

# Labor combined with SOCIALIST FIGHT MILITANT

FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM

Volume 4, Number 7, September 1984



Tax cut con-trick  
boosts Accord

## Keating's cutback Budget

## Oppose U.S. bases

Owen Wilkes  
interviewed

El Salvador  
U.S. prepares  
invasion

British Labour  
The fight  
for democracy

60c

PER

SF  
294.2940974  
L11 L



## Labor MILITANT

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

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

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

We also devote a lot of attention to the threat of war and the wars already going on. From Central America to the Middle East, the United States and its allies are determined to block progressive movements in order to protect their economic interests. Reagan's drive to war increases the danger of nuclear war and Australia's participation as part of the U.S. war machine must cease. We must remove the U.S. bases and withdraw from the aggressive ANZUS military pact.

Labor Militant campaigns for progressive policies for liberation struggles world wide — in El Salvador, for Solidarity's struggle for socialist democracy in Poland, for the rights of the Palestinian people and against Israeli aggression in the Middle East, for the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines and against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, and for the need to make reparations to Vietnam.

Labor is in government in four states and federally. Yet never before has there been a bigger gap between stated Labor policy and government performance, let alone the gap between performance and working class interests. This gap is reflected in important debate and discussion within Party branches and at Conference. We believe that the most free and open debate within the Party and affiliated unions on policy and practice is necessary to develop positions and actions that can represent the working class from whom Labor draws its strength.

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

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

If you agree with our aims we encourage you to help finance and distribute Labor Militant. You can get each issue sent by mail at a cost of \$6 for 10 issues. We can also make arrangements to have a bundle of any size mailed or delivered for your Branch or for you to sell. There are high costs involved in the production of a publication like Labor Militant so any financial contribution will help to ensure its continued regular appearance.

For subscriptions or any further information please fill in the clip-off below or write to any of the addresses on the following page.

## A good way to spend your 'tax cut'

Paul Keating's Budget is supposed to have given the average wage-earner a \$7.60-a-week tax cut. Well, here's an ideal way to spend less than one week's worth, \$6, before inflation and "fiscal drag" eats it away again.

I enclose \$6.00 for ten issues

I would like to distribute Labor Militant.

Please send me . . . . . copies and find \$ . . . . . enclosed

I enclose \$ . . . . . donation towards the cost of producing and distributing Labor Militant

I would like to be contacted by a Labor Militant supporter

I would like further information . . . . .

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PCDE \_\_\_\_\_

BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Labor Militant, P.O. Box 372, Broadway 2007,  
(Cheques etc payable to Labor Militant)

Investing in a subscription to Labor Militant is not only a hedge against inflation, but the best way to keep in touch with the fight for socialist policies in the Party.

## Contents

Volume 4, Number 7, September 1984

4. Letters
5. Editorial: A war in the Party
6. Keating's cutback Budget  
Tax cut con-trick bolsters Accord
9. Public schools lose out
10. NSW nurses' 38-hour fight
11. Early election vs. membership preselection?
12. Tas State Council report
14. El Salvador  
U.S. prepares an invasion
16. Grant Faris Glubb a visa
17. SA Labor Against Uranium set up
18. Owen Wilkes speaks on U.S. bases
20. British miners' struggle
22. British Labour Party  
The fight for democracy
24. Review: The case against ASIO
26. Setting up a YLA in NSW
27. Activists' guide to the ALP  
Tasmanian Branch
28. Sri Lanka: Tamils under attack

Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion

Printed and published by P. Brewer PO Box 372, Broadway NSW 2007  
Registered by Australia Post—publication no. N8Q4572

### For further information

Victoria  
PO Box 319  
South Carlton  
Vic 3051  
Western Australia  
GPO Box U1925  
Perth  
WA 6001  
Newcastle  
PO Box 166  
Newcastle  
NSW 2300  
Wollongong  
PO Box 2058  
Wollongong  
NSW 2515  
Queensland  
PO Box 88  
West End  
Qld 4104  
South Australia  
PO Box 152  
Unley  
SA 5061  
Sydney  
PO Box 372  
Broadway  
NSW 2007



## letters to L.M.

### 'Defend NZ nuclear-free' proposal'

[We reprint the following - 'Open letter to People for Nuclear Disarmament members: Nuclear Free New Zealand proposal under threat.']

In the recent New Zealand general elections the Labor Party won a landslide victory commanding a 17 seat majority in the Parliament.

The election was called at short notice by Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, who claimed that he could no longer rely on the support of some of his own backbench to secure a majority in the Parliament.

The reason was due to a rare circumstance when two of the government backbench MPs crossed the floor to vote on a Labour-sponsored Bill to make New Zealand a nuclear free zone. The Bill was designed to give legal effect in NZ to the UN General Assembly resolution (in 1975) to create a nuclear weapons-free zone in the South Pacific. Essentially the Bill provided for prohibiting visits of nuclear powered and/or armed ships and aircraft to New Zealand ports. The Bill was nonetheless defeated by one vote due to the support given to the government by two Independent (former Labour) MPs, one of whom ironically is the son of former Prime Minister Norman Kirk - the man who dispatched NZ frigates to Mururoa Atoll in 1973 in protest against French nuclear tests.

The issue of a nuclear free New Zealand remained high profile during the election campaign and the new government can quite rightly claim therefore that its commanding victory at the polls can be interpreted as widespread electorate endorsement of this aspect of its policy platform.

On this question NZ Labour's policy calls for:

- legislation to make New Zealand and its territorial waters nuclear free.
- opposition to visits to NZ by nuclear powered and/or armed vessels and aircraft.
- sponsorship of a regional

conference under UN auspices to promote a nuclear weapons-free zone in the South Pacific.

renewal of the terms of NZ's ANZUS association with Australia and the United States to take account of:

- NZ's unconditional anti-nuclear stance.

- active promotion of a nuclear weapons-free South Pacific.

- equal partnership.

- a guarantee of the complete integrity of NZ's sovereignty.

Arising from the ANZUS Conference in Wellington in the week following the election pressure has been exerted on New Zealand to back down on its hardline anti-nuclear stance. It should be emphasised that the economic situation in New Zealand is such that pressure (or even the threat of economic sanctions) from a major trading partner may be sufficient to force the government to backdown. If this occurs then the position of the anti-nuclear forces in Australia would also be weakened considerably and the opportunity to establish a "beach head" for the Nuclear Free Pacific Proposal would also be lost.

Concerned Australians should urge the Foreign Minister Bill Hayden to ensure that no pressure is applied to the New Zealand Government either by the United States or any other government and we should express our strong support for the stand of the New Zealand Labour Party. Letters should be directed to: Bill Hayden, Parliament House, Canberra, 2600 and to Mr David Lange, Prime Minister of New Zealand, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, New Zealand. I would be grateful if copies could be forwarded to my office to allow the campaign to be monitored.

Yours in solidarity,  
Robert Tickner,  
MHR for Hughes,  
(2 Boyle St, Sutherland, NSW 2232.)

### 'Protest resignation'

[The following letter has been circulated to a number of ALP bodies.]

This statement is to announce my protest resignation from the Australian Labor Party.

As a worker and rank and file ALP branch member, I have found it absolutely intolerable how a narrow elite of Parliamentary and other Labor leaders so often defy the will of members and implement policies against the best interests of working and poor people.

During the period of the present federal Labor government, such betrayal of the working class membership and voting base of the ALP has been epitomised in the wage-cutting Accord social contract and the reactionary outcome of the 1984 National Conference.

This extremely undemocratic and unrepresentative conference was used to impose "pragmatic" sell-out policies for almost every major issue, from uranium mining, United States nuclear military bases and East Timorese independence, to foreign and economic matters in general.

In the next federal election, I feel that a party which commits so much harm against its supporters does not deserve my active support except at the minimum level of my continued preference that the ALP not be defeated by the openly reactionary coalition.

In particular, I cannot support the endorsed candidate for Willis, because of the pivotal role of this comrade as Parliamentary Labor leader in diverting the party from the aims of increased social justice, more independent foreign policy and progressive reform; in short, derailing the ALP from the best and most basic labor movement traditions.

Therefore, after two and a half years active membership

and a lifetime of supporting the ALP, I am resigning forthwith, in order to work most actively for a political organisation that stands more for advancing the interests of the working class.

I request the branch to send copies of this statement to the ALP Victorian branch office, the federal ALP Parliamentary caucus, the Prime Minister R/L Hawke, and the "Labor Star" newspaper.

Yours fraternally,  
G.R. Walters  
Melbourne

### 'Support NZ PM and his Labour Party'

It was like a breath of Spring when the Labour Party was elected in New Zealand. But more important by far was the news that the new Prime Minister, David Lange, intended to carry out his election promises.

Our Branch at its last meeting on 17th July passed the following Resolution to send a telegram to the New Zealand Prime Minister to read as follows:

"That this Branch welcomes the election of the New Zealand Labour government and supports their stand on keeping New Zealand a Nuclear Free Zone and banning nuclear powered vessels from their ports."

A copy of this Resolution was also sent to the Foreign Minister, Mr Hayden.

We urge all Branches to support the New Zealand Prime Minister and Government on their stand. They will need much support during the coming months when increasing pressure will be exerted to encourage them to overturn election mandates and promises with regard to nuclear weapons.

Irene Robson  
Member of  
Labor Foreign Affairs  
Policy Committee, Vic ALP.

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

## Left must fight on all fronts A war in the Party

There is a war being waged in the Party. Many events point to the seriousness and extent of the battle. The recent Budget and the National Conference are just the latest and perhaps the crudest signs of the fight for control.

The battle is being waged over the nature and purpose of the Party and whose interests it will serve. On one side is the ordinary Party member, in the Branch or union, who sees the Party as the means to defend and advance their hopes and needs - to give the ordinary person and the underdog "a go." On the other are the careerists - those who see the Party as an avenue to position, status, wealth and power.

The pragmatic electoralist approach of Hawke, Hayden and Keating expresses this perfectly. For them, winning seats and maintaining government is all-important. It is the key goal to which everything must be subordinated.

And we have seen this clearly in the policies pursued in Government. Social issues, more equitable economic policies, welfare and foreign policy have been weighed and discarded as too "idealistic," giving the reality of a recession and the need to maintain themselves as a viable leadership, as good managers of an ever more unequal system.

That the buying power of the wage is falling, that more and more welfare recipients are sinking ever deeper into poverty, that a fifth of the next generation are already living in poverty, that secure full-time jobs are disappearing, to be replaced by part-time, short-term employment - all this is unfortunate but necessary.

to face his Party membership in a very direct way - at the National Conference of over 900 delegates.

For those who see the Party as the vehicle for social progress and greater equity the battle has to be taken up on issues of both policy and democracy. We have to put forward what we want, and make sure the Party is structured in such a way that the Parliamentary Party is held directly accountable for its actions. We need more democracy, not less.

But equity we have to fight for progressive policies. No longer can the Left delude itself with the illusion that concessions and compromise will appease and deflect the onslaught, creasingly trade off on questions of democracy as well, willing to compromise on.

There are notions among the Left that effective radicalism means accommodation and appeasement, that progress can be marked by the degree to which you are willing to compromise, that firmness and consistency are doctrinaire. This viewpoint confuses weakness with tactical flexibility. It ignores the fact that the strategy is to win what you are fighting for, and tactics are tailored to this.

But as we have pointed out before. This is not an error that the Right makes. They have consistently pushed forward their policies, irrespective of violations of Party policy. When it became embarrassing to have such blatant contradictions between platform and practice, the National Conference overturned all that.

But the Right is consistent in all their policies. They have ac-

### editorial

This pragmatism at home is tied to an increasingly aggressive foreign policy. Now we can't be seen to offend the rulers of America or Indonesia; they are the ones in power, so their needs must come first. So it's too bad for the workers and peasants of East Timor or Central America, who are fighting to overcome the corruption and brutality of military dictatorships which serve the interests of international capital.

In this view, winning Government is not the first step in a process of putting into practice what the Party stands for in the election Party policy. Instead it is the goal itself.

And if the Party ranks object to what is being done, then they must be gagged and intimidated. This of course means that Party democracy must be eroded.

Accountability and responsiveness to the ranks for actions in Government are barriers to this pragmatic approach. The recent New Zealand elections provide a good example.

When Labor won there recently and David Lange implemented the Party's anti-nuclear ships policy, despite his own views on the subject, he posed the question quite clearly. He stated that the New Zealand party was much more democratically structured than the Australian Party.

He had to implement the policy, despite pressure from the United States and the Australian Government, because he had

cepted that if they must shore up capitalism at home, they must also shore it up abroad. That is the basis for the foreign policy shifts that have taken place.

It's the Left who have proved inconsistent in facing this question. While they have been loud in their defence of progressive foreign policy issues in the past, their silence on progressive economic issues has been deafening.

Leave aside the issue that the Left thought it was necessary to agree to the Right's economic policy, the Prices and Incomes Accord, in order to get Labor into Government.

What is important now is that the whole experience of the Accord has cut wages, eroded living standards and increased the tax burden on wage-earners. Public education and increased the tax burden on practice limited to manoeuvres and numbers games.

The logic and tactics of the Right will set the framework - and not only will policy be compromised, but the Left will in-



# Tax cut con-trick Cutback Budget bolsters Accord

The much-heralded tax cut package in the Hawke Government's second Budget, announced on August 21, is essentially a con-trick. It will hardly cover for the effects of the average wage-earner being pushed into a higher tax bracket over the course of the past year — a process which will worsen over the next year.

The headline in the August 22 Sydney Morning Herald hit the nail on the head: "Tax trick election Budget," it proclaimed.

**Martin Tuck**  
Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

Fundamentally, the 1984 Labor Budget continues the strategy of cutbacks in public spending and redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich established by the Fraser Liberal-National Party coalition since 1975.

Within this general framework, this Budget is designed to provide enough camouflage to bolster the wage-cutting prices-and-incomes Accord — which has been the cornerstone of the Government's policy since the electoral victory of March 1983.

