;
- calls for the restoration of respect for human rights of all people in Central America;
- rebuffs the vast inequalities of wealth which are the cause of the injustices suffered by the poor and of the violence in the region;

- calls for the withdrawal of interference and the provision of military assistance by all external parties; and
- reaffirms that the people in each of the countries of the political system under which they wish to live.

Furthermore, Bill Hayden distributed a policy statement at the Queensland State Council meeting in October which he described as Cabinet policy guidelines on Central America. This contained the following statement on

Nicaragua: "Nicaragua is seeking to develop a new society after years of oppressive dictatorship and has a right to choose its form of Government without interference. The Sandinista revolution stood for important principles which had received wide international support."

Yet Washington has repeatedly scuttled efforts to find a negotiated settlement to the war in El Salvador (along, we noted, extreme human rights violations by the military regime it supports in El Salvador). It has supported counter-



Sydney march

revolutionary forces trying to overthrow the Government of Nicaragua. And it has stepped up its own military intervention in the region.

The Hawke government has done nothing to promote a negotiated solution and has failed to criticise the Reagan Administration for deepening the crisis. Instead Hawke has stated that he "understands" U.S. policy objectives in a region he considers to be part of their sphere of influence.

3) **Vietnam.** Party policy on Indo China contains the following unequivocal commitment to the restoration of aid to Vietnam:

"The Government should resume its commitment to the two aid projects in Vietnam suspended in January 1979. We should also resume cultural exchanges so as to promote greater understanding between our countries."

Yet Hayden has linked the restoration of aid to Vietnam to the demand for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. He knows that the Vietnamese troops remain in Kampuchea at the behest of the Heng Samrin government and he knows that their withdrawal could lead to the return to power of the U.S.-backed Pol Pot. Before being overthrown by Kampuchean and Vietnamese forces Pol Pot headed a Government that was responsible for the extermination of an estimated 3 million people.

Hayden claims to follow an "even-handed" policy in regard to Kampuchea. Yet on his recent visit to Singapore he invited the anti-communist forces to set up information offices in Australia. No such recognition has been extended to the Heng Samrin Government.

At the forthcoming National Conference the left will seek to reaffirm policies like those listed above. Hopefully they will also raise new issues such as Australia's military and economic aid to the crumbling Marcos regime in the Philippines.

But the Hawke supporters will argue that the government must be allowed to adopt a "pragmatic" approach to foreign policy. They will point out that this involves defending the American alliance and protecting Australia's trading relations.

And if you accept their basic premise that the primary Labor Militant, March 1984

responsibility of the Government is to revive the capitalist economy, you can't argue with their conclusions. Australian capitalists have their investments and trade to protect. A significant number of companies have operations in the free trade zones where they can exploit cheap labour and bring their profits, tax free, back to Australia.

Australian imperialists support the regimes, like those in South Korea and the Philippines, that set up the free trade zones and create favourable conditions for imperialist investment. They naturally oppose the growth of influence of the Vietnamese revolution and of anti-imperialist struggles in the region.

Australian capitalists also have investments and trade in other parts of the world. They co-operate with other such investors to defend the interests of imperialism throughout the world.

From this point of view the military pact with the U.S. can be seen as part of Australia's foreign policy. The ANZUS Treaty and the U.S. bases help to safeguard the interests of imperialism. Australia's participation, with the U.S. and New Zealand, in the wars in Korea and Vietnam demonstrated the real purpose of the alliance between these countries. A consistent anti-imperialist policy must oppose it.

But the Hawke Government has been consistently pro-capitalist and therefore pro-imperialist. From their point of view, Hawke and Hayden can easily justify their departure from the Party's foreign policy.

The real challenge for the Left is to develop an alternative strategy. This implies more than taking progressive stands on this or that issue. It involves active support for the revolutionary struggles in Central America and for national liberation struggles in the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere. It means confronting Australian imperialism and promoting a socialist, noncapitalist course in this country. And it means fighting for the ALP in Government to implement such an approach.

The implications of this for domestic policies will be explored in future articles in this series.

Continued from page 5

has led many of the foreign policy over- turns. But he, and others in his camp, fear the power of the Hawke-Keating machine. And they are probably worried that Hawke may be going "too far too fast" to the right, opening the way for the sort of electoral disaster that befell the right-wing Callaghan Government in Britain in 1978.

The campaign by the capitalist press to portray Hawke as a folk hero has created the conditions for a revival of the NCC and the extreme Right. But the ALP Left also bears responsibility because it has failed to counter Hawke's political strategy.

In 1982 the Left, nationally, fell for the line that the Party must adopt "pragmatic" (ie strongly pro-capitalist) policies to win government. The theme of that year's National Conference was "Preparing for government" and both Hayden and Hawke made it absolutely clear that the linchpin of their strategy was the prices-incomes accord that would make the unions pay for the economic crisis. The failure of the Left to counter the strategy of the prices-incomes accord has been central to its demise as a force within the Party.

Much flows from an acceptance of the strategy of the Accord. If you accept that you must take responsibility for shoring up capitalism in this country you must support the interests of Australian capitalists abroad. You wind up supporting imperialist exploitation.

The ALP Left, even in Victoria, has failed to develop a consistent alternative strategy to that of the Accord and all that flows from that. Some individuals have stood up against particular policy overruns but they have

generally been pulled back into line.

The most notable success for the Left has been the fight it has put up against uranium mining. But this has only served to highlight its failures in other areas. Soon after last year's fight in caucus over uranium, the Bulletin ran an article that commented, accurately, that without this issue the Left "looks rather naked. It is a faction searching for policies and a credible leader."

Indeed the Left is the emperor with no clothes. More people are prepared to point this fact out.

The official Left of the trade union movement is also paying for its support for the political strategy of the Labor leaders. Many rank-and-file unionists may not yet see the connection between the increased passivity of their own leaders and the Accord. But they are, nonetheless, angry at the lack of action. For this reason it is hardly surprising that the NCC is making gains inside the AMFSU. Laurie Carmichael and his colleagues may have won acceptance in the upper echelons of the labour movement for their role in helping to draft the accord. But they are losing ground in their own union for their failure to do anything to prevent mass sackings, wage cuts and deteriorating working conditions.

The unions provide the working class base, and therefore the strength, of the ALP. But workers will respond only to leaders who prove they can defend their interests. It is not enough to simply call yourself Left.

The Left should be basing itself on the organised strength of the working class. It should be consciously building a current within the ranks of the unions that will undermine the power base of the Right. It could replace the anti-Labor leaders who seek to infiltrate and dominate the whole Party apparatus.

A strong Left current will only be built in the unions if it can promote policies that can effectively defend existing living standards and project a credible strategy for winning socialism. It must also take up the question of internal democracy in all structures of the movement.

But this is not the approach of existing Left factions. They have failed to define an alternative strategy and they rely largely on trying to play the Right at their own game, the numbers game.

The NSW Steering Committee is a good example of this. Its policies are barely discernible from those of the Right and it maintains a narrow, bureaucratic structure. Furthermore, many of the unions that support the Left around the country are run bureaucratically. Most simply appoint delegates to various bodies of the Party. None promote discussion of ALP policy within the union.

Left union officials helped ram the Accord through on the eve of the last Federal elections. Very few called membership meetings to consider the ramifications of the new restrictive guidelines associated with the last national wage rise.

In the final analysis it is the failure of the Left to campaign within the ranks of the union movement to promote socialist policies and internal democracy that has led to the situation where the Left must try and block the affiliation of unions to the Party. But that is obviously not a long-term solution.

Only a strong Left current with a clear socialist strategy and firm roots in the unions will be able to significantly alter the existing balance of forces and halt the pro-capitalist course of Labor Governments at State and Federal level.

health

Medicare makes a start

Medicare is a welcomed policy initiative of the Hawke Labor Government. Health care for the majority of Australians had become an expensive and worrying item after seven years of Fraser's dismantling of the old Medibank.

Coral Wynter, member of Darlington Branch (NSW) ALP, member of the Amalgamated Metals Foundry and Shipwrights Union

Now at least all Australians have access to hospital care and visits to general practitioners without having to calculate if there is enough money in the bank to pay for it.

Hawke had to fulfil this election promise. It's one of the pay-offs for the ACTU's acceptance of the wage-cutting Prices and Incomes Accord. However, unlike the original Medibank, the new scheme is not free. Workers have to pay a levy of one per cent of their income. And the extra cost of the scheme will not be an item on the Consumer Price Index. This means wage-earners will lose out through another hidden increase in the cost of living.

The majority of working people expect a free and universal health scheme from a Labor Government but it's not what we're getting.

The dispute between the Australian Medical Association and Federal Minister for Health, Neil Blewett, has tended to overshadow the real benefits of the new scheme. The AMA has again shown its hypocrisy towards patients. Its only concern is to defend the enormous incomes of some of its members. It is fitting that this organisation should have a former leader of the Liberal Party in Victoria, Dr Lindsay Thompson, as its president.

It is entirely correct for Blewett to insist that charges are made to the specialists for the use of hospital staff and equipment.

The initial proposals for the limit on doctors' incomes of \$62,500 was falsely represented in the media. It did not limit doctors' incomes since many are registered at several hospitals. The Doctors' Reform Society certainly thought the terms were generous.

However, in the face of the huge publicity campaign run by the AMA, Blewett has retreated. The contracts will not be extended to specialists on private practice, other than diagnostic specialists. The old agreement will operate in hospitals until July 1. It is expected the results of an inquiry into the issue of private practice in public

hospitals, in which the AMA has reluctantly agreed to participate, will then be ready.

However obviously the efficiency of Medicare is severely limited by hospital closures and massive cutbacks in staffing rations and numbers of beds. Because of insufficient funds to public hospitals, long queues already exist. They are expected to get worse as people who weren't covered before, attempt to get treatment.

In NSW alone it is estimated by the Nurses' Union that 1500 extra nurses will be needed to cope with the load.

