

**Labor**

incorporating **SOCIALIST FIGHT**

# **MILITANT**

13 DEC 1984  
OF VICTORIA

**FOR WORKERS' POWER AND SOCIALISM**

Volume 4, Number 2 April 1984

**Stop the  
enemies of  
Labor!**

NSW elections

**Swing against  
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Economic policy

**The real alternative**

Labor history

**The Socialisation  
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# Labor MILITANT

At the beginning of this year Labor Militant amalgamated with Socialist Fight.

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

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

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

2) By combining our resources we can improve the quality of our articles, the range of issues covered, and the distribution of the finished product;

3) This amalgamation demonstrates that we are serious about building a strong Left current.

An important aspect of the new Labor Militant is the opening up of a number of pages for debates. In these pages we hope to reflect discussion that is taking place in the Party around key issues. We invite contributions from those in the Left who have different viewpoints to those expressed by supporters of Labor Militant and Socialist Fight.

We also encourage contributions in the form of letters and reviews to make our journal more lively and stimulating.

We also want Labor Militant to be a useful guide for activists in the ALP. For that reason we will continue to carry contributions by organisations and committees that are campaigning around particular issues, and we will focus on what we think can be done within the Party.

The new Labor Militant will continue to campaign against the Prices and Incomes Accord. This has already resulted in cuts to wages and living standards and it will not give workers a share of the limited economic recovery now evident. We believe capitalism remains in a deep economic and social crisis and that socialist measures are necessary to confront a crisis of this depth. This crisis is not caused by wage rises and wage cuts will not help resolve the crisis in the interests of the working class.

We also devote a lot of attention to the threat of war and

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

The Australian Government is in a position to make a significant contribution towards world disarmament by removing the U.S. military bases and by withdrawing from the aggressive ANZUS military pact.

We also insist that progressive policies must be advanced by Labor on the liberation struggle in El Salvador, on the defence of Nicaragua against U.S. aggression, on Solidarity's fight for socialist democracy in Poland, against the Israeli aggression in the Middle East and in favour of the rights of the Palestinian people, against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, in support of the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines and on the need to make reparations to Vietnam.

Labor is in Government in four States and federally. Yet never before has there been a bigger gap between stated Labor policy and Government performance, let alone the gap between performance and working class interests. This gap is reflected in the important debate and discussion within the Party Branches and at Party Conferences. We seek to develop a broad coverage of this process.

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

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

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

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

## Beat inflation. Subscribe now

Labor Militant is against the Prices and Incomes Accord. It is also against inflation in policy and practice. Our principle deflationary measure is to offer subscriptions for 10 issues at just \$6. That means

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion

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## letters to L.M.

### Greenham Common

Dear Editor,  
I have recently returned from England, where I visited the Greenham Common camp. Because of recent moves to evict the women from the Common it is important that Australians are aware of the camp and offer our support to the women.

It is remarkable that the protest at the once beautiful Greenham Common has continued for over two long years, and that the small but growing group of women living outside the perimeter of the base continue to endure the most appalling conditions of inadequate shelter, bitter cold, constant antagonism, rain and incredible daily hardships.

In spite of these conditions, and the two hour coach trip from London,

the day of protest on December 11, 1983 attracted over 30,000 women.

It was predominantly a day of peaceful protest; women weaved the golden autumn ferns and branches into peace symbols and attached them to the wire fencing, and the eerie silence was broken every hour by an orchestra of sound, in an attempt to express anger "positively."

Prior to the protest Heselbine announced that the protest will not guarantee that protestors would not be shot when intruding onto military bases. Women have complained that they have been beaten with metal sticks by soldiers at Greenham and the Home Office denied that it had set a precedent by awarding an extra 1.5 million pounds to the Thames Valley Police.

A huge majority of the protestors appeared to be middle class women, many of whom were

mothers, concerned for their children's futures. It is therefore a unique protest, for it has arisen from unique circumstances: less an issue of political factions, than one of survival. It has a depth of commitment I had never before experienced, for like many Australians, I had never before shared the terror of feeling so close and so vulnerable to possible (and probable) annihilation.

Why women? Few and far between are the men who share the terror of what is going on. They prefer to approach the issue more "rationally." Yet when ninety-six Cruise Missiles are installed less than two hours drive from London, and when one of these is equivalent to dozens of Hiroshimas, it is little wonder that it is an issue which is provoking such a widespread, persistent and positive response.

Clare Cox  
Leichhardt.

### NSW elections

Dear comrades,

I hope that by the time this appears in your next issue that the N.S.W. Government is smarting from an electoral defeat. Not that I can stomach the Liberals any more than any of Wran's cronies, but it will give the true workers and members of the N.S.W. ALP a chance to get rid of corruptible right-wingers so the party can be rebuilt as it should be, and as we hope other States Branches will be in the not-too-distant future.

Chris Bean  
Balclutha Branch  
WA

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.

## Social Rights Conference

As part of the debate around what should make up an alternative economic strategy to the Ecos and Incomes Accord, the Social Rights Campaign will hold a four-day Conference between April 20 and 23 at the University High School in Melbourne.

Such an alternative strategy must be one that benefits the vast majority of the population. It must defend social and democratic rights and our standards of living.

The Conference seeks to provide a forum for the exchange of information and experience of struggle. It seeks to provide a climate in which the various alternative strategies and policies in the interests of working people can be discussed and clarified. It seeks to provide an opportunity for those in struggle to form national wide links for future communication and support.

The Conference arrangements will enable a wide range of speakers to take part in the forums, workshops, informational talks and plenary meetings. In addition there will be some international speakers who will feature in separate public meeting sessions.

A speaker from Sweden will speak on the long experience of social contracts in that country and a speaker from France will speak on the experience of the Mitterrand Government. Other international guests have been approached.

There will be a session held for ALP members on what

strategy to pursue in the ALP around the Accord. So far a number of ALP members have endorsed the Conference including Jill Hickson, President of WA Labor Women's Organisation; Judy Siddins, WA State Executive member; Anthony Albanese, National President Council of ALP Students; Victorian Local Councillors Kevin Healey, Joe Kaputo and Craig Marshall and a number of others.

Those who have already endorsed the Conference include some union Branches, a wide range of union delegates, community organisations and academics. Among the most prominent are: Jenny Haines, NSW Nurses Association; Norm Gallagher, BLF; Tom Ryan, Food Preservers Union; NSW Branch Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union; WA ACOA Branch sociate Professor Ted Wheelwright; the Hobart, Newcastle and Victorian branches of the Unemployed Peoples Union.

The Conference's success depends on activists coming together to discuss and plan an alternative economic strategy that will be in the interests of working people. If you in Sydney on (02) 690 1032 or Bethana Mohideen in Melbourne on (03) 329 1338, or write to PO Box 363, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012. Registration forms are now available. Childcare will be provided.

## victoria

### Implications for Party nationally

# The campaign against the NCC unions

The campaign in the Victorian Branch of the ALP to oppose the re-admittance of the four NCC-controlled unions is important for the party nationally.

The unions are the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), Federated Clerks Union (FCU), Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA).

### Garry Walters

Member of Brunswick (Vic) ALP Branch and Australian Railways Union

If these NCC-led unions are admitted it would represent a victory over the forces in the Party that support policies in the interest of working people.

It would be a major victory for those right wing forces in the Party represented by Bob Hawke. It is no coincidence that Hawke is strongly in favour of letting these anti-Labor forces into the Party. He wants them because they are in full agreement with the economic and social policies that he is implementing.