Following on the right-wing destruction of virtually all progressive policies in the Party platform at the July National Conference, this Budget confirms the rightward drive of the Hawke-Keating leadership in its attempt to establish this Labor leadership as the main instrument of government in the interests of big business in Australia for a considerable time to come.

The aim of the Budget is to give enough away — in appearance at least — to win the expected December election by a landslide. But, at the same time, the framework of the Accord — "restraint" on wages and living standards generally, while profits are boosted — is intended to be shored up, for the next year at least.

The fact that it seems increasingly likely that the Liberals, under lame-duck leader Andrew Peacock, will be slaughtered at the coming election is very good news.

But, this only makes it more scandalous that the Hawke Government has not taken the opportunity to push ahead rapidly with a radical reform program to create massive numbers of new jobs

through large-scale public works measures, to completely restructure the tax system to slash taxes on working people and introduce capital gains and wealth taxes, and to remodel the social welfare system to raise benefits to the level of a living income.

To do this, of course, would mean a fundamental change in direction for the Government — but this is going to require a big fight by progressive forces inside the Party, and the rise of a massive mobilisation from the union movement to create a new leadership for the Labor movement.

So, what is the reality of the "tax cuts" in the Budget?

The facts are that the introduction of cuts worth \$7.60-per-week to the average wage-earner, and the new five-band tax scale to replace the three-step scale, are

going to be substantially undercut by "fiscal drag" — i.e. the effect of inflation on the level of income tax.

As the August 23 Financial Review noted, "More than a million taxpayers will move into a higher tax bracket by June 1985 as a result of the restructured tax bands in the Budget."

"Based on the latest available income tax statistics, for fiscal 1982-83, over 50,000 taxpayers will be put into the 46 per cent marginal rate by the end of the current tax year if their wages or salaries increase by the 7 per cent average suggested in the Budget papers."

"On the same extrapolation, 350,000 will go from 46 to 48 per cent and 155,000 will jump straight from the 46 per cent band to a marginal rate of 60 per cent."

"In fact, based on the average weekly earnings (AWE) for males of \$20.165 excluding overtime, it would seem that a good section of the adult male population is already in the higher bracket."

The failure to index taxes to inflation has once again meant that workers' wages will be eaten away over time, and real wages will fall.

"Enjoy it while you can," the Sydney Sun newspaper headline proclaimed on August 22.

The real tax situation is underlined by the glaring fact that total income tax receipts for 1984-85 will rise by 23 per cent — three times the rise of 7.6 per cent

for the previous year!

This increase of \$5678 million in income tax, overwhelmingly from wage and salary earners, makes the \$1300 million total value of the tax cuts look like peanuts.

Meanwhile, the major winners in the tax field will be — wait for it — big business!

BHP, in particular, stands to do very nicely from the company tax relief measures announced by the Treasurer. The proposal to allow losses to be transferred between one company and another within one group will give great scope to BHP, and other corporate giants like CRA, to cover up profits for tax purposes.

BHP and other mining companies will also do well out of the tax allowance for mineral exploration. And other big companies are very happy with the increased depreciation allowance for new construction, and the extension of the investment allowance.

Overall, corporate taxes will comprise only 9.4% of total budget receipts in 1984-85. And the share of profits in the national cake will rise again in the coming year — an essential aim of the Hawke-Keating strategy for economic "recovery."

A survey of more than 200 leading company executives by the Murdoch media group on reactions to the Budget showed that 73% thought the Labor Budget was as good as or better for business than the Liberals would have done.

But what about the unemployed? The news there is bad.

Despite Paul Keating's declaration that the Budget "is about embarking upon a new growth path," the jobless are going to get none of it.

Although Keating and Hawke boast of a 10% growth rate through 1983-84, unemployment is predicted to fall only "slightly" in 1984-85. In fact, the Budget papers note that longer-term unemployment "is still growing."

And the prediction of continued 4% per cent growth in 1984-85 is dubious in any case. The August 22 Financial Review pointed out that, "if ever a set of figures deserves to be described as rubbery, those of the Budget relating to growth in GDP over the current financial year, growth in receipts, and unemployment do."

"There is a very real possibility that the Government's optimism could turn out to be excessive in which case the deficit would be considerably larger than the estimated \$6.7 billion."

"Indeed, rising unemployment and faltering growth could increase the output figures by causing unemployment benefits to blow out while substantially reducing the revenue figures."

The forecast of continuing high growth is completely dependent on an international recovery which is less and less

solid. In fact, a fall-off in the U.S., Japan and Europe next year could leave the Australian economy floundering by the end of this financial year.

The utopian idea that it is possible to tinker with the capitalist economy and achieve "sustained economic growth" which will produce substantial down-the-line benefits for workers and low-income earners is the core of the Hawke Government's strategy.

Eventually, the kind of international economic recession which confronted and defeated the Whitlam Government in the mid-1970s will hit this Government also. Then all the Hawke-Keating economic "rationality" will collapse and the fundamental challenge of an irrational private profit-based economy or a socialised system based on public ownership and control will be sharply posed — as it was in the 1930s Depression.

As for the job-creation features of this Budget, they are basically a mirage. In major areas of public works, real spending has actually been cut.

Urban and regional development has been slashed in money terms by 14.7%, which will badly hit new capital works in the cities and towns. It means no new jobs, maybe even fewer, in these important areas.

Public housing also faces a continuing crisis because of the failure of the Government to increase funding to meet the massive need.

Cuts in funds to the States and local government in real terms will also mean more cutbacks coming up in the State Budgets later this year.

What about the much-trumpeted increase in funds for Community Employment Program job-creation schemes? This is another con-trick.

The 44% rise in CEP funding hides the reality of an increase of only \$23.5 million, or 6%, for job-creation schemes overall — a fall in real terms, allowing for inflation.

In general, social welfare gets a miserable deal in the Budget. A rise of only \$2.50 in the single pension and unemployment benefit from November 1 will do little more than cover for the effects of the artificial reduction in the CPI with the introduction of Medicare — in reality, amounting to a net rise of about 35 cents!

One pensioner organisation spokesman rightly used the label, the "postage stamp Budget."

As for the international dimension, this is summed up by the fact that disaster and humanitarian aid to Third World countries is slashed in half — while there is an 81% per cent increase in defence spending, including a massive \$758 million in this financial year for the new F/A-18 fighter planes!

The key to the Budget strategy is the attempt to bolster the flagging prices-and-incomes Accord.

In his Budget speech, Keating stressed that the Accord had been a "remarkable success — and the contribution of the ACTU to that outcome has been vital."

Economic growth "has only been possible because the Accord has given the Government an agreed basis of wage and price restraint."

"Tax cuts will ensure the continuing moderation of wage pressures — moderation that has been essential to putting the recovery on a sound footing."

But Keating issued the open threat that tax cuts were being given only "on the basis of continuation" of wage restraint. This indicates that future tax rises may follow any break-out from the restrictive wage indexation guidelines in the coming year.

The response to the Budget by ACTU President Cliff Dolan (that the tax cuts in the Budget would succeed in keeping the lid on wages for the coming year underlines just how much the Government is relying on the trade union bureaucracy to continue to co-operate with the Government in holding back workers' struggles.

Keating's going to be easier said than done, however.

The pressure for wage rises is starting to build up significantly. Not only are workers restive over the failure to receive any catch-up for the 9.1% lost under the Fraser "wage pause" of 1982-83, but anger is growing at the effective 12-month wage freeze in force till next April because of manipulation of the CPI for the "Medibank effect."

The plan to trade off a national superannuation scheme for a productive wage rise next year is meeting stiff opposition — especially from those workers, about 40%, who already have superannuation!

To summarise the meaning of the Hawke Government's second Budget: It is a package which essentially continues the austerity drive begun by the Fraser Government in 1976, including major cutbacks in real spending on social welfare and public works programs.

It contains a largely illusory tax-cut scheme which is primarily intended to prop up the wage-cutting Accord, and restrain workers' independent struggles to defend living standards — while providing the conditions for boosting corporate profits.

The strategy of the Budget is intertwined with that of the Accord. And its success seems to depend on the very doubtful proposition that the union bureaucracy can hold back wage struggles for another year, in the face of rising anger and expectations from unionists and the oppressed for real improvements in their living conditions.





## Sydney Social Rights seminar hits Accord

The Sydney Social Rights Campaign held a pre-Budget seminar on Sunday August 12 at the Annandale Neighbourhood Centre. About 80 people attended during the course of the day. The morning session was addressed by Graham Roberts, President of the Port Kembla Branch of the Federated Ironworkers Association; Anna Pha, an executive member of the Victorian Trades Hall Council; and Tony Forward of the Social Rights Campaign National Co-ordinating Committee.

Leon Parisi

Member Camperdown (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

In the afternoon, workshops were held on the topics of women, migrants, unions, and the ALP — all in the context of the experience of the ALP-ACTU Accord.

Both Roberts and Pha brought up to date the message of the original Social Rights Manifesto — published by a group of progressive unionists, ALP members and others, about a year ago. It said in part:

"In essence, the Accord/Summit strategy calls for workers to take a smaller share of the (economic) 'cake'. . . . We should now start afresh and put forward a program that does respond to our pressing needs."

Graham Roberts estimated that under the Accord, after discounting the Medicare component of the CPI, workers faced a net loss of \$4.80 in real terms from their purchasing power on health costs alone.

At a time when BHP achieved a record 150% profit increase with the help of millions of dollars in subsidies from taxpayers, and yet workers still face the sack, Roberts saw the Accord as a redistribution of wealth to the wealthy.

His other main objection to the Accord was that it prevents unions from fighting to achieve their own logs of claims, when most of the "social wage" components of the Accord are long-standing ALP policy.

Anna Pha made the point that the much talked-about economic recovery was so limited that when the natural increase in total workforce numbers is taken into account, only 67,300 new jobs have in fact been created.

On the other hand, she said, government priorities should be questioned when millions of dollars are wasted on F-18 fighter planes — at the same time as Paul Keating would have us believe the

only choice to be made in the 1984 Budget is between tax cuts or increased social services.

Tony Forward saw the tremendous example of the British miners' struggle as pointing the way for Australian workers. He too argued that the clampdown on independent activity by unionists was a major drawback of the prices-and-income Accord.

He announced that the Social Rights Campaign will produce a leaflet analysing the 1984 Budget, similar to the well-received leaflet produced in response to the October 1983 National Wage Case.

The afternoon's workshops attempted to come to grips with the steps required to take the Social Rights Campaign into the labour movement.

The session on migrants saw the need

to pressure the ACTU to implement its good policy on migrant workers' committees.

The workshop on women and the Accord came to the conclusion that for the interests of women to be pushed forward we need to approach the problem on a broad front. That is, child care, equal pay and women organising on the job are all indivisibly connected issues — so they need to be fought for in a simultaneous campaign.

The ALP workshop unfortunately got bogged down into an argument about whether there is any point working in the Labor Party. Labor Militant supporters put the case for the ALP being an essential political arena in the struggle to create a socialist alternative in Australia.

Hopefully, at future meetings of the Social Rights Campaign more Party members may be present to carry forward the concrete discussion about how to defend the rights and living standards of working people, and challenge the straitjacket of the Accord, inside the ALP.

## 'Chilean and Turkish people united against fascism'

Friday September 14, 7pm. Leichhardt Town Hall, 107 Norton St, Leichhardt;

Latin American band; Greek musicians; Turkish folk group; Australian Speakers: From Federal Parliament; trade unions; bush band. Turkish and Chilean communities. Entry \$3 and \$2.

## Protest rally March to U.S. Consulate

Saturday September 15, 10am. Sydney Town Hall Square.

Authorised by Chile Solidarity Committee and Federation of Democratic Turkish Associations of Australia.

## 'Solidarity with the struggle of the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America'

### Poster exhibition

Friday Sept 28 to Sunday Sept 30, 9am to 10pm each day. Lower Auditorium, Sydney Town Hall. Entry free.

Sponsored by Chile Solidarity Committee; Sri Lanka Solidarity Group; African National Congress Support Group.

### Concert

Sunday September 30, 7pm, Lower Auditorium, Sydney Town Hall.

Performers: Uzbekistan Folk Dance Group, with folk music and dance groups from Chile, Sri Lanka, South Africa. Entry \$7.50 and \$5.

## Public schools lose out in funding

"Betrayal." Is how the NSW Teachers Federation reacted to the August 14 announcement by Federal Education Minister Susan Ryan of the Commonwealth funding guidelines for 1983-84.

The Federation was being polite. Ryan's about-face on public education is a total repudiation of the longstanding Party commitment to equality of educational opportunity.

Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

The Federal Government has handed a blank cheque to the wealthiest private schools in the country, and endorsed the consolidation of dual private/public education system — in which the lion's share will go to the private sector.

Ryan's announcement is a disavowal of the 1982 Hayden Education Plan, of the Party's 1983 election promises, and of the education platform laid down by the July 1984 Party National Conference.

Specifically, the Hawke Government has broken its 1983 election promise to "restore" the Commonwealth share of government school funding to its pre-Fraser level of 10 per cent. This was to be achieved by injecting \$220 million extra over the three years to 1986.



Education Minister Susan Ryan

Instead, a paltry \$156.6 million will raise the Federal funding to a mere 8%, and this will be spread over eight years!

Again, instead of 1984 Conference's promise to "phase out" all funding for the "most wealthy private schools," comes a commitment to subsidise even the richest private schools.

Ryan and the Cabinet have opted for a funding system that will fuel the private education subsidy cycle.

Funding will be put on a per capita basis, rather than a predetermined amount being handed over to the States. As government school enrolments decline, funds will drop faster than costs. This will encourage even more students into the private schools, which will automatically attract more funds.

The Australian Teachers Federation has accused the Government of deception over the real transfer of funds to private schooling.

Ryan's figures assume constant private school enrolments at 1983 level. But given the drift to private schools, while it might well become a stampee, the Government has underestimated its 1985 private school expenditure by \$35 million.