Unless the financial situation of the hospitals is reversed many people will be forced into the grasping arms of private health insurance companies. This is particularly true for people with a long-term illness or the elderly. Even people who need an operation that is not urgent will have to resort to private insurance as there is no possibility of treatment in the near future with the way public hospitals are functioning now.

If Medicare was operating effectively these private insurance schemes would

wither on the vine. They already receive a large subsidy from the Government to fill out their bulging profits; \$100 million a year.

Another flaw in the whole scheme is the training of specialists. Government intervention in this area is desperately needed. The present arrangement whereby the number of doctors becoming specialists is decided by the specialists themselves is open to abuse. Numbers are deliberately limited so that they can ask for, and get, enormous fees for their services. This is how the AMA is able to blackmail the Government.

Another area of unbridled profiteering is that of the pharmaceutical companies. It would be interesting to know just how much is paid out of Government funds to these multinational corporations. A Labor Government should be attempting to set up its own manufacturing of pharmaceutical products, at least the commonly used medicines.

Obviously there are many problem areas the Government hasn't even touched. Medicare is a start but much more needs to be done.

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Thatcher's new anti-union laws

as gas and telecommunications to companies like GEC, Plesseys and the Mercury consortium. Such is the drive of the Tories that they want to privatise the state-owned armaments factories and naval shipbuilding yards.

Local Government

Already 4 million are unemployed yet the Tories are planning to push more onto the dole. Their target in the coal industry is 70,000 jobs, and in local government and central public services the sackings could measure in the hundreds of thousands. For here the central target is the large metropolitan authorities covering the big cities like Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham and the Greater London Council, made famous by "Red" Ken Livingstone.

In the area of local government Thatcher's aim is not just to cut jobs but also to replace the traditional system with one tightly controlled by a powerful centralised Civil Service. In Britain local authorities carry out a vast range of services including education, social services, police, roads, housing, planning, environmental control, and creation of local industries. After Thatcher's new laws go through, the Tories will have virtually total control of all government and semi-government spending. The ability of local Labour-controlled Councils to provide some measure of localised improvement in services to the working class will disappear. There is reform program that is not facing votes. In every way the Tories are riding high. Their class is growing in confidence, lowest for over 15 years and the leadership of the labour movement is in retreat.

The Tory victory at the May 1983 General Election gave getting less than 40 per cent of the Parliamentary majority (despite portantly it crushed the votes cast). But more important to power and thus opened the road for a quicktion of a very right-wing leadership at the top levels of the British trade union movement.

From 1979 to 1983 the TUC General Council was dominated by a "soft" Centre-Left coalition which used the strident anti-union laws. But it did nothing to seriously organise working class resistance to Thatcher's attacks, or even did take on the Tories and the employers.

The central political strategy was not to provoke the Tories too much, and hope for a quick return of a Labour Government. Even the rising levels of unemployment were believed that it was greedy workers who were to blame for such a leadership the campaign against the Tory anti-union militant sounds, to a campaign that would convince rank-and-file workers the attacks could be defeated.

Ever since the Heath Tory Government was kicked out by

the miners in 1974, the ruling class has realised that its strategy towards the unions and the working class needs to be more carefully thought out.

British workers have experienced a wide range of Government-initiated programs designed to cut wages. They have ranged from social contracts and incomes policies to straight out jailing of strikers.

Tory strategy

From these experiences the current Tories have drawn two conclusions:

- 1) laws that outlaw strikes and other forms of union action can open the way for workers to openly defy the state. If they get enough support this can cause a political crisis, like that which brought down the Heath Government; and
- 2) all previous laws and social contracts have relied too heavily on union leaders being voluntary police of the union movement.

So current Employment Minister Tebbit, following the path of his predecessor Prior, has decided on a policy of hemming in the union movement with a wide range of laws, particularly aimed at breaking down the closed shop.

Prior brought in a law to make it easier for non-union workers sacked from a closed shop to sue employers for damages. It also threatened legal action against any employer who allowed a union to proclaim a closed shop unless 80 per cent of the workers expressed an opinion in favour in a secret ballot.

One device of the Prior Employment Act of 1980 was to take the TUC's voluntary code of restricting pickets to six per factory gate and give it the force of law. But Prior was not considered tough enough and when Tebbit replaced him, a new Employment Act was drawn up. The various clauses of this law are still being enacted and they go much further than the earlier law.

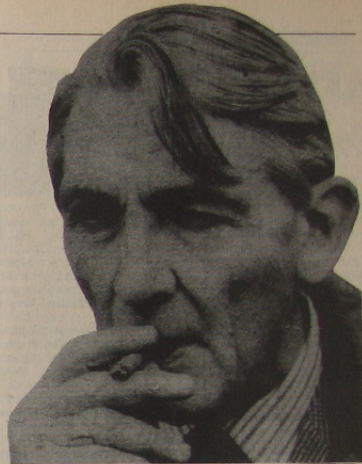
Tebbit's law means picketing is only allowed at the workplace or factory where the dispute started or the workers work. Therefore no secondary picketing is allowed. Strikes are only legal (ie the employer cannot sue for damages, for compensation, etc) if they are about wages and conditions of work; any strike that is about another dispute, or about a "political" matter makes the union open to civil claims and injunctions.

Where an injunction is granted by a court against union action (strikes, overtime bans etc) a refusal to obey the injunction makes the union funds open to fines, and sequestration (legal theft).

All closed shops will become illegal after November 1984 unless a ballot has established the required level of support (80 per cent). This will apply to some shops that have been closed for many years.

The new Tory laws are designed to frighten the union leaders and force them to curtail workers' struggles within the bounds of the new legality. This turns industrial relations into a confrontation between unions and judges, thus obscuring the role of the employers.

Labor Militant, March 1984



Len Murray

It was this legislation that laid the basis for the court injunction that ended the telecommunications engineers' strike against privatisation and which laid the basis for the Warrington print boss, Eddie Shah, to use injunctions against both the Journalists' union (the NUJ) and the printworkers' union (the NGA). This led to the seizure of the NGA's assets worth \$18 million, and a fine for the union of over \$500,000 for disobeying a court order to stop mass picketing. It was this law that saw a British Labour Party member, Robert Maxwell, win an injunction against the biggest print union (SOGAT).

The Tory laws aim to restrict unions to house-trained bargaining outfits. It is ironic, to say the least, that Thatcher can still claim to be a supporter of Solidarnosc in Poland.

TUC still claim to

On December 12, 1983, it became clear the Tories have picked the Achilles heel of the union movement by putting pressure directly on the officials. For that was the date on which the TUC sold out the struggle at Warrington against the new laws.

After mass pickets had been organised to stop the scabbing operations of Eddie Shah, the national newspapers in Fleet Street were struck for two days. The NGA appealed to the TUC for support and won the endorsement of a TUC sub-committee. But then Murray called an emergency meeting of the General Council to prevent any support being given, and he won by a vote of 29 to 21. The NGA was stabbed in the top back and the courts were given the endorsement of the top trade union federation.

Murray hoped that this back-down would convince Tebbit not to proceed with the implementation of further laws. But instead he will be encouraged to proceed with his plans which include a law to determine how unions will elect their national executive committees and some of their officers; provisions to force a ballot in unions remaining affiliated to the British Labour Party; and use of secret ballots to decide on strike action.

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The picket at Warrington

Thatcher's 1984 New Year message to the millions of unemployed, pensioners and social security claimants was simple: "We need to cut more from your social welfare. We need it for our program of tax cuts for the rich and by business; and to pay the bill we owe the U.S. for the new nuclear missiles system."

And by mid-January the Tory Social Security Minister decreed a savage cut in Housing Benefit payments of \$350 million. Some families will lose as much as \$12 per week from social security money that only totals about \$10 for a married couple with no children.

This latest cut will force many to choose between paying the rent or buying essentials. Already rent arrears are a ma-

Mick O'Sullivan, shop steward in the Union of Construction and Allied Technical Trades, supporter of the Labour Party paper Socialist Organiser

problem for many working class people.

The only response from the General Secretary of the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), Len Murray, was to go on his bended knees to plead with the Tories. In the TUC document "Protecting those in Need", Murray argued that the TUC did not want to challenge the Tories' economic policy. He boasted that "these measures do not make up an alternative program." In fact they could fit in well with the Chancellor. Since re-election in 1983, the Thatcher Government has substantially stepped up the pace of its attacks on the British working class. There is not a single from education, where class sizes are increasing and hundreds of nurses and doctors are being retrenched and private interests.

In the state-owned heavy industries, such as steel, shipbuilding and coal, the Tories have gone for mass sackings. They are preparing to sell off the more profitable areas such

western australia



Metalworkers for nuclear disarmament

The Amalgamated Metal, Foundry and Shipwrights Union has announced the formation of a new nuclear disarmament movement, Metalworkers for the Enforcement of Nuclear Disarmament, drawn from the ranks of the union.

The following is an interview with Barry Healy an AMPSU activist in Perth.

Question: How will MEND operate?
Answer: Each union member can join for \$5 a year. That money will go to the disarmament movement in each State.

The union will produce stickers and leaflets on disarmament issues. The only thing required of MEND members is that they agree to take ten copies of each leaflet to pass on to others.

This initiative has come about because of the position on the war danger that the ACTU has adopted. Perhaps other unions might follow suit.

Question: Do you think MEND will be successful?
Answer: I think the sky's the limit. People where I work are always talking about nuclear war danger. It comes up in the papers and on TV every day.

But it's like the weather. People talk about it but nobody does anything about

it. That's where MEND comes in. I think there's a very strong base of support just waiting to get organised.

Question: Why will MEND organise it?

Answer: Because it is an official wing of the union. It carries the authority and prestige of the union.

Question: How have you got involved?

Answer: I was trying to organise a contingent from where I work to the April disarmament rally.

I approached the union office about buying a banner for us on the same day that Laurie Carmichael happened to be over here telling the officials about the plans for MEND.