Hawke's ability to arrogantly ignore Party policy and implement his own anti-working class ideas would be even further strengthened with these forces inside the Party. He wants to be able to implement his policies without internal Party opposition. The re-admittance of these unions would allow him to do just that.

The NCC and its splinter groups, the Industrial Action Fund and the Industrial Research Organisation, have nothing in common with the interests of the broad labour movement. They are forces outside the labour movement that are devoted to destroying all the progressive elements within it.

The IAF, which the four unions concerned belong to and which consists of the trade union operatives of the NCC, should not fool us either. The leopard has not changed its spots. In fact the orientation of the IAF to the unions and the ALP is even more dangerous than Santamaria's obsession with the cultural and educational front.

The campaign against the re-admittance of these unions is well under way inside the Victorian ALP.

For example:

● According to a report in the Sun newspaper on March 4 a General Meeting of the Victorian Socialist Left re-affirmed its complete opposition to

the re-admittance of the four unions and individuals, groups or other organisations which are connected with the NCC or IAF. It called on its members and the whole Party to unite and work to prevent the re-affiliations.

● Women members of the Party have set up a Women's Defence Committee to build a united and broad campaign against the re-admittance of the four unions (see accompanying article).

● On March 6 a meeting of members in the Batman Federal Electorate Assembly unanimously voted against the re-affiliations, instructing Conference delegates to vote the same way. It also voted to set up a broad committee to campaign against the re-admittance of these unions.

● A ten member committee is to be elected at State Conference on March 31-April 1 to investigate the application of these unions. If this committee does its work properly it is bound to lead to the Victorian ALP decisively rejecting the re-affiliation moves.

The feeling in the ranks runs high. There can be no compromise. Any compromise is a foot in the door. Any compromise means the beginning of a rampage against progressive forces inside the Party, in particular the Socialist Left in Victoria. Any compromise now will be the mere beginning of a greater push into the Party by

other right-wing forces.

The example of the iron-fisted right-wing control of the NSW Branch should be a warning to us all. There should be no compromise on the level of setting up a Federal body to look into the matter in Victoria.

This would be indirect Federal intervention. It would create a farcical situation in which the NCC in NSW would be investigating the NCC in Victoria.

The NCC and IAF have a stranglehold on the four unions. Any delegates from these unions would vote straight NCC. The tens of thousands of honest worker members of these unions would not get a peek into the ALP even if they were affiliated.

The following extract from a leaflet titled Fight the Right explains why it is not a sectarian manoeuvre to keep the four unions out:

"The media are trying to depict opposition to affiliation as a 'sectarian' move to 'keep out 100,000 workers'. The reality is that the workers wouldn't get a look in if these unions are affiliated with the ALP. The manipulation which has kept these unions right-wing and industrially ineffective will ensure that their delegates will always be unformally reactionary.

"What will be excluded — and should

Continued on page 6





victoria

## ALP women's meeting opposes affiliations

Approximately 120 women members of the Victorian Labor Party attended a meeting called by the Victorian ALP Status of Women Policy Committee to discuss the affiliation applications of the four NCC-controlled unions. There were 62 Party Branches represented.

**Leesa Wheelahan**

Member of Braybrook (Vic) ALP Branch

A number of women who are current members of the unions concerned (especially those covering clerks and shop assistants) spoke about the failures of these unions to represent their members. Others explained how these unions had consistently opposed progressive policies for women on such bodies as the ACTU Women's Committee.

A series of motions were passed unanimously at the end of the meeting, solidly opposing the affiliations. They called on the Status of Women Policy Committee to set up a broadly based Women's Defence Committee and to co-opt women who could conduct an effective publicity campaign inside the Party by disseminating information and organising regional meetings.

This body was also given the responsibility of preparing a submission on the issue to the State Conference sub-committee.

A motion was passed which called for a policy of affirmative action to

be used in electing the 10 person subcommittee which will look into the affiliation question.

A leaflet was distributed at the meeting, headlined "Why Women Should Oppose the Reaffiliation of the Four Unions." It was issued by the Status of Women Policy Committee and is one of the best pieces of material to come out of the campaign against the affiliations.

It starts off by explaining that the affiliation of the four unions concerned would "pose a real and serious threat to the status of women both in the party and Australian society." It goes on to say that "Progressive policies such as

affirmative action, childcare and the right to work, which have been fought for and won by women in the ALP, are threatened by the proposed affiliation of these unions."

After providing background to the NCC and the four unions concerned it explains how these unions have policies which are in direct opposition to the interests of women. The three areas that were highlighted were affirmative action, the right of women to work and the question of childcare.

A large number of women at the meeting put their names on the list for the Women's Defence Committee.

## WHY WOMEN SHOULD OPPOSE THE REAFFILIATION OF THE FOUR UNIONS

Current moves by the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), Federated Clerks Union (FCU), Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and Federated Ironworkers' Association to rejoin the ALP after 25 years' absence pose a real and serious threat to the status of women both in the party and in Australian society. It is indeed ironic that these moves by unions dominated by executives and officials controlled by the National Civic Council (NCC)

come as the federal parliament debates the ALP-initiated Sex Discrimination Bill, and the State parliament reconsiders the ALP's amendments to legislation on equal opportunity.

Progressive policies such as affirmative action, child care and the right to work, which have been fought for and won by women in the ALP, are threatened by the proposed affiliation of these unions.

## WHO THEY ARE

### Background to the NCC and the four unions

The NCC is a semi-secret organisation that has always worked through various front groups, the most well known of which is the now defunct DLP. After 25 years, it is once again engaged in an all-out attempt to neutralise any concern in the Labor Party about basic questions of economic justice or the key social issues of the day. High on the NCC hit list is the women's movement, which they attack by means of subversion and co-optation through their front groups and through operatives in the right-wing unions. Their tactics in the 1980s, as in the 1950s, are to stall reform programs of the federal and State Labor governments, such as legislation on sex discrimination or equal opportunity, and to destabilise the organisations that work for these reforms: women's groups, trade unions, and the Victorian branch of the Labor Party itself. Membership of the NCC is proscribed for ALP members.

The front groups that have been created expressly to undermine the gains of the women's movement of the past 10 years or so are the Women's Action Alliance (WAA), the Moderate Feminists and the Australian Family Association. NCC operatives are also dominant in the Fight to Life Association and Women Who Want to be Women (an extremist split-off from the WAA).

The major gains of women at the NCC movement are under direct attack, most particularly from the WAA, whose links with the ALP can be easily demonstrated. Anne Blandhorne (also known as Anne Black), president of the WAA, said in a report to the NCC Victorian State Conference in October 1978 that the setting up of a women's bureau in the SDA was the greatest step her organisation had taken in its constant effort to challenge women's social and liberalist interests within the union movement."

Cover of leaflet produced by Status of Women Policy Committee

victoria

## What is the National Civic Council?

The following extracts are taken from a leaflet against the affiliation of the NCC-dominated unions in Victoria titled "Labor's Past, Labor's Future"

"Since the 1950's the right-wing ideologues of the N.C.C. have attempted to gain a foothold, and then a stranglehold, in various unions and the A.L.P. The idea was to crush any hint of progressivism or socialism. The favoured technique for achieving this was witch-hunting individuals denounced as 'communists'. Today the N.C.C. prefers to speak of the 'trendy left', but the meaning is just the same — anyone concerned about basic questions of economic justice or with the key social issues of the day was to be neutralised. If this failed, the N.C.C. consoled itself by destabilising the organisations that played host to it. The crowning achievement of this white-ant strategy was the split within the Victorian A.L.P. and trade union movement in 1955.