By 1992, this will be \$300 million more than current estimates, delivering a \$1 billion golden egg to private schools.

"No wonder the private school lobby groups are so pleased with the outcome of the guidelines," said ATF Assistant Secretary Bill Leslie. "First, they are the real winners, and second, they have had the full extent of their success concealed by the Government."

The extent of that success is indicated by the fact that by 1992, the 25 or 26% of students in private schools will receive almost twice the funding of the public school majority.

Clearly, a fight must be launched inside the Party to change this situation. Unless this is done, the state school system faces a grim future of declining facilities and falling opportunities for the great majority of migrant and working class students who attend government schools.

## Cavalier vs. NSW teachers on migrant classes

The 39 intensive migrant language teachers, who have been at the centre of a bitter dispute between NSW Education Minister Rod Cavalier and the NSW Teachers Federation since early June, returned to work on August 1.

Coral Wynter

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

The final resolution of their dispute with the minister over class sizes has yet to be determined — although the teachers went back to classes at least temporarily smaller than the formula demanded by the minister and the Education Department.

The 39 teachers from the outer-suburban Liverpool area of Sydney were

originally stood down for refusing to take migrant classes larger than those operating in inner-city areas and in other States. The teachers were insisting that classes for students with no English be limited to 15 and for those illiterate in their own language to 10.

Teachers throughout NSW struck on July 11 in opposition to the stand-downs, and in support of the Liverpool demands.

A mass meeting of 7000 teachers in the Sydney Town Hall on that day voted to mount a political campaign to publicly reveal Cavalier's attacks on teachers and on migrant rights.

The teachers won the overwhelming support of migrant and community groups for their demands.

ALP Branches, especially those in Cavalier's electorate, were to be contacted about the dispute. Support has been gained from other unions in the

State.

The most scandalous aspect of the situation from the Labor Left point of view is that Cavalier is a leading "Young Turk" of the Steering Committee. And yet his anti-union attitude would do any right-wing Wran Government minister proud — and even rival an infamous Liberal Education Minister like Eric Willis!

Just like Transport Minister Barrie Unsworth, and Health Minister Ron Mulock, Cavalier seems determined to take on the unions. Taming the teachers, nurses, and railworkers is up front on the priority list of the Wran Government in its continuing cutback drive.

On the other hand, Cavalier's right-wing attacks have reportedly caused a storm inside the Steering Committee — many of whose members are themselves teachers!



unions

## 'Challenge' puts the boot in NSW nurses' union fights for 38 hours

Since 1975 there has been an overall cut-back of \$175 million in health funding in NSW. This has resulted in the closure of beds in hospitals across the State and in staff shortages in most hospitals. There has also been a savage cut-back in funding for psychiatric hospitals and community health services.

Nurses have coped the worst of these "rationalisations." It has become a standard joke that when they can't fill the rosters they simply add the name Nurse Shortage.

Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch

The nurses at St Vincents Hospital in Sydney recently took strike action in support of their claim for 72 extra nurses. They got 15 and a commitment from the hospital board that it would seek to fill 26 vacancies. Meanwhile the board at Sydney's showpiece hospital, Westmead, has allowed the number of unfilled vacancies to grow to over 100, and there are around 80 at Royal North Shore.

There has been an effective staff freeze in many hospitals since 1981.

The staff shortages have forced nurses into unpaid overtime and unreasonable shifts. Most hospitals refuse to implement a minimum ten-hour break between shifts. It is not unusual to work an afternoon shift followed by an early morning.

The pressure on nurses has caused a high drop-out rate and this, in turn, has increased the pressure on those remaining.

In this context nurses in NSW are determined to win a 38-hour week. This would at least give them an extra day off a month and increase paid overtime.

Yet, despite the fact that the 38-hour week has become the norm in many industries and has been accepted as such in the wage-fixing guidelines of the Arbitration Commission, the Wran Labor government has stubbornly resisted the nurses' demand.

In fact the Wran government has resisted the implementation of shorter hours for all its employees. This led to a censure motion at the 1982 ALP State Conference.

After a motion demanding implementation of the 38-hour week for hospital employees was narrowly defeated at the 1983 Conference the government moved to set up an inquiry into the cost of such a step. But the negotiations with the Nurses Association and the Health and Research Employees Association dragged out, and so the 1984 Conference defied a call for further delays from Wran to pass a motion demanding immediate action on the matter.

Since early in the year the government has told the health worker unions that they must accept cost "offsets" in exchange for a 38-hour week. During negotiations, leaders of the H&REA proposed that these might include higher meal and accommodation costs. Later the government added to the list, abolition of part-time and casual loadings; retention of 40 hours as the divisor for calculating overtime; and no accrual of the one-day off a month for those on leave or in training schools.

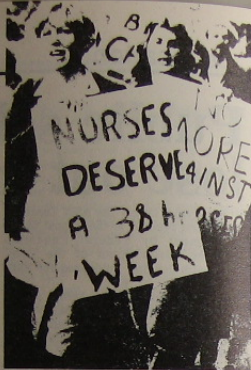
Not long after the ALP State Conference the leaders of the H&REA recommended acceptance of the offsets, and thus ended their dispute with the government. However, the leaders of the Nurses Association have urged their members to reject the proposals.

Association general secretary, Jenny Haines, was elected to office in 1982 on a platform of opposing the health cuts of the Wran government. She is now leading the campaign for continuing the struggle for a 38-hour week with no strings attached.

The group which supports her, Nurses Reform, produced a broadsheet outlining their case, and this was distributed to nurses shortly before branches of the association were due to vote on the matter in late August.

The broadsheet pointed out that acceptance of the "extraordinary" proposals on meal and accommodation costs would force live-in nurses to pay an average of \$46 extra a week or \$194 a month — rather a lot for a 38-hour week. And the loss of penalties would cost an average of \$18.24 a week.

At a stop-work rally in Sydney Town Hall on June 29, Haines advised the nurses to resist pressure to accept a hasty settlement of their claim on the



basis of a deal that would cost them more than they would gain. She successfully argued for consulting the campaign and for pressing ahead for other improvements in award conditions.

Haines and her supporters have played an important role in convincing nurses they need not accept the same rotten deal as that accepted by the H&REA. But, unfortunately, this has not prevented the newspaper of the "left" faction of the NSW ALP — Challenge — from attacking them in the middle of the campaign.

As if competing with Rupert Murdoch's publications for a media prize for shameless hypocrisy, the July issue of the paper printed a vicious attack on the Haines Group under the heading "Nurses' struggle for better conditions threatened by outside political interference."

Challenge has had a rather chequered history in regard to the health cuts in NSW. In 1982, at the time Haines and another Nurses Reform candidate, Bronwyn Ridgway, were elected to key positions in the union, Challenge was busy defending the Wran government's public health cuts under the guise of the phoney "beds to the West" scheme, which was supposedly aimed at shifting resources from an "over-serviced" inner city region to the heavily populated Western Suburbs.

Now in 1984, Challenge is prepared to say: "While this process was desirable, it served as a cover for extensive overall cuts in services and expenditure." But in 1982, the paper was enthusiastically backing Brereton's scheme, even though Nurses Reform and other organisations of health workers were already pointing out that it was a fraud.

The present Challenge article, by Les Carr, attacking Haines on two counts — for allowing the Nurses Reform Group to run down, and over her association with well-known political activist Bob Gould, whom it describes as the "Santamaría of

Continued next page.

## Early election vs. rank-and-file preselection?

There is strong suspicion in NSW that the Right wants to avoid rank-and-file preselections for the coming Federal elections. At the NSW Administrative Committee meeting of 3 August, a Left proposal to commence the process of Federal preselections was defeated by the Right.

Janet Burrall

Member Rozelle East (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

The excuse for the delay in organising preselections is the proposed redistribution of NSW's electoral boundaries, which may not be finished until October 10. Richard Farmer, writing in *The Bul-*

letin has gone so far as to suggest that Hawke will call the Federal election for December, specifically to provide a pretext to the NSW Branch for not holding rank-and-file preselections at all.

Presumably the Right would innocently discover, that having been unable to open preselections due to boundary changes, the election would be called too soon to organise preselections in October.

The Right is weakest in the branches, and it is quite possible that the Left would win 6 additional preselections to the Right's 2, in winnable seats, as a result of the redistribution.

In a further development, Rex Connor Jr. is almost certain to challenge the

preselection of Stewart West, the only Left member of the inner Cabinet. West declined to comment on the Left's call for pre-selections. This raises speculation that he will support moves to protect sitting members' preselections, in order to save his own seat, at the expense of both rank-and-file preselection and possible overall gains for the Left in numbers.

It is on the order of the day that all Party units which support rank-and-file preselection demand that Head Office start normal preselection procedures immediately, and protest to Bob Hawke and Federal members against the calling of an early election for such cynical and bureaucratic reasons.

## Nurses . . .

Continued from previous page.

the left." It highlights a split between Haines and Ridgway, and openly takes Ridgway's side in the argument over what to do with Nurses Reform and its funds.

Carr gives the impression that Gould's "interference" has brought Nurses Reform to the point of collapse and that the progressive leadership of the union has lost impetus. He fails to give Haines any credit for winning improvements in the award, for pushing for a reform of the Association's constitution to make it more democratic, and for providing strong leadership in the 38-hour week campaign.

The Haines group published the broadsheet on the shorter hours campaign, which also reprinted the full program of Nurses Reform, and managed to distribute it to all major hospitals in the Sydney and Newcastle regions.

Ridgway, on the other hand, has played little role in the 38-hour week campaign. She remained silent at the Association's State Conference in July when Haines came under attack from the conservative "old guard" who retain a big influence in conference and council meetings because they are favoured by the existing undemocratic constitution.

During the 1982 election campaign, Haines and Ridgway attacked the exorbitant salaries paid to the union officials. After their election they asked the council to reduce their salaries and, when this

request was ignored, they agreed to pay a regular amount into a trust fund for Nurses Reform.

Ridgway has now demanded, and received, her money back on the grounds that some of the money has been used to support a reform group in the H&REA, rather than being used directly for Nurses Reform.

At an August meeting, advertised in the Haines' group's broadsheet, she demanded discussion on the internal structures of Nurses Reform rather than the 38-hour week campaign.

The split in Nurses Reform is unfortunate and could not have come at a worse time. It will strengthen the determination of the Government to resist the nurses' demands, and has already altered the balance of forces within the union.

But the only way to resolve this problem is to push ahead with the industrial campaign and use this to rebuild the reform group. A defeat for the shorter hours campaign would inevitably set back the prospects for consolidating a progressive leadership of the union.

It is also obviously in order for Nurses Reform to support the reform group in the H&REA. The acceptance of the 38-hour week offsets by the leadership of that union not only undermined the position of its own members, but also the campaign of the nurses.

Yet Carr's article suggested it was up to the leaders of the Nurses Association to avoid doing anything that might strain relations with the H&REA. It claimed the H&REA had been willing to carry out a joint shorter hours campaign with the

Association, but the leaders of the Association failed to respond.

Carr asserted that Gould's support for both Nurses Reform and the H&REA reform group makes it virtually impossible for the leaders of the Nurses Association to co-operate with the leaders of the H&REA where necessary.

Obviously Haines, as general secretary of the Association, must deal with the elected officials of the H&REA, but it is dishonest to argue that this means Nurses Reform must cut all links with the H&REA reform group and denounce Gould.

Carr's ALP faction, the Steering Committee, is renowned for having its finger in the pie of a number of unions which are controlled undemocratically. Yet he has the hide to write: "Interference in the internal affairs of unions has always been opposed by leftwingers, whether it comes from Santamaría or Gould or elsewhere."

Because he supports a faction which is in competition with Gould in some areas, he concludes his article by saying: "It will only be when nurses become aware of and reject Gould's behind the scenes manipulation and influence will nurses have a chance of developing a real rank-and-file organisation."

Challenge has grabbed the opportunity, provided by the split in Nurses Reform, to sink a boot into Gould. But, in so doing, it has sought to undermine the progressive leadership of the Nurses Association at a time when it is fighting for a significant improvement in the working conditions of all nurses.



## Tasmanian State Council — a disappointing experience

The Tasmanian State Council ended with a whimper, rather than a bang. You had the feeling that Council was purely a rubber stamp, and that decisions in the Party are not made by the ranks, but a small group of parliamentarians in behind-the-scenes backroom deals.

**Lou-anne Barker**  
Member Murchison (Tas) Branch

The Council was held primarily to preselect candidates for the Senate ticket and for the House of Representatives.

The right-wing factions, Labor Only and the Centre Left, would have been pleased with the Senate preselections.

Top position went to Terry Aulich, a one-time left-winger while at university, who has since moved rapidly to the right. Second position was taken by Ray Devlin from the Democratic Socialists, a Waterside Workers Federation member and secretary of the Burnie Trades and Labour Council. Third position was taken by John Groat, who was being backed by the Federal Executive. Fourth was Hobart lawyer, John White.

Council went ahead without the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union delegation. The AMFSU executive had been challenged by right-wing union secretary Geoff Adams for not having their delegates elected by the rank and file.

In fact, the right wing have no interest in union democracy, as can be seen from the actions of those unions over which they have control, like the Federated Ironworkers and the Shop Assistants. But they used this issue to attack the Left.

The AMFSU did leave themselves open to attack from the Right by not relying on the ranks, but outside court interference has always been used by the Right to weaken the union movement. The issue should have been settled by the members of the union concerned.

As usual at State Councils, both Right and Left factions were more concerned with the numbers game than with political issues. However there were indications that a number of people in the U.S. are dissatisfied with the lack of clear political perspectives and policies of the D.S.

In the afternoon of the Council, Jack Lomas moved a motion calling on the 5 delegates to National Conference to make themselves accountable to State



Joan Coxedge speaking at July National Conference.