So the next thing I knew I was talking to Carmichael and he was asking me if my workplace could organise the first MEND branch in the country.

Question: What constitutes a branch?
Answer: Three MEND'ers in any one workplace or locally. I don't know yet if the branches will have any set responsibilities. I guess they will probably set their own agendas.

Question: What was the response at work to the idea?

Answer: Enthusiastic.

Question: What sort of things will the

branch you're in take up?

Answer: I don't know yet but I think that we should be guided by some of the things that Laurie Carmichael was saying at the public meeting where he announced the formation of MEND.

He said the big demos in Fremantle against the visits by U.S. Navy ships had been an inspiration for people in the eastern States.

He also kept emphasising that the danger of nuclear war comes from the big flashpoints in the Middle East and Central America.

The U.S. bases in Australia are obviously an issue too. So I think there's a lot of issues to talk about at work.

Question: Will you be only talking at work?

Answer: No. The thing to do is get people along to the anti-nuclear rallies. That's the most constructive thing we can do at the moment.

Question: What's the next step after that?

Answer: I think that it's to tie our government in Canberra to a genuine peace policy. By that I mean to carry out party policy on Central America and the Middle-East and to go further to chuck out the ANZUS Treaty.

defend the poorest sections of the working class from Tory cuts; and for their stubborn refusal to support any mass action against the Tories. Tony Dubbins, General Secretary of NGA, said after the December 12 TUC call-out of the trade unions, "This is going to affect the overall membership seeds for the death of effective trade unionism in this country."

Fortunately, these words have not yet come true. In the first month of this year many different groups of workers voted to take action against their employers or the Government.

Only a manoeuvre prevented an all-out strike by shipyard workers starting on January 6; and a vote by British Leyland Land Rover workers to come out on January 17, 20,000 struck against the Tories. On January 24 over 20,000 struck against the Tories plans to abolish the Greater London Council and the Inner London Education Authority.

The TUC may want to promote itself as the broker between the Tory Government and the working class. But the Tories are unlikely to grant them enough concessions to play that role convincingly. And more importantly the working class is not going to be satisfied with the crumbs the TUC can forage.

Coombe-Ivanov affair

New evidence against ASIO



Joan Coxsedge

The following is an interview with Joan Coxsedge, a prominent member of the Socialist Left in Victoria and MLC. She is the co-author of a book about secret police, The Australia Rooted in Secrecy. The interview was conducted by Rehana Mohideen, member of the Preston (Vic) ALP branch. A second part of the interview will appear in the next issue of Labor Militant.

Question: What would you say overall about the charges made against David Coombe?

Answer: The main thing is, and this was agreed to by the Attorney-General Gareth Evans and others, that he had not committed any offence, he was never charged with anything.

The whole Royal Commission was based around finding out whether or not the Government had acted properly in denying him access to the ministers.

This was linked to the expulsion of Soviet diplomat Valery Ivanov and that was linked to the global campaign

against Soviet personnel.

Australia just fell into line with other capitalist countries on this.

It is interesting if you look at what happened in Britain, there was a Soviet diplomat expelled prior to our expulsion of Ivanov. Looking at the two cases you see an uncanny resemblance: both diplomats even had the same name, Ivanov!

So, I reiterate, such sensationalism was part of a global campaign of anti-Sovietism, and we fell into line with it.

In one sense, you could say that the D.U.S. Central Intelligence Agency got a double whammy effect in Australia. Not only could they chuck out a Soviet diplomat who they could claim was a KGB agent, but they could implicate a senior Labor figure as well.

In fact, it's quite blatant when you read the transcripts of the Commission, when the Head of ASIO, Harvey Barnett, was interviewed and cross-examined, he came out and admitted that he had met with the Prime Minister and discussed their options.

They could kick out Ivanov quietly, or they could make a great big hoo-ha about it.

Of course the option ASIO wanted was to make a big fuss, because ASIO was always being attacked for never having found a spy, in all the years that they have operated.

The whole thing was disgusting from start to finish, in that it was nothing but a witch-hunt.

The implications are very serious for all Australians, particularly for political activists.

The witch-hunt was an attack on the basic democratic rights of freedom of association, and freedom of speech.

Question: Do you think that the Royal Commission and the outcome actually puts ASIO in a stronger position now; that it has helped to legitimise ASIO's activities?

Answer: I think so, but the point is, that we knew about Justice Hope and his love for secret agencies, from his first Royal Commission.

Any government that sets up a Commission and appoints a Royal Commissioner does so with its own aims in mind.

In other words, they set up particular heads of reference and somebody to lead it, to bring down the result that they wanted.

This time they certainly got what they wanted. I was able to predict in my Hard Facts a few months ago what the result would be. It was almost word-for-word.

It was clear from the terms of reference and the fact that Hope was

appointed, that he would say exactly what he did. It was a fait accompli, right from the word go.

There was confirmation of everything about ASIO that we have been saying about ASIO for years; that they operate on the basis of smear; that they use In-nuendo as hard evidence; that they base their assessments of people on a very flimsy level.

The Commission may have strengthened ASIO somewhat in the sense that more people may feel it is necessary, but on the other hand, a lot more information is now available to expose them and confirm what we have been saying. And this time that information is out of their own mouths.

Things that Barnett and other ASIO officers said to the Commission were very useful and interesting in that respect.

Question: Would ASIO have considered using an affair like this to try to discredit the ALP before the elections?
Answer: I don't think that you can lump the whole ALP in the one category here, because ASIO is always, above all, out to get at the Left.

I don't think that ASIO would be all that unhappy about this Labor Government, because the Government has shown itself to be quite supportive of secret agencies.

In fact, the Labor Government initiated much of this; the Hope Commission and the problems that Coombe faced were initiated by the Government, rather than by ASIO.

Of course ASIO was right in there swinging, and its role was brought out in the course of the whole farce.

But senior Government figures have to take a great deal of the responsibility for the whole affair, which was very damaging for the Labor Party as a whole.

I can't say that ASIO would be all that unhappy with this Government, because they were given so much support in the Coombe-Ivanov episode.

When the National and International Security Committee of the Cabinet (NIS) was established very early in the first Royal Commission, in the piece, only days after the Government was elected, it showed his high priority that the Prime Minister gives to this sort of thing.

The NIS, which represented Cabinet and not Caucus, must have rubber-stamped a lot of decisions, because when the Coombe matter was raised, the committee had already made something like 300 decisions, in only six weeks or so.

Just what were these decisions, who

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Tebbit plans to systematically fragment the British working class both organisationally and politically.

The TUC, on its knees, is begging him to lay off. But on January 25 it got its answer. The Tory Foreign Minister banned 5,000 civil service workers at the top secret Government Communications headquarters from holding trade union cards or accepting a voluntary transfer to another Government job outside the area. If they refused those options they would be sacked.

Bickerstaffe, the General Secretary of the largest public workers' union (NUPE) commented that it was "only a maternal services face a similar threat."

The TUC rejected the idea of a call for general strike action to stop the new attack. Instead it offered a no-strike deal on behalf of the workers at the secret spy centre, and begged to be allowed to continue collecting the members' dues.

Since Thatcher came to power in 1979 over 2 million trade unionists have left the unions. From 12.2 million in 1979 the trade union members are now under 10 million. The British trade union leaders are responsible for this decline; for meekly accepting the rise in unemployment; for failing to

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knows about them? They were never discussed, I believe in Cabinet, let alone in Caucus.

What you have, in effect, is a small elite group, right at the top of the Labor Government, dealing with issues affecting the whole Party, as well as the country, without anyone else knowing about it. I think that is a matter for deep concern for all ALP members.

Question: Do you think that the Prime Minister was prepared to go along with ASIO's aims, to legitimise its activities, to gain it more strength?

Answer: I think that Bob Hawke has shown himself to be sympathetic to the secret agencies, he is on record about this over many years.

Question: How would you respond to the claims by Hawke and ASIO, that they were protecting the "national interest" and "national security". How do you regard this, coming from an ALP member, a head of a Labor Government?

Answer: This is the sort of jargon that ASIO always uses. They use phrases like the "national interest," meaning the protection of the status quo, the protection of the rich and the privileged and the stopping of any progressive social change.

They bandy such expressions around all the time, also using them to justify serious incursions against people's basic civil liberties.

They attack anyone who dares to suggest that we ought to make some sort of change in our society.

It is as broad as that, we are not only talking about people on the Left, we are talking about people who belong to churches and campaign for peace; about environmentalists; about feminists; about unemployed activists.

All these people come into the category of those ASIO regards as suspect, because they challenge the situation as it presently exists in some way.

Anyone who has looked into the area knows that any fifth rate snoop can claim that whatever they are up to, no matter how dubious, is in the national interest, and get away with it.

They only get away with it because such phrases are so seldom challenged. Of course we have to link up what the United States secret agencies are saying and the British, the New Zealand, South African, Indonesian—they are all saying the same thing.

Their work is in the "national interest", and it is a beautiful cover, to conceal the global links between these people.

The national interest is a spurious claim, not only for us as their international work is concerned, but also because they are part of an international intelligence network, that knows no national boundaries. The network is dominated by the U.S. CIA, so that whatever is good for them is

supposed to be good for all the others, and for us.

Again Barnett was very frank and stupid in this regard. He said that ASIO regards anyone that criticises the CIA role in Australia as a traitor.

So here is the head of our security, ostensibly working on behalf of Australians, paid for by the Australian taxpayer, saying that ASIO is there to operate in the interests of the CIA.

Quite an indictment, but also very revealing and providing a lot of ammunition for progressives to use against the secret agencies.

Question: What is your comment on the refusal by ASIO to give many of their Coombe-Ivanov documents to Attorney-General Gareth Evans?