"In the 1960's and early 1970's the image of the N.C.C. — which had always been a semi-clandestine organisation — tended to fade in the minds of labour movement activists, partly because they were preoccupied with the painstaking task of rebuilding the movement (a task which began to bear fruit politically in the early 1970's), and partly because the Groupers had shifted the focus of their activity to the D.L.P. The N.C.C. became an historical curiosity, wedded in people's minds to the Cold War and the Split.

"But even though it backed the wrong horse in the D.L.P., the N.C.C. remained an organisation which could not be treated lightly. In the late 1970's it had a tightly organised membership of around 800 in Victoria alone. More importantly it is able to draw on vast reserves of funds to finance its anti-labour activities. The financial resources of the Groupers are out of all proportion to their membership, and they have no other visible means of support. It has long been accepted that the organisation is a conduit for funds from groups inside and outside Australia who share the N.C.C.'s objectives and who are stimulated to generosity by its impeccable anti-labour credentials.

"The N.C.C. has been a proscribed organisation federally in the A.L.P. since the mid-1960's. The Groupers' record of anti-labour activity, both in the unions and in the A.L.P., has continued to the present day. The continuing and well-documented interference of the N.C.C. in both white- and blue-collar unions led the Victorian A.L.P., to reaffirm its proscription in 1983 as well as extending it to N.C.C. splinter-groups like the Industrial Research Organisation and the Industrial Action Fund.

"Just how much of a threat is the N.C.C.? Some indication was given by the former N.C.C. Secretary Gerald Mercer on ABC Radio's A.M. on 26 May 1983. First, the N.C.C. has a full-time staff of 30 (others have put this figure at 60-70).

"These line staff are in continuous contact with about 210 operatives or 'associates' working as full-time officials in trade unions. Second, Mercer — the N.C.C. secretary — admitted that \$100,000 had been spent on the A.M.F.S.U. national elections in 1983. (In the recent ballot for A.M.F.S.U. national organiser the N.C.C. spent \$250,000. Their candidate won.) These massive sums are, according to Mercer, raised separately from the N.C.C.'s ordinary operating budget which in excess of a million dollars a year" (others have suggested this is closer to \$400,000).

"These enormous financial and personnel resources are aimed not just at 'communists' in the unions but at labour



B.A. Santamaría

trade unionists as well. Principal N.C.C. mouth-piece B.A. Santamaría explained at an N.C.C. national seminar at the Melbourne Car-o-Tel on 17-18 March 1979: 'we're now in the situation where the problem is one of unionism itself, not just communist unionism'.

"In the sixties and seventies when the work of rebuilding a divided labour movement was being done, N.C.C. frontmen like John Maynes of the Federated Clerks Union (and until recently number two in the N.C.C. hierarchy) were more interested in affiliating with U.S. sponsored 'international' unions than with the A.L.P. What good this did any Labor government — let alone the F.C.U. rank and file — is not clear, however it did seem to ingratiate him with U.S. security and corporate interests and enabled him to become one of the widest-ranging expense account travellers in Australia.

"The N.C.C. has for twenty-five years striven relentlessly to defeat Labor governments and A.L.P. trade unionists. There is little doubt that without the active support of a number of Labor Party members the N.C.C. would become increasingly irrelevant. It would lose influence in the trade unions and the A.L.P. The most effective course of action in destroying the influence of the N.C.C. in the labour movement, both industrially and politically, would be complete isolation of the N.C.C. and its various fronts and splinter groups by all sectors of the trade union movement and the A.L.P."



editorial

## NSW elections

# Warning signals for Labor

Labor was returned to power in NSW at the elections of March 24 against an average swing of 5.9 per cent. This will cut Labor's record 39-seat majority to about 17.

The most important thing to note is that the overall vote was only 0.5 per cent below Labor's vote in NSW at the Federal elections one year earlier. In this sense it is a return to something more like normal after the last State elections when the Liberals were in total disarray. Most of the swing votes in this election went back to the Liberals.

The swing was very uneven. In some safe Labor seats it was 10 to 14 per cent. Seats in Sydney suburbs like Manly, Burwood and Hurstville swung to the Liberals. Yet in some seats the swing was minimal and in Bathurst there was a swing to Labor.

One reason for such mixed results was the fact that 11 Labor members did not seek re-election. The country seats of two former ministers were lost and a lot of new candidates did not achieve the earlier results of their better known predecessors. In some of these seats the swing against Labor was similar to that registered in by-elections in 1983 when two other ministers resigned.

The redistribution of electorate boundaries that took place before the last elections also made it difficult to predict the exact outcome in some of the seats in this election when the Liberals were more of a force.

However, some of the results do have clear, and serious implications for Labor in NSW.

The loss of the Wollongong seat to Frank Arkell (the mayor of the "steel city" who stood as an Independent) is a big defeat. This probably indicates that steelworkers (both employed and unemployed) had little confidence in Labor after the failure of the Wran Government to take effective action to prevent thousands of job losses in 1982 and 1983.

Another indicative result was the defeat of the leading NSW representative of the new Centre Left faction, Ryan Ryan's seat, Hurstville, in both working class and middle class suburbs. As a former first-grade footballer but this did not prevent a strong swing against him.

Most commentators believe the corruption scandals influenced voters in the marginal Sydney electorates more than in other areas.

But there was also a big swing against Labor in some of the safest Labor seats, like that of Deputy Premier Ron Mulock in Sydney's western suburbs. Here traditional Labor supporters decided to give the Government a "kick in the pants" (to borrow an expression from Neville Wran).

The corruption scandals were undoubtedly a factor here as well. It is commonly accepted in NSW that corruption was just as rampant under the Liberal-Country Party Governments of 1965 to 1976 and that organised crime as well as the police force and the judiciary as well as the Government structures.

But many Labor supporters expected the Wran Government to do something about this and they have been disillusioned to discover that members of the Labor Government and the Party apparatus are handing out special favours to friends and associates and trying to subvert the normal course of the justice system.

Of course the big business press, particularly that section controlled by the Fairfax empire, has used the corruption scandals to undermine Labor. But they are able to do this because figures associated with Labor are creating the scandals that can be used in this way.

However, corruption scandals have not been the sole cause of the waning enthusiasm for Labor in working class areas.

A more important factor has been the continuing high level of unemployment. After eight years of the Wran Government, NSW now "boasts" the highest unemployment rate of the mainland States.

Steelworkers are not the only ones to have lost confidence in Labor because of the Government's failure to defend jobs. Thousands of jobs have also been lost in the metal industry and in the mines. The Government itself has threatened sackings in the railways and other public sectors.

In his policy speech on March 13 Wran announced that \$10 million would be set aside for concessions on payroll tax for employers who take on new workers under the age of 21. But this is almost identical to a scheme the Fraser Government tried. It failed to stem the growth of unemployment and simply provided some of the wealthier companies with a further handout.

The other major "employment-creation" scheme Wran announced in the election platform was the offer of a tax rebate for those residents of NSW who spend their holidays in NSW. But, in reality, this money will go to those who are wealthy enough to spend a minimum of ten days in hotels and motels. It will also boost profits for the hotel and motel owners but it may do nothing for the fight against unemployment.

The platform was most notable for its lack of ideas and substantial proposals. It was hardly the stuff for building enthusiasm in the campaign.