Council — and explain why they voted for uranium when the previous State Council voted unanimously against uranium mining and for the phasing out of all existing mines. There was considerable anger and frustration by many rank-and-file members at the National Conference and Labour Council. Third position was taken by John Groat, who was being backed by the Federal Executive. Fourth was Hobart lawyer, John White.

Council went ahead without the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union delegation. The AMFSU executive had been challenged by right-wing union secretary Geoff Adams for not having their delegates elected by the rank and file.

In fact, the right wing have no interest in union democracy, as can be seen from the actions of those unions over which they have control, like the Federated Ironworkers and the Shop Assistants. But they used this issue to attack the Left.

The AMFSU did leave themselves open to attack from the Right by not relying on the ranks, but outside court interference has always been used by the Right to weaken the union movement. The issue should have been settled by the members of the union concerned.

As usual at State Councils, both Right and Left factions were more concerned with the numbers game than with political issues. However there were indications that a number of people in the U.S. are dissatisfied with the lack of clear political perspectives and policies of the D.S.

In the afternoon of the Council, Jack Lomas moved a motion calling on the 5 delegates to National Conference to make themselves accountable to State

policy so as to allow Roxby Downs to go ahead, then the Government would lose credibility, possibly even go down, if Conference didn't endorse it.

If this argument is extended to its logical conclusion, it gives the Hawke Government a free hand to carry out pro-war policies and Conference would have to ratify them — so the Government wouldn't lose credibility!

Both emphasised uranium was only a symbolic issue and not terribly important. Field even had the cheek to say that he went to National Conference expecting the vote against uranium to go down. He would have voted against it, but when he realised he was one of 5 whose votes would be crucial, he decided to vote for uranium mining!

Les Brown, the leader of the D.S., disappointed many with his display of pragmatism when he said that his loyalty to the Miscellaneous Workers Union — whom he had served for 25 years — overrode his feelings on uranium. He implied that his job as a full-time official of the union was in jeopardy if he voted against uranium; yet he failed to point out that nothing has happened to an MWU official in Victoria who voted against uranium mining at the National Conference.

Les Brown revealed his real views on uranium when he stated that he thought the issues of the bases and uranium were a diversionary matter to the question of peace.

The conference ended early due to lack of a quorum. This either reflected frustration at the Council or that many delegates were merely organised for the numbers game of voting.

A concerted fight is needed to create a genuine left-wing current in the Tasmanian Branch, one that not only takes up the issue of peace, but also the economy.

## Tas West Coast Branch debates Accord

With the Federal Government spending \$750,000 on advertisements promoting the Accord, the Murchison Branch of the ALP on the West Coast of Tasmania felt it was time a genuine discussion was held in the Party to assess the benefits of the Accord.

**Lou-anne Barker**  
Member Murchison (Tas) Branch

While debating the following motion, the question of Medicare was discussed. It was pointed out to a supporter of the Accord that Medicare was not a free health care system, and that a majority of miners in Rosebery were in fact paying twice as much money for health care now as they were paying previously — and that the Government then had the hide to take 2.1% off the inflation rate which will affect future wage rises.

After some more discussion, the following motion was carried by the Branch, which is to be circulated to other Tasmanian Branches and to be debated at the next State Council in October:

"The Accord has been in operation for over a year now and it is time ALP members had a critical look at it. This branch is of the opinion that the benefits to workers promised under the Accord such as, a substantial reduction in unemployment, reduction of indirect taxation coupled with a tightening up of taxes on corporations, a substantial improvement in the healthcare system, automatic full wage indexation, control of prices and repeal of all anti-union laws, have not taken place. Instead workers have been forced to accept wage restraint, in effect a cut in real wages.

"The 9.1% lost under the Fraser wage freeze has not been granted and it is estimated that over a three year period workers have in fact lost about 20%.

"Unemployment has only dropped to 9.4% from 10%, hardly a significant figure. Moreover most of the jobs created have been short term jobs. Jobs continue to be lost in the manufacturing and mining industries.

"We do not believe an increase in employer profits leads to the creation of

new jobs as can be seen by the \$80 million handout to BHP, who made a record profit and is now talking of closing down its Newcastle plant with the possible loss of 10,000 jobs.

"Nothing has been granted to workers on a plate. It has been only through a struggle by the union movement that wages and conditions have improved and therefore there should be an abolition of all agreements which restrict industrial action.

"The Government should immediately implement:

- the introduction of a capital gains tax;
- reduce indirect taxes;
- full monthly automatic wage indexation with no strings attached;
- end profit subsidising handouts; and instead consider nationalising those industries threatening massive layoffs.
- repeal all anti-union laws.

"In effect the Accord has been of no benefit to workers and should be thrown out."

## Way forward debated at WA Broad Left meeting

Over 300 members attended the inaugural meeting of the Broad Left in Perth on August 12, convened by Left delegates to the National Conference, members of the State Administrative Committee and several key Left unions. Jim McGinty, the State Secretary of the Hospital, Services and Miscellaneous Workers Union, is a spokesperson for the faction.

**Matthew Power**  
Member Marylands (WA) Branch and Administrative and Clerical Officers Association

Many of those attending the meeting were angry at developments both at the National Conference and afterwards. Centre-Left delegates to the conference had courted the Left, and their clear right-wing viewpoint at the conference disgusted many members. The Broad

Left was seen as a necessary step to counter their moves.

But the Broad Left leaders were not so clear on this perspective. In the past, key Left representatives had operated by wheedling and dealing through a consensus approach on the Administrative Committee.

It must be said that this consensus approach worked largely in favour of the conservative forces within the branch as progressive motions were compromised to achieve agreement.

At the Broad Left meeting, attendance by prominent members of the Centre-Left and their encouragement by the organisers of the meeting, indicate that they still hope to work as in the past.

Speeches by Wendy Fatin and Senator Pat Giles in opening the meeting made no mention of taking up a fight on the growing number of issues on which the Hawke Government has betrayed both

Party members and supporters.

In fact, differences over this approach came to a head in the form of an amendment to the major recommendation put to the meeting. The amendment, moved by Senator Ruth Coleman, sought to delete reference to "talking to other factions" as one of the tasks to be carried out by the new faction.

Meeting organisers opposed the amendment, claiming that it was unworkable. Though little debate took place over the amendment, it indicated important differences.

Many members obviously wanted a clear break with the Centre-Left. After all, it makes it quite impossible to organise to fight the Centre-Left if they are present at the meetings where you discuss your plans.

The amendment was ruled lost by the chair. All the same, it was pretty close on the votes.

What happens now with the Broad Left? The organisers may find that many of the members joining the Broad Left are not as forgiving to the Centre-Left and the Right as they appear to be.



## Central America

# Eyewitness report on U.S. threat to El Salvador The eagle has landed

[The following article is reprinted from the British Labour Party monthly magazine *New Socialist*, of July/August 1984.]

US preparations for an invasion of Central America are almost complete and Reagan is looking to the presidential election for an invasion mandate. JENNY PEARCE charts the US military build-up and recounts her experiences on a recent visit to the guerrilla-controlled zones of El Salvador.

"The Pentagon is now in a position to assume a combat role in Central America should President Reagan give the order," a recent *New York Times* article began. The statement is significant because until now the Pentagon has been most unwilling to see US troops on Central American soil. Deeply affected by the "Vietnam syndrome," the Pentagon has remained sceptical about the military aspects of direct intervention and the fearful lack of public support for it. But now that most of the infrastructure for intervention has been constructed in Honduras and since the Grenada invasion proved so successful in terms of US public opinion some of these doubts have been removed.

A greater consensus now exists. In other areas of the administration, Central America has long been one of the key battlegrounds between conservative pragmatists and right-wing ideologues in their struggle over US foreign policy. Until the demise in early 1983 of Thomas Enders, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, the pragmatists determined policy towards Central America. This meant the pursuit of a military solution but a certain reluctance to see US troops carry it out. When the ideologues moved to take control over policy towards the region at the beginning of 1983 they began preparations for just that eventuality.

The military infrastructure, which has been erected since then in Honduras under cover of a series of joint military manoeuvres, is designed for the rapid deployment of Honduran and US troops and the protection of supply routes in the event of direct intervention. Emphasis has been put on the building or improvement of airstrips, considered crucial in view of Honduras' poor road communications. Five air strips have been prepared to accommodate planes and two of them are able to handle any Honduran or US jet fighter. Work on two more airstrips, one at Jamastran near the border and one at Cacayagua near the Salvadoran border, was begun during the Grandero 1 manoeuvres now taking place in Honduras.

In addition to the air strips, the US has set up radar installations near Tapachula and on the Yagay Island in the Gulf of Fonseca, and has built a command centre at Comayagua which includes 200 military medical personnel and a military hospital capable of expanding to deal with thousands of wounded. There are projects for the construction of 30 storage bunkers for bombs and rockets in Palmarola and for a combat munitions store at San Lorenzo. This would allow US combat forces to be immediately mobilised in a crisis.

The United States has also intensified its efforts to improve the fighting capacity of local Honduran and Salvadoran forces. It is a systematic training and arming the Honduran army; there are plans to train every unit in counter-insurgency. But considerable political as well as military problems hamper the

US strategy of relying on Central American forces to carry out their policy. As a result the US has steadily increased its own military presence in the region.

A year ago, the Pentagon declared that a total of 150 US military advisers were in El Salvador and Honduras. They now admit to a figure of 1,800 on continuous duty. Thousands of US troops have been in the region since joint manoeuvres between the Honduran and US armed forces began in February 1983. According to Pentagon estimates there were 33,000 US troops in the Caribbean basin in May taking part in the Grandero 1 manoeuvres and Ocean Venture 84, a joint Navy, Marine corps, Air Force and Army exercise in the Caribbean.

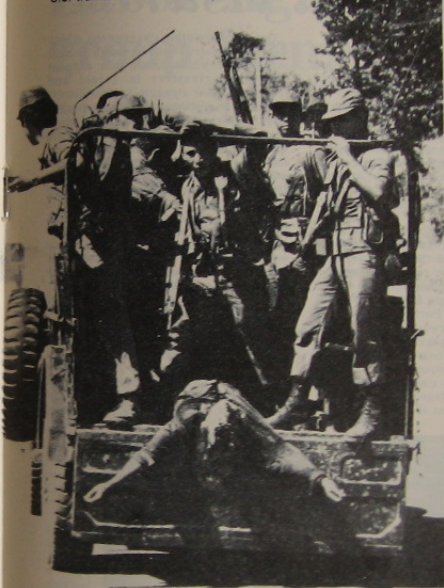
Direct involvement of US personnel in military activities in Central America is now openly discussed in the US press. In February, US pilots began to fly OV1 Mohawk observation planes over El Salvador — the first regular tactical support to be given. Two US army Huey helicopters carrying M-16 machine guns and crewed by Americans are now permanently based at Ilopango airport in El Salvador. US advisers work closely with the Salvadoran army command, accompanying them on missions and increasingly, bearing arms. US reconnaissance planes fly regular missions over Nicaragua. A military source told the *Washington Post* that the planes fly from Honduras and Panama into Nicaragua several times a week, sometimes staying along the border mountains and sometimes penetrating as deeply as 100 miles into the country.

The CIA's role in making Nicaraguan harbours is only one more piece of a jigsaw. Almost every day brings new revelations of CIA activity in Central America. It was recently revealed for instance, that it was the CIA that directed the attack on Puerto Corinto in Nicaragua on October 10 last year, when fire destroyed 12 million litres of fuel and forced evacuation of the entire population. The role of the CIA in giving training, arms, and logistical support to the Socialist International revolutionary force based in Honduras is well known; this contingent is now estimated at 15,000, three times its size a year ago. In the last few months the US has increased its support for Eden Pastora's 2,000 ARDE rebels based in Costa Rica. CIA pressure caused Pastora to take the town of San Juan del Norte in Nicaragua on April 12. Prior to the action, it supplied military equipment to Pastora's forces in Costa Rica, most of it dropped one of these planes crashed; according to *Newsweek* three US nationalities were aboard.

The two immediate objectives behind this military build-up are to prevent the Salvadoran guerrillas scoring significant victories before the US elections and to sabotage the Nicaraguan elections scheduled for November 4 through increased military and economic pressure. But of the administration is also looking towards a second term. But the administration is also looking towards Reagan, together with the existence of the appropriate military infrastructure, would greatly increase the likelihood of a direct intervention. But is the target Nicaragua or El Salvador or both?

There is still a possibility that it would be both. But an intervention into Nicaragua would be beset with problems politically and militarily. The degree of popular support for the

U.S. trained Salvadoran troops in action.



Sandinistas will be reflected in the November elections most observers believe, despite US efforts to sabotage them. A US intervention would meet a highly motivated, mobilised and armed population. The Nicaraguan government also continues to enjoy considerable international support; the Socialist International for instance reiterated its support at a recent meeting in Copenhagen. Few European governments, even those with little or no sympathy for Sandinismo, would support a direct intervention to overthrow what will be a properly elected government by November. The US will do everything possible to discredit the electoral process and step up its pressure on the Nicaraguan economy to increase popular dissatisfaction. But it may have to content itself with continued destabilisation rather than direct intervention to overthrow the government. The damage this will do to the Nicaraguan process should not be underestimated. The Nicaraguan government has reported that military aggression against the economy caused the loss of 30 per cent of the total value of the country's exports in 1983.

Much of the aggression against Nicaragua is directed towards neutralising it in the event of a US invasion of El Salvador. It is here that the administration has "drawn the line." While the Democrats have intimated they would cut off the aid to the contras if elected, even Mondale is much more equivocal on El Salvador. No US politician wishes to be accused of "losing" that

country, and this fear has helped Reagan a great deal in persuading Congress to grant his military aid requests irrespective of the country's appalling human rights record.

The recent election of Duarte to the Presidency, despite a messy electoral process in which the CIA was deeply involved on Duarte's behalf, will be a major boost to Reagan's efforts. Although there were more killings at the hands of right wing death squads when Duarte headed the government from March 1980 to July 1982 than at any other time in Salvadorean history, his image as a "democrat" will be amply exploited by Reagan. Over the next few months the Reagan administration is likely to reinforce this image as much as possible, encouraging him to appear flexible and reasonable and seeming to back his overtures to the FDR, FMLN opposition. But the basic objectives of US policy towards El Salvador, the defeat of the FMLN guerrilla movement, will remain the same.