Answer: He should have insisted on access to all those documents. I was particularly concerned about the pitiful performance of the NIS committee, which seemed to accept without question the utter garbage which Barnett verbally presented. His act was so abysmal that they had to ring up and get ASIO operatives to fly from Melbourne to Canberra with two suitcases of documents to back him up. Barnett was just so sloppy and unprepared in his interview in the Commission, and yet the NIS did not even

demand to see the original tape transcripts. They let him and ASIO get away with presenting their doctored summaries!

The summaries were riddled with ASIO's own biases, and the NIS accepted them as the base facts, when clearly they were not.

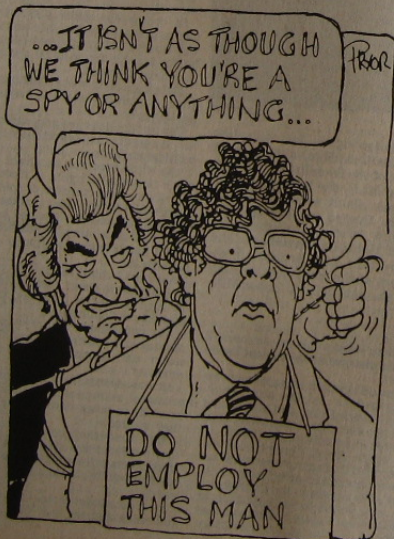
Question: What is the significance of the return of Mick Young to the Cabinet?

Answer: Well, we all know that he really committed no offence to warrant his removal in the first place. Every Tom, Dick and Harry knew about Coombe and Ivanov. You only have to read the transcripts again to see that. It was totally ridiculous, he committed no offence whatsoever; he just talked about it like everyone else.

But in this instance, the power of the Caucus prevailed. The strength was in the Caucus to get him reinstated.

Question: Do you see the return of Mick Young as a victory for the ranks?

Answer: Yes, in a limited way it is, but the same thing should be done for David Coombe, he should be cleared and compensated for all the damage that his has done to him. What happened to him was even more disgusting, yet he has been literally left high and dry.



Labor History

The Militant Propagandists in World War I

The following article examines the way Marxists in the Australian labour movement responded to World War I. It follows eight previous articles in a series entitled *Marxists and Labor* that were published in *Socialist Fight*. Copies of *Socialist Fight* containing previous parts of the series can be made available by writing to Labor Militant PO Box 372, Broadway NSW 2007.

Earlier articles in the series showed how Labor's support for the White Australia Policy, the Fisher Labor Government's introduction of compulsory military training for all young men aged 14 and over and support for World War I had led to W.M. Hughes becoming Prime Minister in 1915.

Hughes' efforts to introduce conscription during the War split the Labor Party and resulted in the downfall of the Labor Government and its replacement by an anti-Labor coalition.

Hughes made two attempts to introduce conscription. They both failed and the anti-conscription campaigns helped to galvanise opposition to the war. Anti-war socialists in Victoria formed the Militant Propagandists of the Labour Movement, which described itself as a "loose fraternity of class conscious members of the ALP and trade unions."

On August 14, 1914, a shot from the gun of a Serbian nationalist rang around the world. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary provided the imperialists with a pretext for launching a brutal war over the possession of colonies. And this, in turn, split the world socialist movement.

Before the War successive conferences of the Socialist International had declared that socialists should never support imperialist wars. Yet, as soon as the war began the leaders of the International and the leaders of socialist parties and trade unions in most countries called on the workers of their own countries to go to war against the workers of other countries.

In September 1915, a meeting was held in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, of those few leaders of the old International who had maintained their opposition to imperialist war. Their number was depressingly small—only 42 in all, enough to fill just four coaches for the ride to Zimmerwald.

The Australian Labor Party was not affiliated to the International. Commonwealth Conferences of the party in 1905 and 1908 had decided to affiliate but no action had been taken by Party officials. The 1912 Conference had voted to send a delegate to that year's International conference. But again that was ignored.

However neither the obstruction by the ALP bureaucracy nor the vicious war-time censorship managed to prevent the Zimmerwald conference's anti-war Manifesto from reaching the hands of Marxists in the Victorian Socialist Party.

The VSP published the Manifesto in leaflet form, heralding it as a "clarion call to CLOSE UP THE RANKS" of the workers' movement. VSP activists made sure it was distributed to those in the Militant Propagandists of the Labour Movement and the Labor Party itself. Lenin criticised the weaknesses of the Zimmerwald Manifesto. He pointed out that it lacked any "clear pronouncement as to the methods for fighting against the War." And it did not expose the role of the opportunist leaders of the International who had supported their own



capitalist classes. Yet he recognised that it would strengthen the hand of those who wanted to maintain their opposition to the War and so he put his name to it.

The Manifesto certainly helped members of the VSP to play a big role in galvanising opposition to the War in this country. In *Socialist Political Tactics, 1900-1920*, Ian Turner has said "It was from the Victorian members of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and the Melbourne Trades Hall Council that the first serious opposition to conscription in any form, Conference recommendations to the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and the Melbourne Trades Hall Council that the first serious opposition to conscription in any form, Conference recommendations to all unions and Political Labor Council branches that they reply by a general strike cessation of industry."

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central america

U.S. invasion plans

The following article is taken from the February/March issue of *Venceremos*, bulletin of the Committee in Solidarity with Central America and the Caribbean and is based on a report presented to the North West regional conference of the U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) on December 10 to 11.

The period up to the scheduled March 25 presidential elections in El Salvador will be one of major escalation of the U.S. war in Central America, a time when the threat of direct intervention by the United States will be at its peak. This is due in part to developments in El Salvador but also reflects domestic concerns. Until the U.S. presidential elections in November 1984, United States policy will be formed within the framework of the Reagan re-election campaign. There are five major tendencies that point toward the likelihood of a direct U.S. intervention in Central America before the end of March:

1. The FMLN in El Salvador is gaining strength and the Salvadoran military is near collapse;
2. The United States has determined that there is little hope for a political and economic solution to the crises in Central America due to internal division within the Salvadoran Government and army and the very existence of the Nicaraguan revolution;
3. The process of militarisation of the region and specifically the militarisation of Honduras has reached a high level of development;
4. The military structures in Central America have been centralised and rationalised. This is exemplified by the reformation of CONDECA (Central American Defence Council), a pro-U.S. alliance of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador), the upgrading of the U.S. Southern Command structure, and the improved coordination and synchronisation of the U.S. political and military strategies in the region;
5. Finally, the political conditions inside the United States and internationally are more favourable than ever for the execution of a direct U.S. intervention into the region. The invasion of Grenada served to create a conjunctural opening for direct intervention.

While it is clear that U.S. policy has advanced in the preparation for a massive war, it is falling in the execution of the war at its current level. The Salvadoran military is in crisis and the Contras in Nicaragua have been shown to be incapable of becoming a serious

military threat to the Nicaraguan Government.

The Salvadoran military was reported to be making significant gains at retaking the tactical initiative of the war because of the apparent success of "Operation Well Being" in San Vicente province. This operation was modelled after the CORDS program in Vietnam which combined military occupation of an area with a social reform program implemented by the military. But the operation was only able to make gains during a short period while the FMLN was regrouping its forces and has been in disarray since September when the FMLN began to intensify its military activities.

The period from September 5, 1983, has been one of rapid advance by the FMLN. In the 40-day offensive by force, Independence and Liberty for El Salvador, 1,050 casualties were inflicted on Government troops by the FMLN. Since then, the level of the offensive has deepened and all sources say that the army is falling apart.

In Nicaragua, the Contras are shifting tactics, moving from guerrilla warfare to major attacks on strategic economic targets. This shift reveals two major factors: 1) the Contras know that they don't have the capacity to challenge the Sandinista armed forces; 2) the CIA is now directly involved in the actual execution of the Contra attacks.

These raids have caused severe problems to the Nicaraguan economy. Raids on oil installations destroyed 3.6 million gallons of fuel plus crucial infrastructure for unloading, processing and transporting oil. This combined with other acts of economic sabotage such as the bombing of the Managua airport represents a real threat to the Nicaraguan society, but not directly to the Sandinista Government.

The Nicaraguan Government is strong both politically and militarily and the Contras have failed in their primary objectives of either holding a piece of ground inside Nicaragua or rallying a base of popular support.

CISCAC campaign

"It is the hour for unity of action." These are the words of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega in response to the growing threat of a U.S. invasion of Central America. CISCAC is calling for an immediate emergency campaign to help prevent that invasion or to raise the biggest possible response if and when it occurs.

On a national scale preparations have already been made for:

- Protest pickets at U.S. consulates or other prominent locations on the day after an invasion;
- Demonstrations for the Saturday following any invasion;
- Meetings of activists to be called at the earliest possible time to plan bigger activities;
- The immediate production of leaflets and posters to explain the situation and to advertise these activities.

CISCAC calls on all individuals and organisations that recognise the dangers of war today to join in a broad united front against U.S. intervention in Central America or the escalation of U.S. military interference there.

As a part of the April 15 demonstrations and in conjunction with as many other organisations

as possible CISCAC will build big contingents against U.S. intervention in Central America.

ALP members must continue to raise these issues in their branches, electorate councils and trade unions. Also efforts should be made to get ALP Branches to publicly demonstrate their support for ALP policy in opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America.

If you want to support CISCAC's campaign or if you want more information, please get in touch.

ADELAIDE: PO Box 428 Unley 5061

BRISBANE: PO Box 141 Ashgrove 4060

CANBERRA: PO Box 606 Dickson 2602

HOBART: PO Box 532 Sandy Bay 7005

MELBOURNE: PO Box 5422CC Melbourne 3001

NEWCASTLE: PO Box 253 Newcastle 2300

PERTH: PO Box 118 Victoria Park 6100

SYDNEY: PO Box A431 Sydney South 2000

WOLLONGONG: PO Box 1976 Wollongong 2500

The revolutionary movement in Guatemala has undergone a period of revitalisation over the past several months, but it is difficult to get a clear picture of its current strength. This will be a key factor in determining how much of a regional role the Guatemalan Army will be able to play in any attack on Nicaragua or El Salvador.