Much of it was pure gimmickry. The promise to give pensioners two free rides a year on the XPT trains was presented as a highlight. The freeze on electricity charges was an attempt to make a virtue out of a necessity, given the electricity it produces are unable to sell all the electricity it produces at present.

Working class people are sick of putting up with overcrowded hospitals and schools and unreliable public transport. They remember the times when Wran and his cops intimidated striking oil workers.

Even though Liberal leader Nick Greiner promised that a Government led by his Party would step up the attacks on the trade unions, many working class people used the elections to register a protest vote against the anti-working class policies of the Wran Government.

Fortunately Labor was returned but the warning signals are there. Any further erosion of working class support will put both the Wran Government and the Hawke Federal Government in danger.

Many Labor supporters will conclude that it was inevitable that Labor would lose its record majority. But why was that inevitable? If Labor really governed in the interest should be able to rely on a large and consistent majority.

The election results should serve as a warning to those who believe that the populist image of a Wran or a Hawke is enough to keep Labor in power. They should also serve as a warning to those in the NSW Steering Committee faction who have defended the Wran Government as a model of co-operation between Left and Right factions.

Rather than doing deals to get a few token faces in the Wran Cabinet, the Left in NSW should be promoting policies that can generate enthusiasm in the working class. It should be promoting socialist policies.

Debates

## Economic strategy debate

In preparation for the National Conference of the Party later this year, the search for an alternative economic strategy is going on within the Left. Economic analyses are being prepared, lists of proposals to be achieved in the short, medium and long term are under discussion.

These discussions are badly needed. The Hawke Government, during its first year in office, has demonstrated very clearly that its economic policies are merely an extension of those carried out by the Fraser Government. The election promise to reduce unemployment has been suspended and the unemployed are being told to wait profitably has been restored. The Government's policies have been formulated with profit protection as the number one priority.

**Pat Brewer**  
Member of Forest Lodge (NSW) ALP Branch and AMFSU

Under the rhetoric of consensus and sharing the burden of the economic crisis, the burden has been laid fair and square on the backs of the working class. Reduced wages, cuts in the public sector, increases in the direct tax burden on the wage earner and the hike in indirect taxes in both the Mini-Budget and the Budget provide a grim list for a Labor Government.

At the same time the Government has been providing massive handouts to large corporations. The multi-million dollar handout to BHP after 12,000 jobs were lost in 1982/83 is a classic example. Within 6 months BHP announced, at the beginning of February this year, a half-year profit of December 1983 for its steelmaking division of \$38.1 million — an increase of 90 per cent. BHP is now introducing new labour-saving technology in its restructuring of the Port Kembla plant which will result in further job losses.

Generous handouts, incentives and tax benefit schemes for the capitalists have been the hallmark of the Hawke/Keating economic strategy. Wealth taxes, capital gains tax, nationalisation of industries carrying out massive job shedding are anathema to them despite their talk of "equity of sacrifice."

While there has been some easing of the more dramatic effects of the international economic crisis on the Australian economy, no-one is seriously claiming that the crisis has been resolved.

The Hawke Government's control over the ACTU leadership through the Accord, has allowed the full benefits of Fraser's wage freeze to flow through to the bosses. The vast majority of unions accepted the 9-10 per cent wage cut resulting from the freeze as permanent when they agreed to the terms laid down by the Arbitration Commission at the National Wage Case of October 1983. They also signed away their right to strike for another two years and dropped claims for the 35-hour week.

The Government's ability to control the unions and its willingness to implement pro-business policies, even where they contradict the Party platform, have ensured that the benefits of the recovery flow to the bosses. This has restored business confidence to a degree. But it has not turned back inflation nor reduced unemployment. By the Government's own estimates these problems will continue to increase in the longer term. This is why Hawke is pleading with the industrialists to re-invest their profits to prevent the recovery slowing down.

So it is more than timely for the Left to embark on discussion of an alternative economic strategy.

The economic problems today can't be solved just by a change in government. It's not just the mismanagement of this or that particular policy by government or any particular phase of the system itself. The problems are those of the system itself. They are inherent in the capitalist system internationally and in Australia.

Labor Militant, April 1984

This is no short-term crisis. The continuing rise in "structural unemployment" and the inability of governments around the world to do anything about inflation demonstrate its depth. Comparisons with the Great Depression of the 1930s are not out of order although the exact sequence of events may be quite different. This economic crisis is exacerbated by a political crisis for Imperialism.

So the problems of the crisis can only be resolved by addressing its cause, by changing the type of economic system from one based on production for profit to one based on production for social need.

The Left has to develop such an alternative socialist economic strategy. To do so we need to be clear on both what needs to be done and how to carry it out.

It is impossible in one short article to lay out a full program of economic demands and formulate a strategy for promoting them. But what can be stated is that such a strategy must be based on social needs. An attempt to begin formulating such a strategy has been made in the Manifesto of Social Rights that has been made in the Manifesto last August. The major demands from the Manifesto are included as a separate box to avoid repetition. In some details they already need updating but they still provide the basis of an alternative strategy for the Left.

But to develop a program is only part of an alternative strategy. How to implement the program is an even more critical problem.

Traditionally the Left has confined itself to developing policy demands to be implemented by an ALP government. Obviously it is important to put pressure on the Government to carry out progressive aspects of Party platform, but it is even more important to play a direct role in mobilising the ranks of the labour movement in support of a socialist program.

Reliance on government contains an essential weakness. If the program is not constructed as a program of action by the working class, in which working people themselves act to change their social, economic and political conditions, then the working class will not be mobilised to defend itself against the attacks that inevitably come along as the capitalist class moves to defend its interests. The Allende Government's failure to mobilise the working class of Chile led to the vulnerability of that Government and its eventual overthrow.

Any alternative economic strategy for the Party must also be an alternative political strategy which seeks to draw working people into political action.

Action by the working class and action by Government are not counterposed. In fact any viable socialist movement will need to build a program that combines proposals for action by the government, with demands that answer the day-to-day needs of the working class. In such a way the movement develops a popular base.

An Australian socialist movement will need to mobilise a social force capable of countering the enormous power of giant corporations like BHP.

A socialist government in Australia will have to rely on, and evolve out of, a politicised and involved population. This situation cannot be reached if socialists restrict themselves to preaching to the working class about the desirability of certain paths of governmental action. As long as they do that most workers will remain passive. Political changes will be theirs but simply the achievements of a "better Government" acting on their behalf.

By being involved in a political fight on a day-to-day basis the working class can break through the ideological barriers which currently prevent it from taking up socialist solutions.

It is for this reason that any socialist strategy must reject

Continued on page 10



Continued from page 9

the Accord. Not only has the Accord effectively cut wages and eroded conditions and living standards, it has also prevented independent action by the working class. The trade unions have signed away their most important defensive and offensive weapon — strike action.

By its very nature the Accord is a barrier to the development of a socialist movement in Australia. It heads the labour movement in exactly the wrong direction. It portrays

## From the Manifesto of Social Rights

### • The right to work

Everyone who wants to work must be guaranteed a job. No level of unemployment is acceptable, certainly not the present 10 per cent.

New jobs can be created by a large-scale program of socially useful works and by a universal 35-hour working week without loss of pay. But much more than these helpful measures are needed for long-term solutions.

Where retrenchments are forced on the workers, retrenchment pay should be according to the model proposed by the ACTU.

### • The right to a living wage

An immediate end to the wage freeze. Introduction of automatic quarterly wage indexation, based on the movement of the consumer price index (CPI).

Full catch-up of wages to cover CPI increases not paid over the last twelve months. Yearly wage adjustments to meet productivity increases.