Now that even the Pentagon believes that, at least in El Salvador, the war is winnable, it is the political cut within the United States which will be the most potent force in preventing a US intervention. While our own Thatcher government remains one of Reagan's staunchest allies, the British labour movement can play a major role in escalating that cost.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the FMLN zones of control in El Salvador to view the war from the guerrillas' side. In the two months I spent in the guerrilla zones I was able to gain a rare insight into the nature of the war and in particular the relationship between the guerrillas and the peasantry.

El Salvador is the size of Wales and possesses no inaccessible mountain ranges or impenetrable jungles. The only explanation for the existence of guerrilla controlled zones in such a country is the willingness of the population of those zones to remain and defend them from the army. The network of popular organisation enabled us to cross straight through the enemy lines one night from San Salvador and into the first zone of control I was to visit, the Guazapa volcano. The same network enabled us subsequently to cross from one zone to another. Our guides were almost always peasants, and all had a story to tell of how poverty and repression had led them into the guerrilla struggle.

Within the zones themselves I was able to trace in more detail the history of the Salvadorean peasant movement. For most of the history of the peasantry, their initial realisation that it was legitimate to question the injustice of El Salvador's social structure came with their contact with the popular church. Bible classes convinced many of the need to organise peasant unions to defend their interests. The government for its part used the paramilitary organisation, ORDEN, and the National Guard to terrorise peasant unionists. Most of the peasants I talked to had one or more members of their family tortured and murdered in this way.

The first contact of the peasants with armed struggle was when they began to steal small pistols from ORDEN members as a means of self defence. It was from these beginnings that the peasant movement turned itself into the base of today's guerrilla army.

It is not just the existence of the zones of control which points to the degree of popular involvement in El Salvador's guerrilla struggle; it is also the fact that so many peasants who are not part of the guerrilla army remain in the zones rather than flee to the refugee camps in Honduras. Life in the zones is extremely arduous. None of the zones are "liberated" to the extent that they no longer suffer army invasions. Guazapa has suffered 10 in the last three years. The army sweeps throughout the area killing anyone who hasn't fled, burning crops and dwellings. The population withdraws from the area, running at night and hiding during the day, returning exhausted after many days without food and shelter to find their homes destroyed.

Continued next page.



solidarity

## Grant Faris Glubb a visa!

The recent elections in Israel highlight the serious problems affecting that country. What is certain is that none of these problems can be solved, whoever is elected, for they all are part of the Zionist colonialist system, which was responsible for the invasion of Lebanon, the siege of Beirut and complicity in the barbarous massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Shatila.

**Irene Robson**  
Member Coburg (Vic) Branch and  
Foreign Affairs Policy Committee, Vic  
ALP

Western nations have played their part in the creation of this state also, but not only in their support in 1948, and in the events leading up to that time. They also contributed by their "diplomatic" recognition when Jewish people, straight from the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, were denied admittance because those Western countries which supported Zionism refused them entry and decreed they should go instead to Palestine.

This is the history which is linked to what is happening in Israel today. This is why Arab and Jewish people have suffered, and will continue to suffer, until a secular, independent, democratic state is established once more, where all citizens, Moslem, Jewish, and Christian, have equal rights and duties.

For until then repression will continue — repression such as that detailed by Amnesty International when Al Ansar detainees were secretly transferred from Lebanon (where they had been held following the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in June, 1982) to Israel. There they were cut off from the outside world, with no communication, not even by letter, from their families, and treatment such as described below took place:

"We were forced to stand for hours with our hands raised. Our hands were

held for three days and we used to sleep in this condition.

"The soldiers insult us without any reason. They beat us as a matter of course. We are degraded by having to stand with our heads bent as long as we are talking to a soldier."

Moreover, Zionist terror gangs, virtually all of whom come from Zionist settlements on the occupied West Bank and Golan Heights, continue to attack Palestinians today, as they did all those years ago, and to deny them fundamental rights.

But these right-wing extremists also attack Jewish progressives, who try to curb the excesses of the expansionists. For history is forever repeating itself in Israel, and will continue to do so until change can be brought about.

We in the Labor Party can promote change by putting forward policies which begin by recognising that the question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem. Consequently no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged, which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.



"No Middle East solution without the Palestinians."

## El Salvador Continued from page 15.

It is the failure of the army to dislodge the population throughout these invasions which has led to an escalation of the aerial war. Everyday I was in Guazapa, the US supplied A-37 Dragonfly fighter planes would bomb the area, sometimes three or four times a day. The pilot looks for any sign of life, and the civilian population bears the brunt of the bombardment.

In these conditions, the endurance of the population in the zones is remarkable. It is explained both by their commitment to the struggle, and by the fact that they have now elected their own forms of local popular government, known by their Spanish initials as PPLs. The PPLs not only enable the peasants to set up their schools and clinics in the zones and organise production but for the first time enable them to control their own lives. The comparison between these popularly elected governments and the

electoral process taking place outside the zones while I was there could not have been more stark.

All the signs are that the United States which now runs the Salvadoran war, is going to step up the war in the air, the one advantage that the Salvadoran army has over the guerrillas. This will not only increase the human suffering amongst the peasantry in the zones, but will affect the unique experiment in popular democracy I observed. But appeals to the reality of the Salvadoran struggle, to the popular involvement in the guerrilla movement which I saw in the zones, will not shift the Reagan administration. The US government is not concerned about the people who live in El Salvador but about the country as a symbol of resurgent America. It is for this reason that Central America, in the words of Wayne Smith, formerly head of the US interests section in Havana, "exercises the same influence on US foreign policy as the full moon does on werewolves."

nuclear

## Labor Against Uranium group formed in SA

The following is an interview with Jeff Richards, member of Torrens South Sub-Branch, well-known labour movement activist, one of the founding members and an organiser with SA Labor Against Uranium. The interview was taken for Labor Militant by Meaghan Delahant, member Hindmarsh Sub-Branch, Adelaide.

**Question:** Could you say something about the formation of Labor Against Uranium? Why was it set up? What are its objectives?

**Answer:** Labor Against Uranium was founded early this year. Initially I tried to start an anti-uranium group in the Left Caucus of the Left in the ALP; however it got relegated to a sub-committee in the Left Caucus. It was obvious that uranium as an issue was considered too controversial and attempts were made to push it aside. So we decided to set up our own group.

Our founding objective was to support the original anti-uranium policy of the ALP prior to the Hogg amendment. Now it is basically to get the ALP to have a strong anti-uranium policy along the lines of the Socialist Left position in Victoria.

**Q: How do you see the work of Labor Against Uranium as part of the broader movement here in SA?**

**A:** Obviously we don't want to substitute ourselves for CANE [Campaign Against Nuclear Energy]. We want to operate within the ambit of the Labor Party — yet we want our actions to be as public as possible.

We see as a step to developing the movement publishing a newsletter for unions and Sub-Branches covering the latest information on the uranium industry.

**Q: How effective do you think Labor Against Uranium can be, existing as it does outside the official structures of the ALP?**

**A:** The Left in SA has basically done little to support Labor Against Uranium. Primarily, support has come from outside the Labor Party — in the form of donations or attendance at our functions. Obviously it's important to build support both inside and outside the Left of the Party.

The Left can exercise a great deal of power in SA. They had the numbers, they had the balance, at State Conference. The fact that the Australian Workers Union didn't join in with the whole of the Left meant that our motion was lost.

We want to extend our influence in the Sub-Branches. Probably the weakest link in the Left is in the Sub-Branches themselves. This is largely because the Left haven't done their groundwork — they've relied too heavily on block votes from the unions. However in most of the Sub-Branches in SA the sentiment is anti-uranium.

Bannon and Chris Schacht did a good job on the delegates once they got to Conference, however. What we want to ensure next time is that delegates are voted in who will be faithful to an anti-uranium position.

However, once the time comes for Hawke to be dumped in favour of a Margaret Thatcher — Hawke will really feel the wrath of the people who voted for him and who have felt really betrayed.

**Q: How does Labor Against Uranium organise?**

**A:** Labor Against Uranium meets regularly every 3 weeks. These are basically planning meetings for future activities, for example fundraising activities.

We sponsored a public meeting on July 4, Jean Melzer, Jenny May from Nuclear Veterans and Ted Gnatenko from the AMFSU spoke. Around sixty people attended.

Many from the ALP Left didn't attend. I think this is because many on the Left feel that the uranium issue is a lost cause; that we should concede ground on this issue and concentrate on the nuclear disarmament issue.

We see the two issues as interlinked. Conceding a certain amount of ground makes us look like fools.

The motion from SA is a ridiculous motion. On the one hand it is anti-uranium. Yet on the other hand it allows the world's largest uranium mine to go ahead.

**Q: What are the prospects for the growth of Labor Against Uranium? How do you perceive the need for an organisation such as LAU?**

**A:** The strength of the anti-uranium movement outside the ALP will be the determining factor in the growth of our organisation. We can't substitute for the anti-uranium movement as a whole.

There is a real need for an organisation such as ours. There's a real need to contribute to building a total critique of the Hawke government.

There is a need to link the points being made by the Social Rights Campaign on economic policy with what we're saying about uranium. The Left in the ALP is fragmented and piecemeal in its criticisms of the Hawke government. Yet the experience of one year of the Hawke government is that it is operating against the interests of the Labor movement.

**Q: How do you see the fight to stop uranium mining in regard to government policy on other related issues?**

**A:** I don't think that stopping uranium mining will change anything by itself. It will only have significance if it is tied in with an anti-imperialist policy — a policy which actively strives for U.S. bases to be removed, for example.



## Interview with Owen Wilkes

## U.S. bases in Australia and New Zealand

Labor Militant recently interviewed the New Zealander Owen Wilkes, a long time researcher on U.S. bases around the world.

Wilkes is on tour in Australia meeting peace groups and giving public talks on the N.Z. peace movement and discussing ways of organising better co-ordination on common problems New Zealand and Australia peace activists face.

Wilkes first became interested in military activities in the '60s when he worked with the U.S. Navy in Antarctica. He was active in the campaign against the Omega transmitter which was originally planned for N.Z.

In 1976 he joined the staff of the Oslo Peace Research Institute, where he studied the radio navigation systems and the U.S. and NATO military infrastructure in Norway. For publishing information on secret electronic spy bases in Norway he was heavily fined by the Government and moved to Sweden. There he compiled a catalogue of foreign military bases worldwide. Towards the end of this period, he was prosecuted for observing Swedish military installations from public roads.

He is now employed by the N.Z. peace movement. In the light of the current controversy in the Party over U.S. bases in Australia, his views on the situation here and in N.Z. are very relevant.

Owen Wilkes said the main purpose of his visit was to talk about U.S. bases. A lot of people knew about the three main bases in Australia, Nurrungar, Pine Gap and North West Cape — but there were a number of smaller bases in this country which make quite a significant contribution to the nuclear and global capabilities of the U.S. Some of these have had virtually no publicity at all.

"In particular, there is a small facility in Perth which was operating as late as 1979, but we don't know if it is still there or not. According to the U.S. Defence Department it is contributing to the accuracy of Trident nuclear missiles and intercontinental ballistic missiles. The facility is at Learmonth near the airfield in WA.

"And then there is the network of spy bases operated by the Australian Defence Signals Directorate (ASDD), which we now know are intimately linked to the U.S. navy system of Ocean Surveillance Information System and used for targeting U.S. naval weapons.

"We in N.Z. are particularly interested because there is a fourth system in that network, located in N.Z. It's operated by N.Z. personnel, but they are there under the principle of cheap native labor. The station itself is under the control of the ASDD and the senior staff are Australians. This is the first recorded example of an Australian foreign base in N.Z. The N.Z. peace movement is definitely going to do something about it."

The three small bases in Australia in this network are at Pearce, close to Perth, Shoal Bay near Darwin, and at Cobarlah in S.E. Queensland. The data from these, plus the N.Z. base at Tangimanga, all feed into the station at Watsonia in the suburbs of Melbourne.

Watsonia is an Australian army barracks but it possesses a large satellite antennae. The collected data is then beamed to the U.S. to provide the National Security Agency and the U.S. navy with intelligence.

In reference to the three major bases in Australia, Wilkes said "I wish to make three points. First, Hayden has said if anyone can prove that N.W. Cape has first strike capacity then he will see it is closed down. I have good evidence that its main function is for launching a first strike attack.

"My reasoning is that the Trident I missile does have counterforce capability — that is the ability to be used for first strike. It's not purely that of course. In addition the Trident II missile when it comes along will definitely have counterforce capability."

Much has been made of the fact that now there's a back-up system for ground bases like N.W. Cape, namely the Tacamo aircraft, said Wilkes. These are aircraft which have a very low frequency transmitter on board. They trail a 10 km antennae behind them which is relatively indestructible compared to N.W. Cape.

These provide for launching a second strike nuclear attack after a war has already been started and N.W. Cape has been destroyed. These planes then take off and start transmitting messages to submarines.

N.W. Cape is broadcasting all the time, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, all in code. This is to hide the fact if the Tacamo planes suddenly took off and started broadcasting the Russians would know that a first strike had already been launched. It's transmitting operational messages and any sort of rubbish to keep it chattering away continuously, including baseball scores and birthday messages.

"So I think arguing from what is general information known about America's strategic policy the Australian peace movement can make an impeccable case that the main role of N.W. Cape is to launch a first strike. Especially since the Tacamo planes have been updated. Tacamo stands for 'take charge and move out,'" added Wilkes.

"The second point I wish to make is that some people even in the peace movement say the three big bases are becoming obsolete. Therefore Australia should just sit back and wait for them to be closed down of their own accord.