There has been an upsurge of the popular movement in Honduras in the last year in response to the U.S. militarisation here but the left has not yet gained a high level of military strength. The Honduras military dealt heavy blows to the PRTC-H, one of the revolutionary organisations in Honduras, killing one of its top leaders.

In response to the failure of current strategies, extremely significant advances have been made in the preparation for a massive escalation and regionalisation of U.S. military policy.

The U.S. has rationalised its policy in Central America effectively combining its political and military strategies. In implementing this policy, the military forces of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have been brought under tight U.S. control, as for example, with the implementation of "Operation Well Being" in El Salvador.

In order to facilitate the increased role of the U.S. in running the war, the Southern Command structure has been strengthened. General Wallace Nutting (a four-star general) was replaced by General Gorman (a five-star general), plus a staff of four four-star generals and ten colonels. This represents a massive upgrading in the status and capacity of the Southern Command making it one of the highest ranking U.S. command structures in the world.

The threat of invasion by the U.S. is very real. Total U.S. troop strength in the immediate area is about 25,000 plus a strong naval presence on both sides of Central America as part of the Big Pine II operation. Six thousand of these troops are now on the ground in Honduras while the balance remain on ships off both coasts.

The building of military infrastructure in Honduras has reached a culmination point with the completion of the third military airbase. Three airbases are made up of permanent wooden structures. This coincides with remarks made by Under Secretary of Defence Fred Ikle that the U.S. is in tending a permanent military presence in Honduras.

One thousand U.S. Corps of Engineers have been dispatched to Costa Rica for the purpose of building roads near the Nicaraguan border presumably to be used to transport troops.

All of this points to the fact that the U.S. has both the inclination and the capacity to fight a larger scale war in Central America. This is highly



dangerous because as we have seen, the U.S. cannot gain ground with its current level of intervention.

The invasion of Grenada was the test of Ronald Reagan's operating premise, that a successful aggressive military strategy could effectively overturn the Vietnam Syndrome. In the context of the military victory and a minimal loss of American lives, the invasion was a political success for Reagan to the extent that it provoked relatively little opposition at both the Congressional and public level.

At this point Reagan's primary political strategy in Central America is his military strategy. The overtly political aspects of Administration policy—the Stone Initiative and the Kissinger Commission—are designed to lay the political basis for prolonged U.S. intervention in the region.

Reagan has attempted to weaken Latin American and European peace initiatives and has moved to neutralise the Contadora peace proposals through a combination of diluting the group with pro-U.S. governments and threatening economic sanctions against Governments that maintain a critical position toward the U.S. Only Mexico has maintained its position of directly challenging U.S. policy.

In Europe, active opposition to U.S. intervention is now focussed on the Euromissiles and the war in Lebanon. The most viable peace initiatives have been coming from the FMLN-FDR and the Nicaraguan Government. In both cases, initiatives have been made that

project urgent willingness to come to a real agreement.

In the case of Nicaragua, election plans have now been brought forward to November 4, 1984, partial amnesty has been granted and Nicaragua has opened its doors to international scrutiny. Current Nicaraguan initiatives have been so far reaching that even the Administration has had to respond to them somewhat favorably in words, while not responding with any concrete action. The FMLN has presented a three-part peace proposal: 1. national debate; 2. an interim Government; 3. elections.

The objective of this initiative is two fold: force the U.S. to negotiate seriously; and pull a significant portion of the Salvadoran centre into a political solution.

The Salvadoran Government is divided. Bitter internal divisions have opened up between the oligarchy, represented by the ARENA party, and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) over the issue of land reform. On October 20, conflicts inside the Government reached a point where the Constituent Assembly was suspended with no date for continuation. Consequently, the March 25 elections could take place without a constitution. In Nicaragua, support for the Government is being strengthened by the threat of external aggression.

Taken as a whole, we can see the U.S. has made substantial political gains on the international front, yet is becoming weaker politically vis-à-vis the internal

Continued on page 35

Hayden changes Party policy



Hayden with Egyptian Foreign Minister Karmal Hassan Ali

An Israeli defence official has admitted that the positioning of the multinational force in the Sinai was a factor that helped the Israelis invade Lebanon.

The latest admission was blurted out on January 30 January by Lieutenant-Colonel Raanan Gissin, who is the Defence Ministry's senior spokesperson in Jerusalem, and confirms observations made by opponents of Australian participation in the U.S.-directed Sinai force.

Frans Timmerman
Chairperson, Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Victoria

"The statement was made during the recent visit to the Middle East by Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, and follows a similar statement made last year. On September 30 last year the Australian Jewish News reported an Israeli diplomat, Dr Walter Eytan, as saying "With the multinational force, recruited by the U.S.A., supervising the maintenance of peace in that (Sinai) area, Mr Begin's Government was free to transfer its active attention to the north."

Hayden's trip to the Middle East between January 21 and February 4 in wake of the Camp David Accords between Egypt, Israel and the U.S.A. The big U.S. contingent is part of the Rapid Deployment Force which is designed to intervene in any country where U.S. interests are perceived to be under threat.

The two-year term of the Australian

commitment ends in April and the Government must decide whether to keep the troops there for a further term. However, reports in the Australian press on January 23 indicated that Hayden had already made up his mind before departure.

When he reached Cairo, however, Hayden said he had a completely open mind on the question: "It would be wrong to conclude that I've come here with a cut-and-dried attitude. I must be assured that anything we do will not stand in the way of the Palestinian people achieving their legitimate rights."

On January 22, the day before Hayden's arrival in Egypt, Morocco's King Hassan announced that President Husni Mubarak of Egypt had said that "for Egypt, Camp David is dead." Mubarak did not deny the king's statement. Nevertheless, the Egyptian Government asked Hayden to renew Australia's Sinai commitment. The Egyptians believe that the Camp David process has run its course, and fear that belligerent elements in the Israeli leadership want to reconquer the Sinai ceded visits to Egypt, Israel, Syria and Jordan. One of the purposes of the trip was ostensibly to review at first hand the role of the Australian contingent, comprising about 100 troops and eight Iroquois helicopters. In the multinational force that was set up in the Sinai desert by the Americans in the peninsula in order to exploit its oil reserves and build more settlements.

The Israelis, who currently have enough on their hands in Lebanon, also

asked for a renewal of Australia's commitment. Neither side wants to be seen to have a rejectionist position that could jeopardise U.S. funding. The Syrians and Jordanians told Hayden they had no objections to Australian participation in the Sinai force.

On arrival back in Australia, Hayden therefore felt free to announce he would recommend that the Labor Government extend the Sinai commitment. Australia will thus be able to keep the Americans happy without offending Arab states. Endorsement of Hayden's recommendation will add to the long list of Labor's broken election promises and policies.

The Palestinians

The positive side of Hayden's visit to the Middle East included his stated interest in a just solution of the Palestinian issue.

In Egypt on January 23, members of Hayden's delegation conferred with Dr Fathi Arafat, who is the head of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Dr Arafat asked for Australian assistance in the form of university training for doctors and material assistance for hospitals and clinics used by Palestinian refugees. Hayden said he would consider the request sympathetically, but that there would be political problems in Australia. (Such humanitarian assistance would undoubtedly anger the Zionist lobby, which has an eager supporter in Prime

Minister Bob Hawke.)
Dr Arafat also said he wanted to visit Australia soon to put his case more fully.

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC) in Victoria supported his request, and said that since the Sinai force has given indirect assistance to Israel's invasion of Lebanon, which claimed tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese lives, Australia is morally bound to contribute humanitarian aid to Dr Arafat's organisation.

On 29 January, Hayden visited the Kalandia refugee camp near Jerusalem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The ghetto-like camp houses over 4000 Palestinians living in poor conditions. Hayden is the most senior foreign dignitary to have made such a visit, which was not on the official itinerary organised by the Israelis. This was followed by a meeting with Rashid Al-Shawa, the Palestinian Mayor of Gaza who was deposed by the Israeli occupation authorities.

Two days later, Hayden told the Israeli Government that it should not reject any opportunities for dialogue arising from Arab proposals for peace negotiations that would involve Palestinian participation. Hayden's plea fell on deaf ears, since it could imply negotiations with the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. The Australian Government believes the PLO should be a party to the processes of bringing about a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem. Hayden also differed with Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir over Jewish settlements in the 1967-occupied territories. The Australian Government regards the settlements as illegal and an obstacle to peace, but Shamir shrugged off Hayden's position by saying that the occupied territories belong to Israel.

Australia's position, therefore, is a tacit recognition that the Camp David process has failed to lead to a comprehensive peace because the centrality of the Palestinian issue was ignored. But, while Bill Hayden's approach to the issues is a welcome improvement over that of his predecessors, little will be achieved unless concrete action is taken.

Policy contradictions

Did the September 30, 1983 review of Middle East policy by the Australian Government represent any real departure from that of the previous governments?

On the positive side, the policy review recognised "the central importance of the Palestinian issue for any settlement" and a role for the PLO in any peace process, and acknowledged "the

right of self-determination for the Palestinian people, including their right, if they so choose, to independence and the possibility of their own independent state." In addition, "Australian Ambassadors in relevant posts will be authorised to include PLO representatives in their range of political contacts." The policy review also called on Israel to freeze its West Bank settlement program, because the settlements are "contrary to international law and a significant obstacle to peace efforts."

The compromise between Hawke and Hayden over the policy review is signified by the number of inconsistencies it contains:

1. The Government refuses to recognise the PLO, yet permits diplomatic contact at ambassadorial level as long as it does not occur on Australian soil.

2. Recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians is denied on the single ground that the PLO does not recognise Israel. Yet the Australian Government recognises many governments and organisations that do not recognise Israel. Israel, the country that dispossessed the Palestinians, does not recognise the PLO, and Israel is granted full diplomatic status by the Australian Government. If this is "even handedness" the word has been given a new meaning.