Indexation can at best only restore wages eroded by inflation. Therefore it should not be a part of a "trade-off" restricting the right to seek increased real wages.

### • The right to decent housing

A program of public housing construction for both purchase and rental. Control over, and restriction of, mortgage interest rates to a level no more than that needed to service such loans. Rents limited to no more than 20 per cent of income of the main wage-earner in any household.

### • The right to adequate social services

Pensions and unemployment benefits to be set at no lower than one third of average weekly male earnings, without a means test, and to be increased in accordance with CPI increases.

### • The right to universal health care

All medical services should be covered. The insurance companies, vocal money-hungry doctors and reactionary politicians should not be allowed to restrict the scope of Medicare or prevent its introduction. Administration of the scheme to be vested in an appropriate government agency.

### • The right to education

Government priority support for the public education system, with special assistance to meet the needs of migrants and Aborigines. The immediate employment of all unemployed teachers in order to reduce class sizes.

### • The right to equality

No discrimination in employment, wages, housing, or any social need because of sex, marital status, race or nationality. Support for Aboriginal land rights and for implementation of the ACTU Working Women's Charter.

### • The right to fair taxation

Taxes should be levied on profits of private enterprise

social change as something that comes as a result of deals worked out over our heads. It is an instrument of demobilisation and its ultimate result will be the demoralisation of the working class as it loses confidence the organisations of the labour movement — the trade unions and the Labor Party.

Any alternative economic strategy must take this into account. It must clearly reject the Accord and all such deals "from above." In their place it must build a political strategy that seeks to draw the working class into action in constructing a socialist future for Australia.

and on personal incomes in accordance with the ability to pay, using a steeply graduated progressive scale which reduces taxes on lower-paid wage and salary earners. Introduction of a capital gains tax (exempting occupied houses) and opposition to new or increased indirect taxes that place the burden on working people.

### • The right to live in peace

Humanity's survival depends on the prevention of nuclear war.

The labour movement must oppose every step towards war and maintain good relations with all countries, support every initiative for a peaceful settlement of disputes between nations, pursue a policy of negotiations not confrontation.

The US bases should go. They make nuclear war more likely, and ensure that Australia will be directly involved if nuclear war occurs.

### • The right to organise

Repeal of all anti-union laws. Maintenance of the union shop. Abolition of anti-worker police bodies like ASIO and the State Special Branches.

### • The right to democratic control of the economy

Private ownership by individual Australian and foreign companies means that the working people have no say in running the economy. Employers hire and fire, decide prices, production levels, even whether production is to occur at all. Even elected governments do not have effective control of the economy.

The 1981 ACTU Congress said:

"The urgency of introducing economic planning in Australia increases as structural problems emerge and unemployment continues. The ACTU strongly supports a medium term national economic plan which should incorporate the objectives of society and be the mechanism for co-ordinating all branches of economic policy."

An economic plan, however, is meaningless unless it can be carried out. Control of economic power must be taken out of the hands of a tiny minority through the nationalisation of monopolies and the largest companies.

The capitalists have no "right" to the ownership of these enterprises, which were created by the labour of working people. They should be taken over without compensation and operated under control of the workers. Nationalised companies should be run in the interests of the people as a whole and any profits made, used to satisfy social needs.

Similarly, banks and financial institutions should be nationalised and strict controls introduced over all credit facilities and movements of capital into and out of the country. This will ensure that credit facilities benefit all Australians, not just the wealthy few. It will then be possible, for example, to provide low-interest loans to home buyers, small farmers and small businesses

## queensland

# A 'critical appraisal' of Accord

Approximately 160 women from all over Queensland attended the biennial Labor Women's Conference held over the weekend of March 17 and 18.

A range of foreign policy motions were passed expressing opposition to all foreign bases on Australian soil; all visits to Australian ports by nuclear-powered and armed ships and aircraft and overflights of B52's; and calling on the Federal Government to immediately make known the general purpose and functions of the U.S. installations in Australia.

The Conference also recognised that being aligned with the U.S. not only makes Australia a possible nuclear

### Helen Russell

Member Banyo/Northgate East (Qld) ALP Branch

target, but also implicates Australia in the current war against national liberation struggles in Nicaragua and El Salvador. It called on the Federal Government to withdraw Australia from all military pacts, particularly the ANZUS treaty.

Conference endorsed the motion passed at the National Labor Women's Conference in January, which called on the Federal Government to recognise the FDR/FMLN of El Salvador as the legitimate opposition to the repressive government there, and called on the Federal Government to strongly oppose the deployment of U.S. combat forces in the region.

Conference also called on the Government to cease its military aid (Defence Co-operation) to the Governments of the Philippines and Indonesia in light of the military harassment of civilians in the Philippines and the arbitrary shooting of suspected criminals in Indonesia, together with the continued military occupation of East Timor. Another motion urged the Federal Government to oppose the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe by the U.S.

Conference affirmed decisions taken at the National Labor Women's Conference in opposition to uranium and expressed strong support for the campaign to end uranium mining. This stance was opposed by right wing forces at the Conference who defended the Federal Caucus decision to allow new contracts for uranium mining at Roxby Downs and in the Northern Territory. An attempt was made to muzzle criticism of the Caucus decision by seeking to stop any comments to the press on the issue.

While the Conference did not really come to grips with Hawke's economic policies, a motion was carried on the Prices and Incomes Accord recognising that:

"(a) Profits are recovering at the expense of wages and living standards. Wages are being rigidly controlled but not prices, profits or government charges;

"(b) The Prices and Incomes Accord takes away our right to strike as a means to defend our hard won gains in living standards. It has been through strike that our most important struggles have been won;

"(c) The social reforms promised in exchange for the loss of the right to strike, aside from Medicare, have not been forthcoming;

"(d) Prime Minister Hawke, on his recent trip to Japan, said that rather than 'be moved by perceptions of their own self interest', we should be concerned 'not merely for today's jobs but already given up the right to strike and suffered a loss in real wages, now we

are being asked for even more;

"(e) The Accord was hailed as a step forward for women. However, the strongest piece of legislation in the Sex Discrimination Bill on the affirmative action in employment has been deferred for at least two years, despite the fact that it is now, at a time of mass sackings, that women need such legislation.

"We therefore conclude that it is timely for Labor Women to make a critical appraisal of the Accord. To this end, Labor Women should organise a one day seminar in the near future to give rank and file members of the Party the opportunity to analyse the implications of the Accord."

This move to open up debate on the framework of the Hawke Government's domestic policies is a big step forward for Party members in Queensland.

Outgoing Secretary Margaret Hardy stood for the position of President and was elected unopposed. Lyn Taylor, a research officer for the Federated Clerks Union was elected to the position of secretary.

## March on April 15

This year's large anti-nuclear demonstrations will be held in most centres on April 15. The slogans focus on such things as opposition to U.S. bases and uranium mining. Many solidarity organisations will be organising contingents to focus on particular struggles. Undoubtedly the themes of Central America and the Middle East will be prominent

### Adelaide

2pm, Victoria Square

### Brisbane

11am, Roma St Forum. March to Albert Park Sound Shell

### Canberra

2pm, Russell Hill Australian-American War Memorial

### Melbourne

Marches to converge at the corner of Bourke and Swanston Sts. Marches begin at 1pm

### Perth

1pm Kings Park main entrance. March to Supreme Court Gardens

### Sydney

1pm Hyde Park South. March to Domain



## National Conference '84

Implications for bases, ANZUS and disarmament

# The uranium debate

This article is the second in a series leading up to the July ALP National Conference. Each part of the series examines a major policy area to be debated at Conference.