"The fact that \$125 million was spent upgrading Nurrungar makes it very unlikely. There is no possible substitute for Pine Gap. Its function cannot be taken over completely by satellites. The volume of information is so great it can't all be relayed by satellite."

Wilkes stressed that N.W. Cape is probably becoming more important rather than less. It has three completely separate installations. One is very low frequency transmitters used for communicating with submarines carrying missiles. The second is high frequency transmitters used for communicating with the surface navy in general.

In the '60s and '70s there was a trend for high frequency communications to be transferred to satellites. But now space is becoming a very dangerous place for the military as many anti-satellite weapons are being developed. So the U.S. military is going back from space to ground base operations.

The satellite facility was upgraded at N.W. Cape in the 1980s. Its main role is for command control of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force in the Indian Ocean. It's linked through to a satellite above the Indian Ocean to a ground station at Landstuhl in West



U.S. Kittyhawk berthing in Perth—ANZUS means we are part of the U.S. Rapid Deployment attack force.

Germany. So this is not part of the Pacific command post. "So through these bases Australia is integrated much more closely into the U.S. war fighting strategies than does mere membership in ANZUS or our hosting of nuclear warships. Day after day we are feeding intelligence data to the U.S. we have little or no control over."

Wilkes went on to describe the N.Z. peace movement. A large part of the growth in recent times had been in the numbers of women involved. For the first time in its history N.Z. had been able to support a national co-ordinating body and permanent staff. Hiroshima Day is the biggest peace march in N.Z.

"We tend to demonstrate against concrete targets, nuclear warships in port. It's an ad hoc organisation. Most people are not members of anything but just turn up at particular marches and sign petitions."

He said there had been a lot of pressure building up on the N.Z. Labour Party over a number of years. First a campaign against the French nuclear tests where a peace fleet was sent to Mororoa.

"We didn't stop that but we did force them underground. This led to the idea of a nuclear-free Pacific.

"Nuclear warships started coming to N.Z. and there were tremendous protests. People were concerned about nuclear weapons, concerned about nuclear reactors on board and many were just straight out angry about their wishes being ignored.

"There were a up to a couple of thousands of people in the block nuclear warships and tens of thousands of people in the streets. We didn't stop the nuclear warships either."

"When I came back from overseas in 1982 what really impressed me was the range of ages of people involved in the peace movement. Students hadn't really got involved in the way they were in the '60s and '70s.

"An interesting phenomenon was that the churches were the last to become radicalised in the '60s, but they stuck with it much longer. But the N.Z. peace movement has always had a large proportion of fairly ordinary people from the suburbs who all feel very strongly about the issue, particularly all women.

"Starting about 1981 there was a vigorous campaign to have N.Z. declared nuclear free. So by the time the snap election was called, 63 per cent of NZers were living in areas which had been declared to be nuclear free.

"There wasn't direct pressure on the Labour Party but the LP

could see which way public opinion was going by all these actions. Furthermore, 65 per cent of the electorate voted for parties that wanted to make N.Z. nuclear free. That is another indication of the backing Lange has."

Wilkes was asked to comment on Bob Hawke's remark at the ALP National Conference that opposition to the bases was anti-American. "That might be the way it ends up but it's not the intention. In the long term it's against American interests to be intervening in the kind of activities it's indulging in. That was the conclusion in 1975 when finally they got out of Vietnam.

"ANZUS does very little to improve our security. The main function of ANZUS is as a device for involving our military forces in serving U.S. military interests in other parts of the globe during peace time.

"This is the really important part of the ANZUS relationship — the joint military exercises. Exercises themselves are a good indication of what the military is planning. With few exceptions these are not exercises to 'defend' Australia and N.Z. but exercises for intervening in the affairs of other countries. Most exercises are the Pig Spirit exercises, held annually, which are dramatic in the extreme for a new war in Korea.

Added Wilkes, "This is what opposition to ANZUS is all about. To some it might be simply anti-Americanism. The peace movement is opposing ANZUS not because it's American but because of the things its getting us into."

Wilkes also explained a little of why Lange decided to oppose ANZUS: "It's pretty hard to invent any kind of tangible threat to N.Z. security. We have no Indonesian neighbours or anything like that, that can be inflated to an unbelievable threat. They keep trying to tell us that the Soviet navy is just over the horizon waiting to move in. That doesn't really convince people."

"When you start opposing something like nuclear warships, the Government defends it by saying it's because of our ANZUS obligations. People start saying, 'what is this ANZUS treaty that requires us to have all these obligations. We don't get much for it."

"So the Government strings off a lot of very silly reasons; it gives us access to the highest levels of Government in Washington. As if that makes any difference.

"It gives us access to the latest military technology" — and the latest military technology is second hand Sky Hawks from the latest military technology is second hand Sky Hawks from Australia and second hand frigates from Great Britain. So they haven't got a good reason for being in ANZUS," concluded Wilkes.



## Call for General Strike Miners' strike enters crucial phase

The British miners' strike is entering a crucial phase. On September 3, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) will meet and the miners strike will be prominent on the agenda. Already leading members of the Labour Party and unionists are calling on the TUC to step up the campaign against Thatcher's Government.

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

Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, National Union of Miners President Arthur Scargill and TUC Executive member Alan Sapper have called for physical support from the entire trade union and labour movement. Some are demanding that a General Strike be initiated.

The economic effects of the strike are beginning to seriously affect important sectors of British capital. Britain's trade deficit hit an all time high in July as more imports are needed to cover for the lack of coal and steel production.

Miners occupy Pontypridd NUM head-quarters to prevent police entry.

It is not a coincidence therefore that leaks are appearing about the Tories handling of the Malvinas War. The recent publication of government documents in the New Statesman show that Thatcher ordered the sinking of the Argentinian battleship Belgrano while peace negotiations were being held.

Simultaneously, the Tory Cabinet stationed a nuclear armed submarine off the Argentinian coast with orders to nuke Argentinian cities if either of the British aircraft carriers were attacked.

If Thatcher has to go, the British ruling class cannot allow it to be seen that it was at the hands of the militant NUM. Another "scandal" is being prepared.

The accompanying articles are reprinted from the weekly British Labour Party paper Socialist Organiser. They include an article by a woman from "Women against Pit Closures;" an underground communique from the Mazowze regional Solidarnosc, which includes Warsaw; and a review of the July Dockers Strike.



On August 24, the dockers' union, the Transport and General Workers Union, struck again. They went out over the unloading of foreign coal which Scottish dockers had refused to handle. If the strike is to be won, and Thatcher's anti-working class government defeated, then these actions will need to become generalised.

## How you can help

At the beginning of August, the National Union of Miners had received \$100,000 from Australia, and donations continue to flow in from all around the world in solidarity. This is, of course, all the more important following the savage fine imposed on the Wales NUM. The union's refusal to pay the \$0,000 pounds fine levied against it for picketing has led to the seizure of 290,000 pounds of the union's funds.

The fight against Thatcherism has already lasted for six months and is bound to continue. Resolutions of support from your Party and trade union branches condemning the British Government and the National Coal Board should be sent to the British High Commission, Canberra, ACT, 2600. Send a copy to the British National Union of Miners care of the Miners Federation, 377 Sussex St, Sydney, 2000.

You can also raise money with motions and by taking up a collection. Donations can also be forwarded via the Australian Miners Federation at the above address.

## Solidarnosc backs the miners

Resolution by underground Solidarnosc in Mazowzske Region:

For four months the British miners have been on strike against a program of mass closures of mines for economic reasons. The miners are threatened with unemployment. The government has rejected compromise solutions and has resorted to severe police methods against the strikers. Thousands of miners have been arrested, hundreds have been hospitalised and one has been killed.

The government of the Polish People's Republic, despite hypocritical condemnations of the activities of the British police in the columns of the regime press and by the regime's pseudo-trade unionists, is profiting from the export of coal to Britain. It sells dirt cheap coal which has been mined in scandalously neglected working conditions and with reckless exploitation of the labour force and the coal field. The slave labour of the Polish miner is used to break the resistance of the British miner.

British miners! The true sentiments of Polish trade unionists towards the authorities of the Polish People's Republic and their practices was shown in the recent electoral force which was boycotted by the workers. In the prevailing conditions of terror, the Polish workers' movement is at present not in a position to undertake protest actions. But you may be certain that as you have supported and are supporting our struggle, so we are in solidarity with you.

We strongly oppose every case where force is used against workers struggling for their rights and interests.

Long Live Trade Union Solidarity!

## How the July dock strike ended

The dock strike reached a settlement early on Friday morning, July 20.

On Thursday evening the strike had collapsed in Dover under threat of violence from strike-bound lorry drivers.

Les Sharp, chair of the shop stewards committee said: "The situation became intolerable, with threats being made to my members and the port installations by drivers. We were informed that they would smash the port."

Nobody disputed his account. In fact the port management joined with the shop stewards committee in stating: "The tensions and eruptions of today have brought us to a point which is intolerable. . . . The shop stewards



## 'A law for them and a law for us'

By Shirley Hood, a Coventry woman from "Women against Pit Closures:"

We've all got to stay together, even after the strike — keep all the contacts we've made with other workers in other areas. It's the only way you will beat Thatcher, because if she can get away with sending the miners back, she will pick on somebody else.

She's not really after the miners, she's after all the big unions.

My first husband died when he was 27, because there was no union. He was a miner in Wales. I was left with three young children and I had nothing. I had a baby of 13 weeks old.

I was given 17 shillings every two weeks compensation when my husband was ill. I used to walk three miles there and back to fetch it. Then a doctor appointed by the pit owners pronounced him fit for work. I knew he wasn't fit for work — but there was no more compensation, and he had to go to work.

He went for a month and then he couldn't any more — he was too frightened to go. And then he died — a piece of coal fell and lay him in his face and the next piece knocked him into a moving machine.

That's what she wants again. Question: What do you think should be done about the scabs?

The port employers agreed to procedures against future breaches of the job-threatening National Dock Labour Scheme. The Tories had been forced to declare that they had no plans to scrap or alter the scheme.

It is a great pity that the dockers settled for such minor gains. Now was the time to fight for the extension of the Scheme to ports presently not covered by it — like Dover. Such a demand would also have given the Dover dockers a more direct interest in standing firm.

A continuing fight by the dockers would also have helped the miners win a speedier and more complete victory.

For all that, the dockers won a victory.

I think they should all be put on the dole. They are union-breakers aren't they? They thought these men would starve back. They wave their pound notes at the bus windows and throw their pennies out.

The police stand by and laugh as well. They think it's a big joke.

Well I've come to this now, there's definitely a law for them and a law for us. And the law for us changes very, very often.

But they know we're winning. We didn't shout scab last night, we shouted rule 51, and they hated it. [Rule 51 is an NUM rule which enables expulsion of scabs.]

Question: Can you describe your day? I get up at 4. I make their coffee and cut their sandwiches. And I go out of the house for 5.10. I run back at 6.30, get on the bus for 6.45 and have to work.

I come back and have our meal — then out at 6pm to picket. Then cut the sandwiches and go at 9pm and get home at 10.30. I'll be in bed by about 11.30.

My husband does a lot and I make the children get involved because I think one day they'll have to be like us. I'm putting enough into their heads now to know they've got to fight. Otherwise it'll all be lost.





## The fight for democratic control

# Accountability and the British Labour Party



Voting at 1981 Labour Party Conference, at which Tony Benn just failed to win Deputy Leadership.

The 1974 British miners' strike led directly to the defeat of Ted Heath's Conservative Government. It was followed by the Callaghan Labour Government. At a time of intensifying crisis for British capitalism, Callaghan, with a narrow parliamentary majority, sought to meet that crisis by developing a Social Contract with trade union leaders.

**Leon Parris**  
Member Camperdown (NSW) Branch and Municipal Employees Union

This Contract saw Labour promise some measures to defend jobs, hold down prices, improve the health service, and defend trade union rights with new laws. In turn the trade union leaders endorsed a strategy on wages that not only pressured rank-and-file workers to accept deals on increased productivity, but also to accept only nationally agreed minimum wage increases.

The real strength of the Social Contract was that trade union leaders had to "police" their own members. They were relied on to halt strikes, sabotage solidarity, and create the conditions for a demoralised labour movement that would not threaten the chances of a rise in profitability.

The Social Contract was a success for the bosses. Callaghan, with Liberal support, maintained his Parliamentary control. But the union ranks became restive as unemployment soared, living standards fell, and the "social wage" began to be cut by a Government trying to bring in monetarism.

Within the British Labour Party many Constituency Labour Parties (equivalent to Australian FECs or FEAs) fought back. It was clear from the start however, that the control of Labour Party Conference by trade union leaders limited the possibilities of success.

The environment of economic decay made some Left union leaders disillusioned with the Social Contract because the membership was increasingly restive. In the run up to the 1979 General Election, Callaghan tried to impose yet another wage-cutting policy in the form of a 5 per cent wage ceiling. Lower-paid workers revolted. The massive strikes that rocked Britain broke the back of the Social Contract, and evicted the right-wing Labour Government — only to have it replaced with even more right-wing Tories.

Throughout the period of Callaghan's Government, the Left in the Party had fought to bring the Parliamentary Labour Party under control. The aim was to kick out the most right-wing and corrupt of the careerists that infested it. They wanted MPs who would be responsive to local CLPs and the local struggles and needs of their electorates.

In an effort to organise this growing movement for accountability within the BLP, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, which had existed since 1975, initiated moves to end the automatic re-election (ie, pre-election) of sitting MPs. This of course was bitterly fought by most of the PLP. But they had little to show for their ten, twenty or thirty years of unchallenged control over Party policy (which for the most part they ignored in any case).

After the debacle of Callaghan's Government, the 1979 BLP Conference carried the principle that every MP had to submit themselves to re-election. This change, as well as a number of other policy and rules changes, occurred directly because of the trade union delegations with the PLP which had developed among the trade union delegations — which controlled 90 per cent of the voting strength of Conference.