3. It is impossible in all practical terms to support Palestinian statehood and self-determination, and not recognise the PLO. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians have continually expressed their support for the PLO as their sole and legitimate representative. An opinion poll of Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and published by Time magazine on May 24 1982 showed that 86 per cent of all respondents "wanted a Palestinian state run solely by the PLO."

Any future Palestinian state is most likely to be governed by the PLO, which is the umbrella body for the many and diverse Palestinian institutions, bodies, and organisations. There can be no meaningful peace talks in the Middle East without PLO participation, and this would require prior recognition of the PLO.

At least 117 nations recognise the PLO, as does the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Yet the Australian Government neither recognises the PLO, nor does it recognise the Palestine Information Office, nor indicates any willingness to even allow PLO representatives the democratic right to enter Australia to present their point of view.

If the Government is serious about the search for peace, it must withdraw its Sinai troops, whose presence has

both abetted Israel's banditry in Lebanon, and signalled lack of concern over the continuing repression and dispossession of the Palestinians living under Israeli rule.

The Hawke Government's actions so far have done little to inspire confidence. In violation of Government policy, Australia's United Nations delegation joined Israel, Canada and the U.S.A. in December as the only opponents of a General Assembly resolution calling for an International Middle East peace conference with PLO participation. The resolution was supported by 124 countries, including several that do not recognise the PLO.

The PHRC welcomed Hayden's call on Israel to take part in a dialogue with the Palestinians, but noted that the vast majority of Palestinians living under Israeli rule regard the PLO led by Yasser Arafat as their representative. Under these circumstances, the PHRC says the Australian Government can assist the peace process by recognising the PLO because this is what most Palestinians want.



economy

Meaning of takeover scramble

While most of us were busy buying Christmas presents, some of Australia's largest capitalists were frantically engaged in buying spree on the stock exchange. The first tentative signs of an economic recovery have spurred on renewed rationalisations, takeovers and mergers in Australian industry. The deepening of the recession in 1982 and 1983 left many companies vulnerable to any concerted takeover bid. Some of these companies are not small by any means. The most significant examples have been:

- Elders IXL's takeover of Carlton and United Breweries (December)
- Entrad's takeover of Bradmill (December)
- John Fairfax's takeover of Brisbane Television (December)
- GME's announcement of its intention to merge with Nissan (December)
- Myer's takeover bid for Western Australia's largest retail group, Boans Ltd. (January)

Tony Brown
member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP branch

Each of these manoeuvres points to the restructuring that is taking place in a wide range of Australian industries. Between 1970 and 1982, there were 588 companies removed from the stock exchange lists, 344 as a result of takeovers.

This restructuring by way of takeover is instructive for socialists in highlighting many aspects of the continuing economic crisis—namely concentration of ownership; rapidly escalating debt, both public and private; the link between concentration and unemployment; and the fact that while Australian worker's hands are tied by the Prices and Incomes Accord, capitalists are free to maintain their profitability without regard for anyone.

Elders and CUB

The takeover of CUB by Elders IXL dominated the financial press for a fortnight. Its repercussions are still being felt. Carlton itself had been in the news earlier in 1983, when it had bought out the Sydney brewer Tooth and Co. As Australia's largest brewing company, CUB's assets included SA Brewing, Cascade Brewery and a 49.5 per cent share in Elders IXL, as well as hotels throughout Australia.

Elders IXL was Australia's largest pastoral company. Not only was it foremost in woolbroking, livestock and meat processing, it was also a rural financier, a real estate and insurance

agent, an investment manager and owner of shipping, merchandising and merchant banking. In 1981, Elders had merged with Henry Jones IXL and added frozen foods, wine and spirits, cooking oils, pineapples and general products to its empire. Its interests were spread through manufacturing pastoral and finance—it was a conglomerate in every sense of the word. This takeover was sparked by a raid on CUB by industrial Equity Ltd. (IEL). IEL specialises in raiding bids

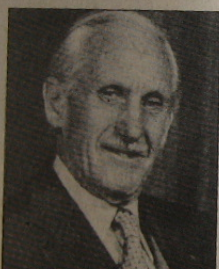
on other companies, and in so doing produces neither goods nor services.

In its swoop it bought 17 per cent of CUB's shares at a cost of \$165m but was effectively bidding for a 40 per cent holding. Elders was not prepared to let this happen and so entered the battle. For IEL the question was whether to sell or stay on and fight one of Australia's largest companies. They opted to sell and made an \$11m profit. The decision to buy and sell is called "enterprise." The \$11m is "free."

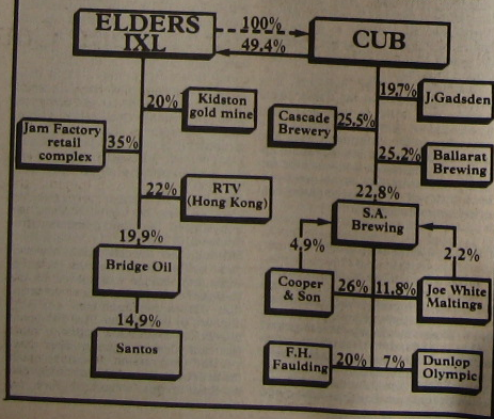
The merging of two empires



John Elliott of Elders IXL



CUB chairman Sir Edward Cohen



What Elders began as a detective measure against IEL developed into a full counter bid for CUB, its 49.5 per cent shareholder. The decision, however, was not an automatic one. Elders had been undergoing a large scale rationalisation of its own which was in line with the general downturn in the economy.

In the food processing industry, where Elders enjoyed a 50 per cent share of the market, 7000 jobs (3.4 per cent of the workforce) were lost in 1983. Yet within only five days Elders were able to raise \$972m to finance its bid for CUB.

With its finance secured, Elders shattered Australian share market records in buying out CUB. On Friday December 9 Elders bought \$157m worth of CUB shares to bring its total to 34 per cent. The previous record for one day's total trading had been \$112m. The weekend allowed CUB to contemplate its fate and any defensive measure it might adopt. However, Elders' blitz continued and by Monday evening they had won. Again they smashed the share market record, established the previous Friday, when they bought 42 million shares for \$159m. CUB had been swallowed.

Some consequences

The effect of Elders coup has left the new company with problems. Because of legal requirements, shares held by Elders in CUB must now be sold. This has meant that the new company has a sharply reduced net asset base. Combined with the enormous borrowing

that Elders undertook, this has resulted in a massive expansion of debt.

The expansion of debt—public, private and governmental—has become a well publicised feature of the current crisis. In December the ANZ Bank announced that it had written off bad debts of \$48.5m in 1982-83 (\$18.9m in 1981-82). This followed announcements by the State Bank of NSW and the AGC Finance Corporation, whose bad debt write-offs had increased from \$1.17m to \$4.84m and \$20m to \$36.5m respectively.

To offset this debt problem, Elders moved quickly to sell its General Jones Pty. Ltd. frozen food operations to H.C. Sleigh for around \$50m. In combination, General Jones (which includes Copper Kettle, Pict and Chiko labels) and H.C. Sleigh (which includes Edgell-Birds Eye, Presto, Wedgewood, Peters, Buttercup and Nannas Frozen Pastries) controlled 90 per cent of the national frozen food market. The sale by Elders effectively gives H.C. Sleigh a total monopoly of the processing of frozen vegetables in Australia.

According to the Food Preservers Union, the sale will force the closure of factories in Brisbane and Scotsdale in Tasmania. The closure in Scotsdale, a small community, will mean the loss of 150 jobs directly and 300 jobs in the area's service industries.

Further evidence of this connection between unemployment and take over was provided in February when BP Australia offered to buy out Amoco Australia. The day after the offer was announced, BP gave notice that it

would be shutting its refinery on Westport Bay Victoria. One hundred and fifty six jobs will be lost because of this closure.

The recent survey of Australia's highest paid business executives in Australian Business shows John Elliott, the managing director of Elders IXL, as the country's second highest at \$350,000 a year. The thousands of workers who have lost their jobs and seen their wages restrained so that "the economy can recover" will find this news as obscene as the speed with which Elders was able to raise the \$972m required to buy CUB.

Job losses

Under the conditions of the Prices and Incomes Accord workers are supposed to be given some degree of job protection and say in economic planning through the structure of industry advisory councils. But these bodies have failed totally to protect the jobs of many involved in industries affected by takeovers. For example, nothing is restraining Elders IXL from carrying out "rationalisations" within its new empire. When a large corporation like Elders IXL sets out to "restructure" its industries workers will only be able to save their jobs by fighting for a reduced workweek. But the Accord stands in the way of such a fight.

Fortunately, many of those in industries under Elders IXL control are in the Food Preservers Union—a union prepared to break with the restrictions of the Accord to defend the interests of its members.

queensland

Nationals attack Labor Council

Brisbane's long standing Labor City Council is under attack by the National Party. Boosted by its victory at the last State elections, the Nationals are now on a campaign to get into and take over the Brisbane City Council.

Helen Russell, member Banyo-Northgate (QLD) ALP Branch

Legislation is in the pipeline to revert to the old method of popularly electing the Lord Mayor. This method was changed to election by aldermen by the National-Liberal coalition in 1972 in an attempt to out then Lord Mayor Clem Jones. The plan backfired and Labor had a landslide victory, winning 20 of the 21 wards at the 1973 election (although this lead has since been eroded by half).

The National Party's change of heart is seen as an attempt to give a National

aldermanic team, headed by a glamour candidate for Lord Mayor. Former test cricketer Greg Chappel has been mooted in the press as a possible candidate.

Also being proposed by Local Government Minister Russ Hinze is a ward redistribution. Considering the Nationals' liking for gerry manders such a move is obviously not being considered for genuine administrative reasons.

The Labor Council itself, however, has done little over recent years to engender confidence that it will be able to significantly defeat any challenge or attack from the opposition.