Since 1979 Bob Hawke has been leading a determined campaign to overthrow anti-uranium policies in both wings of the labour movement.

He began with a frontal assault on the ACTU policy at its 1979 Congress in Melbourne. And, although he failed, narrowly, to win the vote, he won the hearts of the pro-mining lobby with an impassioned plea for "pragmatic policies."

The 1979 defeat convinced Hawke that he needed to prepare his next assault more carefully and he did just that. In the lead-up to the 1982 ALP National Conference, he succeeded in prising Victorian State Secretary Bob Hogg out of the Socialist Left faction and convinced him to present policy amendments that would incorporate giant loopholes in the existing policy.

### Martin Tuck

Member Livingstone (NSW) ALP Branch

After intensive lobbying and a fierce and emotional debate on the Conference floor Hogg's amendments were adopted by a narrow margin of 53 to 46. Hogg was subsequently rewarded with a position on Hawke's staff of advisers.

Obviously aimed at securing a phasing out of uranium mining, Hogg's amendments were ambiguous. They would allow uranium mining to continue for an indefinite period. But still Hawke was not satisfied, and, when he became Prime Minister, he planned further changes to the policy.

One of the first things Hawke did as prime minister was to ram through the policy of "Cabinet solidarity" to secure a solid block of votes in Caucus. Eventually the Left's only Cabinet minister, Stewart West, was forced to resign from Cabinet because he was not prepared to vote for Cabinet's pro-uranium proposal to Caucus. But by then Hawke had secured the numbers by other means.

### Caucus vote

In the end it was a dismal collapse by the Left in the South Australian Branch of the Party on the uranium issue that secured the numbers for Hawke in Caucus. The South Australian Left accepted the assertion that Labor could not hold government in that State unless Roxby Downs was given the go-ahead.

The leaders of the Left in the South Australian Branch did nothing to counter the pro-Roxby Downs propaganda about the importance of this project for employment in the State. And when they failed to exert pressure on South Australia's Federal Labor parliamentarians to defend Party policy, Hawke was able to secure his narrow majority in Caucus.

On October 25 public announcement by the South Australian Left leader Peter Duncan that he was no longer opposed to a change in the policy signalled the certain victory for Hawke in the November 7 Caucus vote last year.

The Caucus vote to allow Roxby Downs to proceed and to allow new contracts for the Ranger mine in the Northern Territory was certainly a victory for Hawke's faction. But the close vote (55 to 46) indicates the depth of opposition to these policy changes.

The 35 votes of the Caucus Left faction were augmented by votes of Queensland and Western Australian parliamentarians who normally vote with the Right.

After the Caucus vote a meeting of the ALP State Council

in Queensland rejected an explanation of the Government's position by Bill Hayden and voted for a resolution calling for a moratorium on uranium mining until after this year's National Conference. Ed Casey, a right-winger who was formerly Labor's State parliamentary leader in Queensland, moved an amendment expressing total opposition to all uranium mining in Queensland.

Hawke came under fire in his own electorate of Willis where the Federal Electorate Assembly voted by a massive 150 to 3 to condemn the sell-out of the uranium policy.

And the Victorian Branch held a special State Conference on November 27 which adopted motions condemning "in the strongest terms possible" the Victorian members of Federal Caucus who voted for the pro-uranium policy. The motion reaffirmed the Branch's total opposition to the mining and export of uranium.

Support for the existing anti-uranium policies of the ALP and ACTU cuts across normal Left-Right faction lines. Hawke's supporters in the unions have been unable to defeat the ACTU's formal policy and the reaction to the Caucus vote indicated that Hawke still has his work cut out if he is to secure the passage of a pro-uranium policy at the July ALP National Conference.

There are two major factors that explain the strength of the anti-uranium sentiment and both need to be taken into account by the Left in preparing for the Conference debate.

Firstly, a lot of effective work has been done over the past decade by a broad range of anti-uranium groups to educate the labour movement and the community at large about the unresolved dangers of the nuclear power industry.

Secondly, anti-uranium sentiment has been given a new impetus by the rapid growth of the disarmament movement and the identification of uranium mining with the danger of nuclear war.

The massive peace marches that have now become annual events attract a very wide range of participants. And these protests are making the link between the demands for no uranium mining and for the removal of the U.S. bases.



Three Mile Island: Site of 1979 nuclear accident, dangers remain unresolved

The case against uranium mining is powerful in its own right. But it can be made more powerful by linking this issue with the general theme of disarmament.

At the Conference Hawke's supporters will undoubtedly point to Labor's disastrous performance in the Northern Territory elections last year to bolster their claim that an anti-uranium policy is a vote loser.

But they would be hard-pressed to prove that point on a national basis.

When it came to blocking the construction of the Franklin Dam in Tasmania the Hawke government was willing to override local opposition because it had strong support for this policy on a national basis. It could easily develop similar support for an end to uranium mining.

Furthermore, a Labor Government should be able to overcome localised support for uranium mining by promoting policies that would create alternative employment.

Hawke is on shaky ground in arguing that a pro-uranium mining policy has popular support. So in this case his "pragmatism" boils down to the argument that Labor cannot afford to oppose the interests of a substantial lobby within the capitalist class. But on those grounds it can achieve no worthwhile reforms at all.

The pro-uranium stance of the Hawke government reveals how Hawke's "consensus" really works — the labour movement is expected to abandon its positions to placate the bosses.

How should the Left argue the anti-uranium case at the National Conference?

Obviously, it can point to the fact that problems associated with the nuclear power industry, like the disposal of nuclear wastes, and the dangers of radiation leaks and plutonium contamination, have not been solved and are not likely to be solved in the foreseeable future.

The Left can point out that no safeguard exists that could guarantee Australian uranium will not be used in the construction of nuclear weapons. The Australian government is in a position to make a stand against the proliferation of nuclear weapons by cutting off all Australian supplies of the basic ingredient.

It can then extend this line of argument by pointing to other ways in which the Australian Government contributes to the growing threat of nuclear war by hosting the U.S. bases, by supporting President Reagan's war-mongering foreign policy, and by maintaining the military alliance with the U.S. imperialists, i.e. ANZUS.

### 1982 Conference

The Left could counter the Hawke government's pro-war policies by developing a consistent anti-war stance which has the potential to attract massive public support in view of the popularity of the disarmament movement.

The Left of the British Labour Party developed a lot of its strength in recent years by focusing on disarmament issues. It succeeded in winning a substantial majority for policies that attempt to commit a future Labour Government to demanding the removal of all U.S. nuclear missiles. And the Party is officially in favour of Britain's unilateral nuclear disarmament.

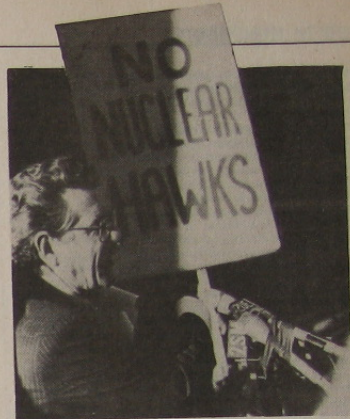
There is no reason why the ALP Left could not achieve similar success with a disarmament theme.

At the 1982 National Conference the Left failed to develop a disarmament theme. It fought the uranium issue in isolation and put up half-hearted efforts on the bases and ANZUS.