For many of the union leaders, not only the left leaning ones, the experience of 1974-79 was bitter. For unions like the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), a 300,000 strong union of garbage workers, hospital cleaners etc, as well as the left of centre Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), led by Geoff Evans, the arrogance of the PLP and its leader was unacceptable.

With this trade union support, the constitutional reforms were easily gained with a vote of 5,253,000 for, versus 1,883,000 against. In the run up to the 1979 BLP Conference, and after the Left consolidated their grip on the Constituency Labour Parties,

there was a sharp move against many of the Right MPs. These later went on to form the backbone of the SDP, when it split in March 1981.

The twin objectives of reform were compulsory re-election of the PLP Leader and Deputy Leader. Behind these constitutional issues was the question of what sort of party is the BLP.

Is it a vehicle for the gaining of another electoral majority at any price over policy or principle? Or is reshaping the Party to be responsive to the needs of the working class, in the same way that the Thatcher Tory Government is responsive to the needs of the bosses and bankers of the ruling class, a real possibility?

Before the 1980 Conference, the Left in the CLPs and unions organised the very significant Rank and File Mobilising Committee. In a tremendous display of unity, the Labour Coordinating Committee (similar to the NSW Steering Committee), the Militant Tendency, Young Socialists, women's groups, and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy came together with the Marxist Left in the BLP, organised around the Socialist Organiser group.

The 1980 Conference saw compulsory re-election set into the party rules and the principle of an electoral college to elect the Leader and Deputy decided upon.

The BLP National Executive Committee, in an effort to defuse the crisis building up around the electoral college principle, called the Wembley Conference of January 1981. There, due to a mixture of successful efforts by the R&FMC to organise within union delegations and CLPs and the incompetence of the Right, the formula for an electoral college comprising 30% for the PLP, 40% for unions, and 30% for the PLP, was adopted.

The actual vote was close — 3,375,000 votes for the proposal were cast, with 2,865,000 against. This represented a difference of only 510,000 votes, which is less than the block vote of any single large union.

The 1981 October BLP Conference was the finale to a leadership election campaign which centred on a discussion of democracy, the direction of the labour movement, how to fight the Tories and how to build socialism. It saw the unofficial leader of the BLP Left (Tony Benn) lose the contest for Deputy Leadership by only 1% of the vote to Denis Healy.

It was after this that the Right, which remained entrenched at the commanding heights of the Party, began their counter attack. As well, trade union leaderships were becoming frightened by the intensity of Thatcher's attacks on unionism through the Tebbit laws and her tactical use of mass unemployment.

As a result a non-aggression pact was worked out at Bishop Stortford between the BLP Right and trade union leaders. This forced the democracy campaign on to the defensive.

The Bennite Left and the soft Left groupings withdrew from the Rank & File Mobilising Committee. For a time this weakened the CLPs, which were solidly pro-Benn and were the main force for reform in the Party. Tony Benn complied with the Bishop Stortford pact to the extent of not running for Deputy in 1982.

The right-wing National Executive Committee counter attacked during 1982 by disqualifying several Left candidates who had been officially endorsed by their CLPs to displace sitting MPs. The case of Peter Tatchell from Bermondsey CLP is perhaps the best known example.

With these moves, the Right embarked on a campaign for the NEC and Conference to whittle away and weaken compulsory re-election. Secondly, the NEC initiated the notion of a register for political groupings within the BLP.

The vast majority of CLPs opposed the register because they saw it as the first step towards mass expulsions from the Party. The register, however, gained the crucial support of union delegations at the 1982 Conference, such as the TGWU.

Registration was not wholly complied with, nor was it the answer to their problems which the Right hoped for. Their drive to regain complete control of the Party peaked with the expulsion of several leaders of the Militant Tendency in 1983.

The Left still controlled the CLPs and the active Party membership was not about to give up peacefully — even though the terrain of battle shifted somewhat. In fact, the mood for

change was not swinging to the Right in the ranks of either Labour or the unions.

The expulsions were solidly fought against, and probably didn't proceed beyond a limited scope, largely because that would have provoked a major split with the CLPs.

As we have seen, the shift of trade union support away from reform had left the CLPs in the lurch for the 1982 and 1983 Conferences. Union leaders could so easily shift ground mainly because the campaign for accountability had left the trade unions largely untouched.

There are a number of undemocratic practices in the union delegations to BLP Conferences — not the least of which is that union leaders cast their delegation's vote in a block which may be 100,000 or 1,000,000 votes. Few delegations are elected, with most being appointed by full-time officials, who themselves may be unelected.

Obviously, if there has been scope to democratise the Labour Party structures then the success of those struggles rests to a great extent on the ability of the active membership of the labour movement to campaign for the election of their officials and Labour Party delegations. The strong organic link between Labour Party and trade union activism gives hope to that necessity.

Optimistically, there has been a surge in active Party membership in the face of the attempts to roll back the hard-won constitutional reforms. The BLP has seen a vast increase in the involvement of women in all the struggles and campaigns at local and national level.

CLPs have been among the most active in support of the current miners' strike. They have been especially successful in raising funds for the miners' families and in monitoring the vicious police attacks on pickets and mining communities.

CLPs have also been at the forefront of the fight against Thatcher's attempts to force local councils to increase rates and cut expenditure. The fight by Liverpool City Council against the cuts, which included city wide stoppages by unions, and the continuing obstacle of Ted Livingston's leadership of the Greater London Council, are partly attributable to the activism and fighting mood of local Labour Branches.

In fact, those struggles against Thatcher could not have been built without the clearing out of the old guard Right in these and many city councils, which in turn came from the success of the accountability campaign.

As far back as 1979, some on the Left in the BLP were saying that there are two alternatives: Either the Left will go on from a victory on democracy to consolidate the Labour Party as a genuinely socialist party seeking to overthrow capitalism on the basis of the class struggle of the working class, and build up a mass membership around such policies, OR the Left will be purged and the Labour Party transformed from its present ramshackle self into a tight and intolerant party modelled on the West German, Swedish and other Social Democracies.

The possibility of using the new mechanisms in the Labour Party to put any new Labour Government under a degree of labour movement control is not foreclosed. It will depend on the level of working-class mobilisation, struggle, and conflict with the Labour Government.

For the Australian Labor Party, there are a number of relevant issues connected with the need to make the labour movement leadership accountable to the wishes and needs of the ranks. The most pressing campaigns are defensive ones.

Rank and file preselection in NSW needs to be preserved and even extended to other States. The defence of the Victorian State Conference decision not to allow the affiliation of four pro-NEC unions is also crucial.

We also need to broaden our horizon from just the Labor Party and to support workers who are struggling to defend their living standards. The NSW Nurses Association's fight for a 38-hour week with no give-backs is a case in point.

The general lesson of the British experience is that the fight for internal Party democracy is closely linked to the struggle for a class-struggle political perspective on all levels.



# New CAPP pamphlet 'Security Threat: The case for abolition of secret agencies'

During the debate at the 1984 National Conference on the Constitutional and Legal Platform, Joan Coxsgede moved an amendment calling for an open, public inquiry into the "scope, purpose and functions of all known security and intelligence organisations in Australia."

The amendment also called for abolition of the political police functions of these organisations; abandonment of the term "subversion" as a legal basis for security and intelligence operations; investigation of the past activity of the organisations; periodic reviews presented to Parliament on their work; and the establishment of an Appeals Tribunal to hear and determine action in case of complaints from people affected by security operations.

## Coral Wynter

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

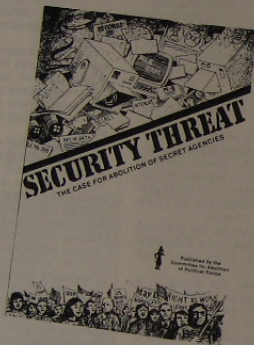
Coxsgede argued strongly for the abolition of the existing security agencies by recounting their role in the frame-up of David Combe; the frame-up of the three Ananda Marga members over their alleged involvement in the Hilton bombing; the practice ASIS raid on Melbourne's Sheraton Hotel; and the link between ASIO and the infamous Nugan-Hand Bank.

Unfortunately, her amendment lost by 43 to 55 votes. Instead, conference adopted a platform which restricted itself to deleting "subversion" as a basis for security operations and the appointment of a single "ombudsman" figure to hear complaints against the security services.

It was not for want of trying by Coxsgede, who is the single best-known campaigner against political police agencies in the country.

Coxsgede, MLC for Melbourne West, is a co-founder of that stalwart organisation, the Committee for Abolition of Political Police. She has written, and argued, and debated, and demonstrated tirelessly against the underhand and repressive activities of ASIO and its fellow agencies for many years.

She is the author of the book "Rooted in Secrecy," a telling indictment of the ac-



tions of ASIO and other security organisations in relation both to spying on the political Left and labour movement in Australia, and in collaborating closely with US military and intelligence agencies.

Now Coxsgede has co-operated with another long-time activist in CAPP, Gerry Harant, in co-writing the pamphlet, "Security Threat: The Case For the Abolition of Secret Agencies."

The pamphlet was published by CAPP shortly before the National Conference in abolishing ASIO. It was widely distributed at the Conference, with an accompanying letter signed by Coxsgede.

In the introduction to "Security Threat," the authors note the advent of the year of George Orwell's book "1984":

"In Australia in 1984, we have to live under the dictum of Harvey Bazzett [ASIO insider himself (sic) free of ASIO surveillance]. Foreign secret agencies play a major role in the operation and protection of aggressive US bases which cover Australia. Some of these bases which cover secret that few know of their existence, others have functions that even fewer understand and none of them have been agreed by the Australian people on the

basis of informed debate. In Australia in 1984, everyone accepts the fact that phones are tapped, premises bugged and Her Majesty's mail tampered with."

The authors explain the background to increasing activity by secret agencies in the "deepening worldwide crisis of capitalism. The system has never been under the control of ordinary people, but the crisis situation has now created conditions where even those in power are clearly not in control, and this group therefore feels increasingly threatened."

In these conditions, "the framework of political violence by the state is being strengthened all the time."

"The last two decades have seen a rapid increase in the number and scope of Australia's secret agencies. These bodies have been the only major growth area in Australian public spending since 1975. But their considerable economic cost is far less significant than their cost as far as Australian sovereignty is concerned."

The introduction continues: "The election of the Federal Labor government in 1983 brought no improvement. On the contrary, as in many other areas such as economic management and uranium mining, the performance of the new government on the question of secret agencies is bitterly disappointing to Labor party members and supporters."

The authors then go on to note that this is the background for the Conference to consider its policy on secret agencies: "The Victorian Branch will once again move for their abolition, using the same resolution which was very nearly passed at the last National Conference in 1982. Predictably, this Victorian recommendation is generating massive opposition from the secret agency network, from the media and from apologists within the ALP, because it is a hard-headed, unambiguous and capable of being implemented."

The pamphlet then sets out the text of the Victorian policy on intelligence and security.

The body of the pamphlet then goes on to tackle a series of aspects of the role of the secret agencies, the debate about and inquiries into them, and conclusions about what should be done.

In the first chapter, entitled: "The ALP and Secret Agencies," the authors

point out the implications of the ASIO/Combe Ivanov affair, and the ASIS Sheraton Hotel fiasco.

"If there were any lingering doubts in people's minds about the destructive role of these agencies, they are surely now resolved," the pamphlet states.

"The facts reveal that the entire Combe/Ivanov episode was a gigantic political fraud perpetrated on the Australian people with the coincidental intent of influencing ALP policy. The only parallel in our history was the Petrov Affair, the impact of which is still reverberating around Australia."

The authors then go on to slam the Hope Royal Commission into the Combe/Ivanov affair.

"Hope's bias in support of secret agencies was already well-established much earlier when he headed previous commissions on intelligence and security matters. For the Combe/Ivanov tragedy, Hope was not picked despite his bias, but because of it. After all, the government and more particularly the Prime Minister, were completely behind ASIO's attempt to grandstand on its own behalf and were also behind any attempt, no matter how ludicrous and trivial, to depict Ivanov as a master spy. Since its election, this government has shown itself to be one of Australia's most conservative, especially in matters relating to foreign affairs, defence and security. The choice of Hope as Commissioner merely illustrates this point."

The pamphlet proceeds to detail the "mistakes" and cover-ups of the Hope Commission, as well as demolishing the ASIO concept of "agent of influence."

Next, the real role of ASIO in relation to "security threats" is discussed. In particular, the link-up between ASIO and the CIA-run Nugan Hand Bank is raised; and the undercover ASIO operation which resulted in the Sydney Hilton bombing and the frame-up of the Ananda Marga three is clearly explained.

Coxsgede and Harant then expose "The Reformers" at Work. They focus on the submission made to the Hope Commission by a Committee of the Federal ALP Parliamentary Caucus:

"The submission 'acknowledges the need for the continued existence and continued effective operations of Australia's security and intelligence agencies,' without stating why we need them at all and in which areas they are expected to be effective."

"Reforms" suggested by the Committee include: accountability to the minister; judicial audits by a 'specially created Security Commissioner'; a redefinition of the term "subversion"; a grievance mechanism to review complaints; and a 90-day limit on bugging authorisations.

These cosmetic changes would do nothing to control the political activities of ASIO against dissenters and the labour

movement — and as the authors point out, no account is taken at all of the operations of other security agencies.

In answering the question, "What is Security?" the pamphlet goes on to say:

"When we ask the question, does Australia need a security service, we need to first ask ourselves what the average person means by security. For most people, security means having a job, a roof over their heads, food in the cupboard and having access to adequate health care."

"Whereas ordinary Australians are looking for security to meet their basic requirements, the Establishment is looking towards a security service to protect its interests and to prevent any inroads into its power."

"We must understand that secret agencies, in all their ramifications, are not some irrational excrement of the system, but accurately reflect the very nature of our society. For instance, we've seen a massive 30% increase in the last budget allocation for ASIO at a time when there are cuts right across the board in essential social service spending."