It is the Labor Council which selectively refuses to allow political rallies in King George Square. They have refused permission for this year's Peace Rally to be held in the Square, forcing the organisers to look for

another venue.

In its last two budgets, transport costs rose more than 40 per cent overall, at a time when the Council had spent large sums of money on advertising for the "Shine on Brisbane" Campaign.

A small snippet in the Courier Mail of February 3 indicated that the Council would be spending \$6,500 for a full page colour ad on Brisbane in a new book entitled "Millionaires Playground."

Just recently, the Council's mismanagement of a multi-million dollar garbage collection contract has undermined their credibility even further.

What should a Labor Council's priorities be? Multi-million dollar wheeling and dealing and advertising campaigns to propagate the deluge of Brisbane, or the cheapest, most efficient and practical services for the people of the city.

DEBATES

Mental health care

The Editor,
Labor Militant.

Dear Sir,

I enclose for your consideration an article on mental health care written in response to Comrade Les Taylor's article on the subject in your last issue.

I feel that any commitment to socialist policies requires that we support disadvantaged groups striving to control their own lives. In the field of mental health, this means supporting Reinforce, the union of intellectually disabled people. In its fight to cut back the large institutions; and unless the unions are prepared to accept this as the basic aim of care in this State they are going to find themselves in conflict with the people they are supposed to be serving. It's as if the Party were to be asked to oppose the Aboriginal outstation movement because of the threat to the jobs of staff in the missions.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Borthwick

Member, Brunswick Branch, Victoria

There is in both Victoria and New South Wales a trend away from caring for intellectually disabled people in large institutions towards placing them in small group homes in the community. In both States this trend has been attacked by sections of the union movement who have attempted to portray it as an anti-worker cost-cutting exercise. The article by Les Taylor in the August Labor Militant represents a classic example of panic-mongering on this theme. If this kind of propaganda in the labour movement defeats or even delays the push to community living it will be a tragedy.

It's been a long hard fight, but the public consciousness about mental handicap has now been raised to the level where even Les Taylor isn't willing to defend directly the practice of segregating intellectually disabled people in vast concentration camps as far away from "decent" people as possible. The argument is therefore marginally more substantial going to be provided to make it work (or if it is provided it isn't going to be secure from cuts) and therefore we shouldn't even try it.

In Mr. Taylor's words, the shifts into community homes must be preceded by the creation of a well co-ordinated community-based system with guaranteed long-term funding to maintain it. It sounds reasonable, if a bit negative, if you don't stop to ask "Well, now does it compare with what we've got now?" You don't stop to ask "Well, now does it compare with a burning building? Just because the architect retardation facilities in this State are a lot closer to that kind of disaster than they are to a well co-ordinated institutional care system. The large institutions are demeaning, dehumanizing, and destructive to those who live and work in them.

It certainly isn't the fault of the staff, but it's also not just because the institutions are ill provided for (though they certainly are that as well). It's because that is the nature of large institutions. They are abnormal environments and produce abnormal behaviours. They make it impossible for intellectually disadvantaged people to throw off the stigma that's always harassed them. They make it impossible for people to be treated as individuals or for them to think of themselves as individuals. They are irredeemable and have

to be phased out as quickly as possible.

All right, how quickly is as quickly as possible? Let's get the figures straight, for a start. Les Taylor says that there are "20,000 intellectually handicapped in Victoria and a possible 10,000 more who don't appear in the official statistics." Fine, no problem. He points out that some 300 places are being provided in community residential homes. So, "What happens to the other 19,700 intellectually handicapped? They would be pushed back onto their families who just can't cope."

Good arithmetic, but the sum is dishonest. Only about 3,000 of the 20,000 were in the institutions to begin with, thank Christ. One of the basic problems of care in this area is that the institutions ate up all the available funds and this meant no money for community support facilities for the vast majority of intellectually disadvantaged people who were being cared for in the community. If all the residents are moved out of institutions 17,000 people won't be any worse off, and if support facilities are provided for the group homes some of the 17,000 can use them and be a whole lot better off.

The cost: the last costing given for the Community Residential Units came out at a capital cost of \$18,000 per resident. Multiply that by 3,000 and the answer is something over fifty million dollars. Spread it over ten years and offset some of the cost against the land value of the institutions and it's quite a rational objective. It'll still be a large payout, but it'll be an order of magnitude less than spending the money that would be needed to get the institutions into liveable condition. A lot of them need rebuilding from the ground up, which is costly. It looks even more expensive when you consider that it's supposed to be a transitional stage, that it's all to be just until we persuade the Government to provide a well co-ordinated program and then we're going to sell them off after all.

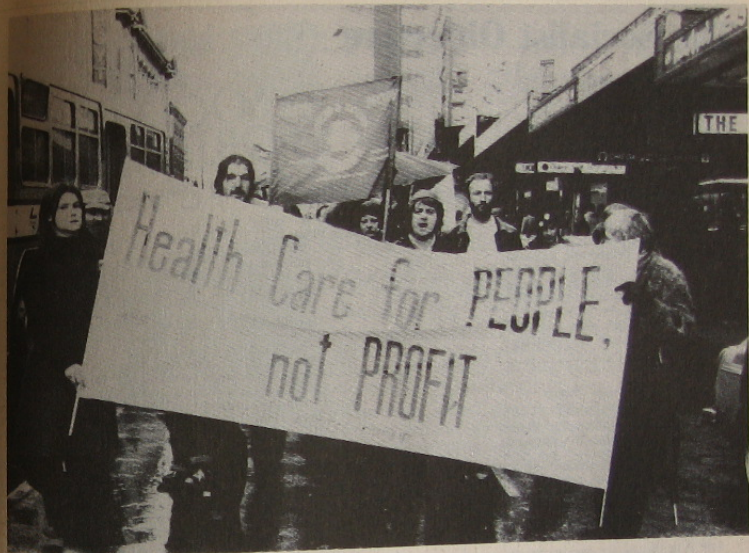
There's no point farting around; put them on the market tomorrow and look around for bridging finance to cover buying community homes. And if you're pretending to be worried, like Les Taylor, that the Government will simply put the money from the sale of Kew into paying off the general deficit then all that has to be done is to follow the St. Nicholas model and put into the enabling legislation a clause giving the rehousing of the residents first call on the proceeds.

Ah, says Comrade Taylor, but that's not enough; the funds might be provided at the beginning, but what about "guaranteed long-term Government funding?" We can't think about beginning unless we have long-term guarantees, and, as he points out below, "any guarantee of adequate funding for welfare reform can only be illusory" and there's presumably no point even in looking for them.

What does the man want, a constitutional amendment? All welfare funding, including the finance for maintaining large Budget. Guarantees aren't provided for from Budget or Governor's cook or the schools or the police or the hospitals.

To be more particular, they aren't provided to the institutions now. As far as that goes, a move into community living isn't going to make the situation any more precarious. The guarantee for funding support for community living can only come on the basis of a developed public feeling that to live as other people live is a basic human right that it would be inconceivable to override.

But still, what about the support programs? Shouldn't we



wallet until they're in place? A good question; but not, again, the right question, which is shouldn't we start them? It's not as if people in institutions had all these educational and developmental and training and entertainment programs that they'll have to give up when they go out into small units. They don't, in the main.

Programs provided in the institutions are scanty and inadequate. We should—we must—provide better programs that will enable handicapped people to expand to their full potential; but I can't see any point in keeping the institutions just so we can put the new programs in. It's not going to be just so we can put the new programs in. It's not going to be just so we can put the new programs in. It's not going to be just so we can put the new programs in. It's not going to be just so we can put the new programs in.

Of course there are going to be real and continuing problems to do with the institutions even under a determined policy of community care. There are going to be times, many times, where there is going to be a choice between buying another house in the community or patching a floor that's rotting out underfoot at Sunbury. Even a ten-year program of phasing out institutions involves some people living in them for ten years (and I think anybody defending the institutions should be obliged to back up their words by living in one for a month). Their lives are going to have to be made liveable. The point is that only a hard-and-fast policy of deinstitutionalization can provide a context for making these difficult decisions.

Hesitating between policies will only mean that decisions will be made ad hoc, piecemeal, and over and over; expensive repairs will be started in the wrong conditions and be difficult to alter later. It is not true that there are no easy answers—there are just no easy right answers. If we do not

get our basic principles straight there are going to be a large number of wrong decisions based on the line of least resistance at any given moment.

Les Taylor's hostility to community care is not representative of the feelings of Mental Retardation staff as a group (although, unfortunately, the union leadership seem to be proceeding on the basis that it is). Many staff can see that large institutions drain the meaning from their own lives as staff to wardens rather than teachers, helpers and friends.

Staff I've talked to have been as shocked as I am at the idea of a Committee Against Exploitation of the Mentally Disabled that apparently interests itself in abuse and exploitation only when they take place in community homes and is prepared to ignore them if they occur in institutions. (If readers want to contact a group fighting against abuses no matter why they occur, get in touch with the Intellectual Disability Rights Group at the Disability Resource Centre, 127 Sydney Road, Brunswick, Tel. No. (03) 387 9859.)

In the simplest terms, the labour movement must support the movement of intellectually disadvantaged people out of institutions and into the community because that is what they themselves want. As in Aboriginal affairs, we have passed the point where even the best intentioned groups of outsiders can be accepted as spokespersons for the interests of the disadvantaged. Speaking through organizations such as Reinforce, handicapped people have over and over again said that the single most important thing that is needed to give them human rights is the closing down of the total institutions. They deserve the full support of every person in the party.

reviews

The Socialist Objective

The Socialist Objective
—Labor and Socialism
Edited by Bruce O'Meagher
Hale & Iremonger, Sydney

Sixty years after the "socialist objective" was adopted by the Labor Party in 1921, it was reaffirmed at the last National Conference in the following form:

"The Australian Labor Party is a democratic socialist party and has the objective of the democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange, to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields."