A motion on the bases simply sought to prevent "new foreign military bases or facilities" and called for a refusal to extend the leases on the existing bases. But the motion was lost on the voices after a lacklustre debate.

Even less effort was put into an attempt to delete the platform point supporting Australia's participation in ANZUS and this motion lost by 31 to 58.

Behind these lacklustre performances is the conviction Labor Militant, April 1984



that most Australians support the U.S. alliance and view it as essential for the defence of the country. But this alliance has nothing to do with the defence of Australia.

The Pine Gap base near Alice Springs is controlled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and carries out a number of important intelligence gathering functions. It can intercept Soviet and Chinese military communications, radar transmissions, and telephonic and radio transmissions. It can provide extensive information on Soviet early-warning systems and air defence networks. And it enables CIA agents in a number of countries to communicate with CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. It is vital to the CIA's worldwide intelligence network.

Nurrungar in South Australia is one of only two ground stations for the U.S. satellite early warning system and it enables communications between the North American Air Defense Command and the Strategic Air Command.

North West Cape is the most important tracking station in the world for the huge U.S. nuclear submarine fleet in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. High frequency transmissions from this base were used to direct the mining of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports in 1972. It was placed on Red Alert in 1973 at a time of war between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The Trane-Smithfield station in South Australia is a ground tracking station also used for communications with the submarine fleet. It can also help pinpoint nuclear targets in the Soviet Union.

Omega in Victoria sends out low frequency signals used in navigation by submarines and the surface fleet.

Clearly these bases help the U.S. in its aggressive stance towards the Soviet Union and form important components of a worldwide military network that is used to defend the interests of U.S. imperialism. They do not increase Australia's military security; if anything they create potential nuclear targets in this country.

### Role of ANZUS

Similarly, ANZUS is an aggressive military alliance. Since it was signed in 1951 it has never been invoked to counter a threat to any of the three allies, but it has been invoked to draw Australian and New Zealand troops into the U.S. wars in Korea and Vietnam.

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## party machinery

On these two pages we present a guide for finding your way around the labyrinth which is the ALP in NSW. We hope this will help to clarify some of the things you can and can't do in the ALP.

One look at the diagram is enough to convince anyone that the ALP in NSW is a jungle. It is bureaucratic and it is difficult for rank and file members to get things done. Furthermore, even if you manage to influence policy adopted at Conference or Council, supposedly the highest policy-making bodies, there is absolutely no guarantee that Labor Governments will take any notice.

Labor Militant is in favour of a thorough shakeup of the structures of the Party and unions so that rank and file members can have an effective say. But that is not going to happen without a long struggle, so in the meantime it is important for all activists in the Party to know how to manipulate the structures as best they can. Obviously it is fundamentally important to mobilise support for progressive policies. But unless you know how to advance those policies beyond your local Branch they will remain like a car without an engine.

In future issues we hope to carry similar information on other State Branches. This will obviously be useful to members of those Branches. It will also be interesting to compare the structures. Some things are done better in some Branches than in others and knowledge of this can help in the campaign for more democratic structures.

The information we present is accurate to our knowledge. If, however, readers can shed further light on this subject we would be pleased to hear from them.

### Janet Burstall

Member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP Branch, Municipal Employees Union

Large ALP and affiliated union contingents at demonstrations; ALP Branches and MPs acting in solidarity with unions in dispute; joint action between ALP Branches and community groups, are not common in the NSW ALP. Sitting through meetings that send resolutions and delegates to higher bodies with no apparent effect is, unfortunately, very common.

The latter is not very inspiring if you don't see yourself climbing a ladder to a well paid, influential position. The former would represent a great strengthening of rank and file socialism in the labour movement. But it wouldn't be possible without more widespread socialist consciousness, and this is a political as well as organisational problem.

In the meantime, to promote socialist perspectives in the ALP, we have to use the traditional, uninspiring methods of motions and elections. But if we want to reach the rank and file, and win them to action, we have to be more imaginative than that. We can and should incorporate into our motions, proposals for activity to back up the policy. Such activities include financial donations, distributing publicity, inviting speakers, marching in demonstrations, affiliating to campaigns and committees.

The rules of the NSW ALP explain much of what can be done if you can plough through the legalese. The male pronouns aren't encouraging to women, but we are entitled to participate. The rules are available to Party members from Head Office. Amendments are made at almost every Annual Conference, so you'll need to update.

Also provided to you by Head Office should be The Radical, the official internal publication of the NSW ALP. It's mostly dull, but you can pick up useful things like, supplements amending the rules, lists of names and addresses of secretaries of Electorate Councils, facts about MPs, self-incriminating statements from various top dogs. As Head

## NSW Branch

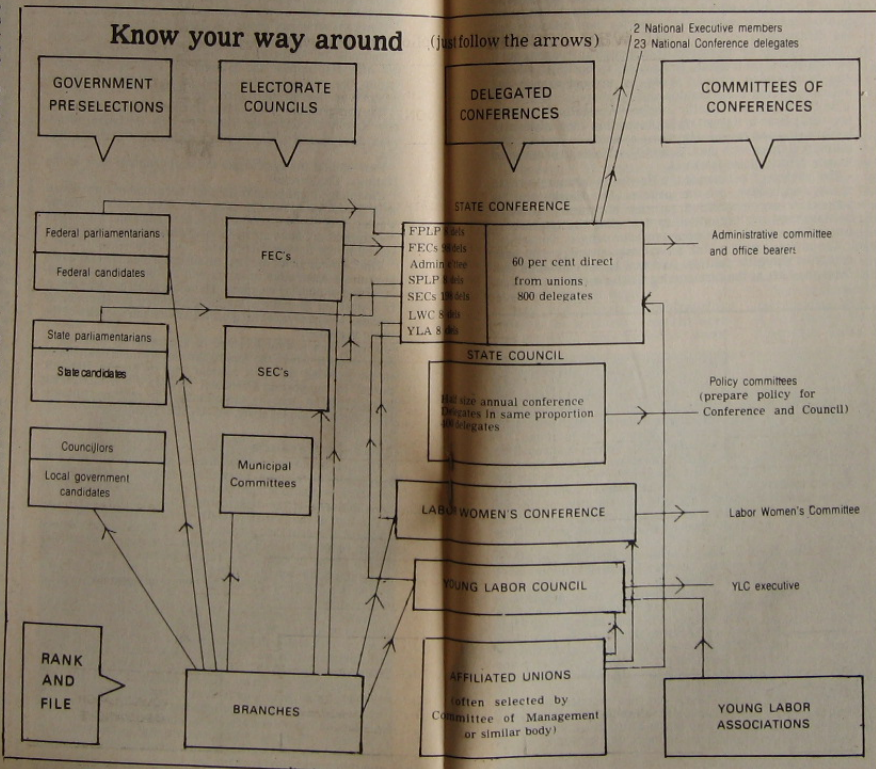
# Activist's guide to the ALP

Office seems to distribute The Radical randomly to members, you may need to inquire about your subscription, which is part of your membership fee.

The organised rank and file of the NSW Branch is in 3 main groups: 1) Branch members; 2) Young Labor Association members 3) members of affiliated unions. It is now

possible to be a member of the NSW ALP without being a member of a Branch, since membership records were centralised at Head Office last year.

Your opportunities for activism in the ALP will be shaped partly by which of these areas you are active in. They will also of course be affected by the regime in your Branch, un-



ion or YLA. The right to organise is quite restricted in some areas. In both affiliated unions and YLAs, only full members of the ALP may become delegates to higher ALP bodies.