"Along with the army and the para-

military forces, secret agencies are the ultimate line of defence of the world-wide capitalist system and the international files of our secret brethren are far stronger than any allegiance they have for us, the ones whose taxes keep them in work. They see themselves as an elite, standing above the vagaries of the country's elected representatives."

"On vastly different levels, both the Chilean military coup of 1973 and the Australian Constitutional coup of 1975 show that once the power elite and its intelligence community decide that normal constitutional processes no longer suffice, they will always find ways to subvert or bypass these processes."

The authors conclude: "In demanding the abolition of secret agencies, we do not imagine that we have any hope of immediate success. After all, as we have said, secret agencies are part of the system. To abolish spying and snooping would mean a fundamental change in our society, but isn't that what we are supposed to be about?"

In this pamphlet, Coxsgede and Harant have done an excellent service in pushing the campaign toward achieving those goals a little bit further forward.





party affairs

# Setting up a Young Labor Association

Mitchell Young Labor in suburban Sydney is very recently established. Labor Militant spoke to Edward Mason, the Secretary of Mitchell YLA, about the formation of the association. The interview was taken by Janet Burstall, Rozelle East (NSW) Branch and member of the Municipal Employees Association.

In September 1981, 16 people (one more than required by ALP rules) attended a meeting to request a charter for the new Young Labor from Head Office. The Charter was granted in December and the formation meeting was attended by about 20 people. Edward Mason explained why they had wanted to establish a YLA:

"We set it up because the conditions in the local Branches were so pathetic. The members were so old, and right-wing. The meetings were boring, and they only talked about local government. So we thought it would be a good way to get young people involved in the Party more. If they had some sort of alternative to the Branches, where they could be with young people, they'd be a bit more comfortable."

Q: How did you find young people to

join, and convince them that it was a worthwhile project?

A: We didn't have to force anyone to come along. Most had already been Branch members, or joined the ALP, and others came straight to us and joined the ALP afterwards. We had press releases in the local papers, and contacted the local Branches.

Since its inception, Mitchell YLA has organised a number of activities, including a camp and a barbecue which raised about \$300, which enables them to finance some other activities. Edward Mason described some of these:

"We've had speakers and films. For example we had a speaker from the Building Workers Industrial Union, who told us about trade unions and their connection with the Labor Party and its formation. And he explained how he thinks trade unions should be more involved in the Labor Party than at present, so that they can get a better voice for themselves.

We had a forum at the Riverstone High School with a representative of Young Labor and Young Liberals, involving the whole of years 11 and 12. We've been

along as a group to demonstrations against uranium mining, and on the April 15 peace march. We're also involved in community radio, the Western Suburbs Peace Group and helping to set up an International Youth Year Committee at Parramatta.

Q: What would you like to achieve with Mitchell Young Labor?

A: We hope to be involved in more outward political activity than we have so far. We've had motions brought up on the Young Labor agenda, and debated those at Conference. But we'd like to organise some public activities in our own name.

We have a problem that the Federal redistribution will probably split Mitchell electorate into 4 other electorates. So we'll probably lose Mitchell YLA and have to start again setting up YLAs in other areas. This makes it hard to plan activities to build Mitchell YLA at the moment.

Q: How do you think Young Labor as a whole is going in NSW?

A: Not as well as it could. It's got a lot of potential that I don't feel is being fulfilled. There's been a lot of dispute in the Radical Leadership Group (the YLA faction associated with the Steering Committee) about how YLAs should be run.

It's getting better than it was. However its main involvement is inside the ALP. It's not achieving much in getting more young people involved in the ALP.

It seems sometimes as though it's used as a training ground for people to get careers. It's not an activist organisation. But I suppose it's no better or worse than Labour youth organisations throughout the world.

NSW Party, in the face of the right-wing Centre Unity's domination of the trade union votes.

The problem with this approach is that it is the industrial strength of the union membership which makes the unions potentially a much more powerful force for socialist change than ALP members in branches. The right-wing officials of these unions have to be challenged with a militant socialist and democratic alternative.

If the affiliated unions now were more militant and democratic, we almost certainly wouldn't have the problem of Labor Governments around the country being barely distinguishable from Liberal Governments.

The proposal to reduce union representation reflects lack of confidence in the possibility of winning the ranks of the unions to left policies, and a desire for a bureaucratic solution to bypass the rank-and-file.

A more constructive response to the problem would be to argue for the ALP rules to require affiliated unions to hold elections from the rank and file for delegates to State Conference.

party machinery

# Tasmania Activist's guide to ALP

Since 1976, the Tasmanian Branch has been controlled by the so-called Left, and has a similar structure to the Victorian ALP. However, the Left called the "Democratic Socialists," are far more conservative than their Victorian counterparts in the Socialist Left — perhaps even more so than the tightly controlled Steering Committee in NSW.

Lou-anno Barker  
Member Murcison (Tas) Branch

You have only to look at the Tasmanian ALP in Government to see that it appeared little different to a Liberal one. The right wing is organised in the Labor Unity faction, and there is a recently formed Centre Left, or Hayden faction — which, like Hayden's faction, ended up blocking with the Right. There were some on the Left, disillusioned with the D.S., who joined the Centre Left.

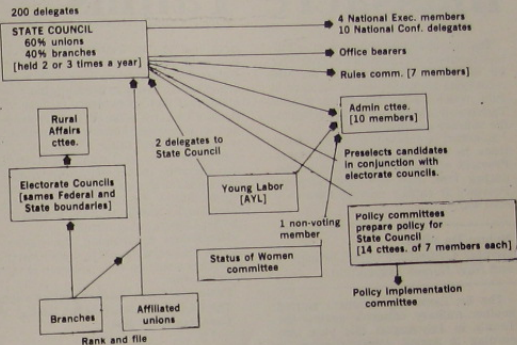
However, hopefully any illusions in this faction have been dispelled by their actions at the National Conference. At the last State Council meeting all factions had united to support the old previous ALP position of phasing out uranium mining, but it was a completely different story at the National Conference.

However, the Tasmanian Branch is far more open than the right-wing dominated NSW Branch.

There has been a history of Federal intervention in the Tasmanian Branch. In 1976, Federal Office intervened against the activities of NCC member Brian Haradine, and at the same time introduced a similar structure to other State Branches:

**State Council** — The highest decision-making body of the Party, which meets at least two times a year, usually three. Delegates are divided by a ratio of 60% from unions and 40% from Branches. At the last Federal intervention in 1982, the rules were changed so that Branches directly elect delegates to State Council, rather than by the Electorate Councils, and State Council was expanded to 200 delegates.

Unions either elect or appoint delegates to State Council, depending on their rules. The right-wing AMFSU State Secretary, Geoff Adams, recently took court action to disallow the AMFSU delegation because they weren't elected by the rank and file. Most unions, as in other States, don't in fact have rank-and-file elections for delegations, nor do they have any discussions in their unions on issues coming up at State Council.



**Branches** — Anyone over the age of 14 can join the ALP, but must belong to the Branch within their own electoral subdivision. Members can only stand for Branch positions after a year's membership.

**Electorate Councils** — At the moment, the State and Federal electorates are the same — although this may change after the Federal redistribution. The Electorate Councils have little power and their main function relates to organising election campaigns.

**Presselections** — Endorsements are done through a combined vote of State Council and relevant Electorate Councils, except in the case of Senate candidates, who are elected by the State Council delegates only.

**Hare-Clark voting system** — This is a system unique to Tasmania, based on proportional representation, used in all ballots in the Tasmanian Branch and in State elections for the House of Assembly. Another unique situation in Tasmania is multi-member electorates, where there are 7 State members for each electorate.

The exception is elections to the Upper House or Legislative Council, which has 19 members, of which three are elected each year on a first-past-the-post method for 6 year terms. Of the 19 Council members, only one is at present from the ALP.

**Administrative Committee** — This is the body which carries out the day-to-day decision-making of the Party. Ten members are elected at State Council each year, and others such as leaders of the State and Federal Parliamentary Labor Party are present in an ex-officio capacity.

**Status of Women's Committee** — This is open to all women members of the ALP and merely plays an advisory role. The committee has one non-voting member on the Administrative Committee. There is no special Labor Women's Conference as there is in NSW, for example.

**Young Labor (AYL)** — Open to all members under 25 years of age, has only recently been established. There are no separate regional branches as in NSW. The AYL also has one non-voting member on the Administrative Committee.

**Policy Committees** — There are 14 committees with 7 members each with the power to co-opt another 7. These are elected at May State Council each year, and write policy recommendations to go to State Council.

**Rules Committee** — This is the second most powerful body in the ALP after the Administrative Committee. It consists of 7 members — positions which are held and contested at each State Council — and have the prime responsibility of upholding and interpreting the rules of the Party.

# Sydney FEC debates the 60:40 rule

The proportion of union delegates to NSW State Conference has been a topic of heated debate at the July meeting of Sydney FEC. The issue was incorporated into a motion expressing concern at the attempts by a right-wing unions in Victoria to affiliate to the ALP.

Janet Burstall  
Member Rozelle East (NSW) Branch  
and Municipal Employees Union

An amendment to delete the following part of the motion was defeated narrowly.

"The FEC also notes that, at present, members of other political parties cannot become members of the ALP, but un-

ions controlled by such people can be affiliated. It is therefore urged that action be taken to redistribute the ratio of votes at State Conference to increase the representation of members and decrease the representation of unions."

A further amendment to the following effect was accepted: "so that union representation reflects ALP membership."

For some years there have been differences in the Steering Committee over the proportion of union representation at State Conference. Those who favour a reduction of the union component from 60% to 50% by and large have their base of support in the branches. Some people are looking for a short cut to increase Steering Committee influence in the



solidarity

## Sri Lankan troops massacre Tamils

The two-and-three-quarters of a million Tamils in Sri Lanka are in great fear for their lives. Although they are still recovering from last year's violence in July, which caused the death of 2,000 Tamils and made about 200,000 refugees, the violence continues.

Renewed combined military operations in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka became intense during 1984. And now the Northern Province is rapidly moving towards a civil war.

**Nelum De Silva**  
Member Livingstone (NSW) Branch  
and NSW Nurses Association

The Sri Lankan government started another military offensive against the Tamils in July-August this year. According to Appali Amirthalingam, a leader of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), naval gunboats have shelled a Tamil village, Velevettiturai, killing civilians and destroying Tamil property.

The village was surrounded by government troops, and all males between the ages of 15 and 25 seized and taken away to a military detention camp in Kaluthara, near Colombo.

There have been many other incidents of government troops shooting innocent bystanders in Tamil areas — including women and children.

The TULF at the last elections became the second largest party in Parliament. It was barred after it refused to denounce the Tamil people's ambition for a separate state and national independence.

Most elected representatives of the Tamil community were removed and forced into exile in South India. The Tamils have been forced to take up arms to fight against the Government's attempts to commit genocide against them.

The Sri Lankan Government, as a part of its big anti-terrorist campaign, has re-established ties with Israel — especially military and security ties — under the banner of the United States. Some leading figures of the Israeli intelligence service (MOSSAD) were involved in setting up a sophisticated intelligence network from a special interests section of the US Embassy in Sri Lanka.

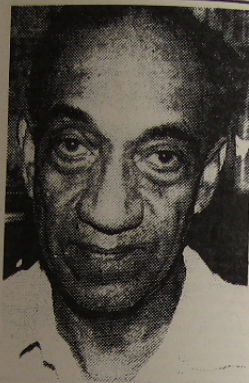
Since the July 1983 massacres, an increased number of army personnel have

been sent to the Northern Province to police the area. The Protection of Tamil Ealam from Genocide (PROTEG) — an organisation based in Madras, India — claim that there is evidence of huge inflows of US arms to the Sri Lankan army and an increasing number of American personnel present in the North.

Because of the continuing violation of human rights, and the stepped up killings of civilians belonging to the Tamil ethnic community by the armed forces, the international community must protest to the Sri Lankan government.

Resolutions condemning the repression in Sri Lanka passed by Labor Party Branches would be very welcome to the Tamil people.

Protests at the Sri Lankan regime's actions should be sent to:  
The High Commission of Sri Lanka, 35 Empire Circuit, Forrester,  
Canberra, ACT 2683.



Sri Lankan President Jayawardene

## Hayden backs Sri Lankan Government

In June this year, the Livingstone Branch in Sydney passed a resolution condemning the attacks on Tamils in April 1984, and urging the Labor Government to put pressure on the Sri Lankan Government to repeal its repressive legislation, and to lift the bans on opposition parties.

At the Branch's August meeting, a reply was tabled from Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, which read in part:

"The Australian Government remains concerned that violence continues to occur in Sri Lanka, particularly in the North. The Department of Foreign Affairs has received reports of continuing terrorist attacks, particularly against security forces. In addition, it seems clear that despite Sri Lankan Government calls for restraint by the Sinhala community in the face of this terrorist provocation, there have been attacks on innocent Tamil civilians, including by members of the security forces.

"While recognising that the inter-communal problem is largely an internal Sri Lanka, the Australian Government believes that the best hope for a lasting solution to Sri Lanka's inter-communal problems rests with a negotiated settle-

ment based on a full recognition of the rights of all communities in Sri Lanka and internationally accepted standards of human rights. In this connection the Government has noted and welcomed the All Party Conference which is meeting in Colombo to discuss the inter-communal problem. The Government hopes that all parties and groups in Sri Lanka will contribute positively to the Conference in a spirit of constructive cooperation with the aim of reaching a just solution."

"Yours sincerely, Bill Hayden."

The problem with this attitude expressed by the foreign minister is that it puts fundamental blame for the violence on the Tamils, rather than their oppressors — in fact, it seems to make out that the Sri Lankan Government is trying to "restrain" the massacres.

In reality, the Government is responsible for the mass murders of Tamil civilians, and for the entire policy of national oppression of the Tamil people.

Rather than backing up the Sri Lankan Government, which is pretending to negotiate while continuing the repression, the Australian Labor Government should condemn the anti-Tamil pogrom and demand that the Sri Lankan regime repeal all undemocratic laws.