Now, for socialists even that must mean the overthrow of capitalism

Richard Archer
member Annandale (NSW) branch

because under capitalism exploitation is the name of the game. Not, of course, for Social Democrats—those who believe a reformist approach will ultimately bring about fundamental change. For them, the possibility exists for a non-exploitative capitalism, brought about by enlightened government intervention and regulation.

And it is this Social Democratic interpretation that has dominated for as a means "to achieve the political and social values of equality, democracy, liberty and social co-operation inherent in this objective, the Australian Labor Party stands for... maintenance of and support for a competitive non-monopolistic private sector."

However, after the coup in 1975, and with a deepening economic crisis, the Social Democratic meaning of the objective increasingly has become a question mark within the ranks of the Labor Party. A "humane capitalism" sounds like a "square circle" to many.

This collection of papers by eleven prominent Labor intellectuals does not diminish scepticism.

Bruce O'Meagher has brought together revised versions of papers originally presented to a seminar on Labor's socialist objective sponsored by the ACT Branch of the ALP prior to the last National Conference. Dennis Alliman's brief piece, together with O'Meagher's Introduction, are the only additions.

All of the other contributors (with the possible exception of Fred Gruen) claim to be writing from a "democratic, socialist" perspective as opposed to a Social Democratic one. Just what this means precisely is not

too clear when we find the very conservative Gareth Evans calling himself a socialist (rather like King Edward VII who once said "We are all socialists now").

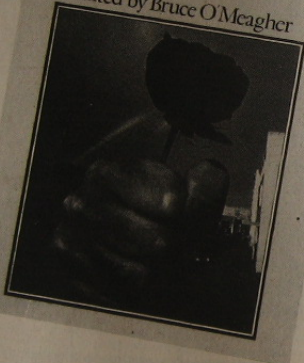
The papers canvass the issues of what socialism means; the various barriers to its acceptance; long-term strategies to overcome those barriers; the roles of women and migrants; Party democracy, and more. With the notable exception of Evans's contribution, much of what is written is good, or at least unobjectionable, that is, at the level at which it is pitched.

The book fails, or doesn't bother, to get down to the level where militant socialists can plug in.

What is left unanswered by these papers are the questions "What does it mean to be a socialist in the Labor Party?" "What is the relation of socialists to Social Democrats in a Party that is governed by the Social Democrats?"

Unless those questions are answered, the political difference between the two is left unidentified. In other words, it is no good just outlining the different policies and programs if they don't con-

THE SOCIALIST OBJECTIVE Labor & socialism edited by Bruce O'Meagher



tain an effective strategy by which power is to be taken from the right-wing of the Party. If you don't have that strategy, you will be overcome politically, and this is precisely what has happened to the current Labor Left; the classic illustration being its endorsement of the Prices and Incomes Accord. Being sucked into this shows how unprepared the Left is. The lack of an effective strategy means that socialists, in theory, turn out to be Social Democrats in practice.

Because the book does not get down to the tin tacks of how to attack the enemy within the party, the socialist activist will not gain much practical assistance from reading it.

This is not to say that the book is worthless. For those cutting their teeth on the topic for the first time, it covers the main ground. The essays by Andrew Jakubowicz, Susan Margery and Bob Connell stand out as the best of the bunch. But for those of us looking for more concrete strategies against the Right inside as well as outside the Party, the book makes for thin pickings.

New national youth paper

The South Australian Branch of Young Labor has taken responsibility for converting its newspaper Insight-Foresight into a national paper for Australian Young Labor. At a time when it is particularly important for members of the Party to have opportunities to debate the policies being implemented by the Hawke Government, this initiative is most welcome.

The paper is actually a joint project with the Foresight section being prepared by a women's collective. As explained in the first national issue "The Foresight and Insight Editorial Collectives seek a democratic, non-nuclear, socialist-feminist Australia. We support progressive policies and organizations, and rank-and-file democracy in the Labor Party."

The paper will be published 6 times a year, and sent free to members of Young Labor.

The January-February issue covers the Alternative Economic Strategy debate, anti-nuclear campaigns in the ALP, childcare as a political issue, por-

nography, jails, YLA activities, Israel, reviews and more. Continuation of the discussion on economic policy is promised in the next issue.

The paper is intended as a forum for a range of views and the editors point out

that they do not take responsibility for the "boring bits" and "opinions expressed in signed articles." Contributions and inquiries are both welcome. Contact AYL 1st floor, 130 Franklin St. Adelaide SA 5000 or phone (08) 519601.

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Statement of Aims

1. To aid in defending victims of political persecution and injustice in the countries of Asia and the Pacific, regardless of their particular beliefs, affiliations or associations, and to provide whatever assistance is possible for their families.
2. To organise such actions as may be possible within Australia to put pressure on reactionary Asian and Pacific governments to stop restrictions on the rights of free speech and free association, to respect the role of law in all political cases, to ameliorate the harsh conditions under which political prisoners are held, and to work for their amnesty and release.
3. To inform and arouse public opinion in Australia on the repressive policies pursued by military, authoritarian and even constitutional regimes in Asia and the Pacific which trample on elementary civil and political liberties, and to call attention to any complicity of the Australian Government and its open and secret agencies in aiding such violations of democratic rights.
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What's Left in Tasmania

The Left in the Tasmanian ALP has always had something of a schizoid nature. Killing up Left on national and international issues such as uranium and foreign policy, but being almost identical to the conservative forces on domestic political matters such as the Franklin dam.

After the Left's victory in 1976 in getting major rule changes, an end was put to many of the corrupt practices used by the Right. Following this, the emphasis within the Left has been the consolidation of its position by playing the numbers game, while placing little emphasis on the development of

By a Tasmanian correspondent

progressive policies or the building of a strong movement to ensure that such policies were implemented.

Often members of this "Broad Left" defended their support for conservative measures: such as the deletion of the "no dams" option from the 1981 referendum on the energy issue; by invoking the spectre of the National Civic Council (NCC). While there is much to justify wariness, the Right has been in disarray ever since the expulsion of Harradine in 1975 and Imlach and Watling in 1977.

On a deeper level, the reason for this domestic conservatism has been the nature of the "Broad Left" itself. As cynics have often noted, the "Broad Left" is very broad without much Left hence its nickname "the Broad."

Progressive policies would act as a disintegrating force upon such a broad coalition yet, paradoxically, while the Broad continued to place so little emphasis on policy, it was destined to remain conservative.

This policy paralysis resulted in policy development being Left to the Parliamentary Labor Party (read public servants) and independent Left members with a sprinkling of the more progressive members of the Broad.

These tensions were important in the dams issue, which effectively paralysed the Party and resulted in its eventual disintegration. The handful of unionists who were the real power brokers of the Broad took a weak line from the outset, allowing the labour movement to move into an unholy alliance with the establishment, the Hydro Electric Commission (HEC), the media, the Liberal Party and the Legislative Council. The best it could manage in differentiating itself from these groups was arguing which dam should be built, rather than question whose are actually served by the construction of more dams.

Interestingly, at the same time on the mainland, progressive sections of the labour movement were challenging new power projects and industries associated with the "resources boom," such as in the Hunter Valley, NSW, and the activities of the State Electricity Commission in Victoria. These placed little emphasis on the labour-intensive manufacturing sector.

While the environment movement made some mistakes in its strategy, it remained the only group capable of promoting the real issues in the energy debate nationally.

The polarisation of the energy debate saw the conservation movement mobilise thousands of people in previously sleepy Tasmanian centres, while the morale and membership of the ALP (then in government) took a nosedive. Branches which in 1980 had a regular attendance of 25 or 30 struggled to get a quorum of 5 in 1983. Members of the Broad still prefer to claim that the people who left were not really committed members of the ALP, rather than face up to the major mistakes that the ALP made.

Following the virtual annihilation of the ALP at the May, 1982 State election, the ALP National Executive intervened in the Branch, suspending all office holders and supervising the writing of new rules prior to the return of control at the October, 1983 State Council.

There was an influx of new members prior to the State Council and following the election of a Federal ALP government and the High Court decision to protect the Franklin River. Many of these people were keen to rebuild the Branch and get it committed to some progressive policies. Following the failure of the old Left to develop policies, a new grouping called the New Economic Directions Forum (NEDF) was formed, primarily to gather together people who were con-

cerned with the development of policy.

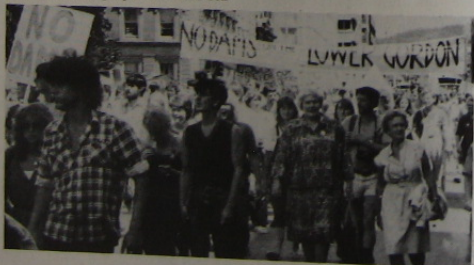
The membership of this group was diverse, consisting of new members, old independent lefties along with people from mainland Left factions who had moved to Tasmania and were looking for the Left. Part of the price for having the group totally open was the attendance of right wing people. Its initial focus was to promote people on to the policy committees by using its collective voting power.

Due to its poorly delineated lines of accountability, one member coordinating liaison with unions took it upon himself to do a deal with the right wing where they would support NEDF candidates for the policy committees, with the NEDF supporting the Right's candidate for the Vice-President position. While it seems that most NEDF candidates did not deliver their votes, it illustrated the problem of the new group being exploited by the right wing.

Despite this problem, many of the policy committees comprised NEDF candidates as well as some progressive Democratic Socialists (DS) members (the reformed Broad) while the Right displayed little interest. Additionally, some NEDF candidates gained support from the DS.

The success of this grouping in the initial stages of reconstruction was largely due to the fact that the size of the State Council was increased from 80 to 200 delegates, with the branches getting direct representation.

While the DS gained control of most of the machine positions at the State Council, the battle between the incumbent Secretary, Terry Aulich, and the DS candidate, Eugene Alexander, illustrated the decline in the strength of the DS caucus. Alexander won, but the 103-97 vote was a far cry from the days when the DS could claim to control 80 per cent of the Council votes.



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