Policy motions may be referred from any of the rank and file bodies, to State Conference or Labor Women's Conference. Matters that are not dealt with at State Conferences are referred to State Councils that meet twice a year (after the first and third quarters of the year). The closing date for agenda items is usually well in advance of the Conference dates, so make sure you are aware of that. You can propose that any motion be referred to Conference, so remind your secretary.

Motions from Branches and union bodies are usually referred to the relevant policy committees which present reports to Conferences and Councils. It is a good idea to find out who are the members of the relevant policy committees so they can be lobbied.

The same principles apply with regard to the National Conference which is held once every two years. Again policy motions can be referred to relevant policy committees.

Motions that are adopted at Branches are often referred to Federal or State Electorate Councils. If they get past these bodies they have acquired more weight. It is also a good idea to send copies of motions to the relevant State and Federal Labor ministers and to the Premier and Prime Minister if they concern major issues. At least this makes these people figure out some kind of reply to the Branch.

Some specific points concerning different areas of opportunity for action:

1) **Branches.** As a Branch member of some months standing, you are eligible to stand for election to the Branch executive, or any of the delegated bodies shown on the diagram. The requirement for length of membership increases with the status of the position you seek. When you stand for any position, including preselection for public office, you are entitled to a list of the Party members eligible to vote. It is not possible to bind delegates' votes, and there are no provisions for removal of office bearers and delegates on grounds of the members having no confidence. However, it is possible to remind position holders that they have to face election some time.

Party membership entitles you to visit any Branch, and, with permission of that branch, to speak at its meeting.

2) **Rank and file preselections.** MPs and local government councillors, strictly speaking, have to face preselection prior to each general election, although Head Office has a habit of devising schemes for some MPs to avoid this. Preselection in the NSW ALP for lower house and local government positions is by ballot of Branch members in the area.

3) **Young Labor Associations.** Where no YLA exists, 3 members of the ALP can initiate one by applying to the YLC Executive. YLAs are usually based on Federal Electorates. Only YLA members who are full members of the ALP may become Young Labor delegates. But people under 25 may join the YLA in their area without joining the ALP. Because of the lack of young people in most ALP Branches it is not hard to become a delegate to Young Labor Councils. Just ask.

4) **Labor Women.** As with Young Labor, it is unusual to find a queue of women in any Branch eligible or willing to become delegates to Labor Women's Conferences. It is extremely valuable to attend these conferences. For a number of years they have been the best forum in NSW for discussion of key policy matters. Once you become a delegate to the Conference you can attend Labor Women's Committee meetings.

5) **Electorate Councils.** These bodies are made up of delegates from all the Branches in their areas, and usually

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## Activist's guide

Continued from page 15

meet monthly or bimonthly. Often the more active members of branches are Electorate Council delegates, so by being a delegate you can make contact with other activists in your local area. Electorate Councils will sometimes recommend activities to their constituent Branches. You can place items on the agenda of an FEC or SEC by having them referred from your own Branch.

6) **Affiliated unions.** The channel from affiliated unions to ALP Conferences is usually extremely difficult to find. In most cases union executives or State Councils simply appoint their delegates to Conference and Council, so rank and file members do not get a look in. Most unions then impose discipline on their delegations so the delegates normally have to vote with the officials no matter what they might think. In most cases unions of the Right and "Left" simply fill their delegations with hand-raisers.

It is also extremely rare for union officials to organise discussion in the ranks about ALP policy, before or after Conferences. As a result there is little knowledge of, or interest in, what the union delegations do on behalf of the members.

Most officials tell their members that politics is not the concern of the unions. And then they vote at a State Conference on behalf of the union membership. This abysmal lack of accountability needs to be challenged. As an ALP member you are entitled to attend State Conference as an observer. If you are able to find out how your union delegates have voted, it may be useful to share this information with your fellow union members.

You could even try nominating to be a delegate from your union to State Conference, YLC or Labor Women's Conference and see how you go. Good luck!

## Uranium debate

Continued from page 13

Australia's involvement in the brutal war against the Vietnamese people has provided a powerful case against ANZUS.

For very many people the Vietnam war completely destroyed the myth that the U.S. is primarily interested in defending "freedom and democracy." In Vietnam the U.S. used genocide to defend repression and economic exploitation and Australia was a partner in this crime.

The Australian Government also operates in tandem with the U.S. administration in providing extensive military aid to pro-imperialist regimes in countries like Indonesia and the Philippines.

Australia has not developed its own nuclear weapons but it participates in the nuclear "arms race" by hosting the bases and by allowing regular visits by nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered U.S. warships and bombers.

In the Asian and Pacific regions Australia is an imperialist power in its own right. Australian capitalists have investments and favourable terms of trade to protect. The military alliance with the U.S. and New Zealand is designed to help protect those interests.

The "defence" policies of the Hawke government are, in reality, aggressive, pro-war policies. But Hawke and his supporters are committed to such a military strategy because they are committed to defending the interests of Australian capitalists at home and abroad.

The alternative is to link an anti-war strategy with anti-capitalist domestic policies. And that is the challenge that faces the Left at the forthcoming Conference.

became the ultimate decision-making body for Unit activists. The structure was flexible, without a set number of delegates from each Unit, though it was standard procedure for the president and secretary of each Unit to attend.

Delegates from Units outside the Sydney metropolitan region came when they could. But this was difficult since the Aggregate Meetings were held almost every week for the first 10 months of 1931 and thereafter on a monthly basis.

The Inner Unit was effectively the executive of the Aggregate Meetings and the overwhelming majority of members of both bodies were from Socialism In Our Time groups.

The Langites may have had the majority in the official Socialisation Committee, but they had very little influence with the movement at large.

Because the Units attracted activists, these people soon became the best activists in the ALP Branches as well. The Units recruited new converts to the Socialism In Our Time current and this in turn began to dominate the Branches. Between 1931 and 1933 a very substantial proportion of Branches and State Electorate Councils in both Sydney and Newcastle were dominated by adherents of Socialism In Our Time thought.

Membership of the Units was not restricted to ALP members. The first Socialisation Committee established a system of full membership of the Units for ALP members and associate membership, without voting rights, for all others.

## secret police

# The role of ASIS exposed

The following is the second part of an interview with Joan Coxsedge, Victorian MLC and prominent member of the Socialist Left. The first part of the interview, which concentrated on the role of ASIO and the implications of the Combe-Ivanov affair, was published in the March, 1984 issue (Volume 4, Number 1). The interview was conducted by Reihana Mohideen, a member of the Preston (Vic) ALP Branch.

**Question:** Can you give an outline of the activity of Australian Security Intelligence Service, especially its role in destabilising progressive governments in the Third World?

**Answer:** ASIS is Australia's overseas intelligence body, set up in 1950 and operating mainly in South East Asia.

It operates by sending agents into countries in the guise of businessmen, and using embassies as bases.

We also know ASIS has been involved in training the Victorian Police Special Operations squad, the paramilitary wing of the State police force.

ASIS is into all sorts of James Bond type activities, skin diving and all that cloak and dagger stuff.

They are currently centralising, which is the trend now; security agencies are being concentrated in Canberra.

ra. ASIO headquarters were in Melbourne, but are going to Canberra, along with ASIS. At the moment, they are still at the big Defence Department building in St. Kitts Road, Melbourne.

Back in 1974 it was involved in work to expose the role of ASIS in Cambodia, when it helped to undermine the Sihanouk Government, acting directly under CIA orders. ASIS was also involved in operations in Chile in 1973 against the Allende Government, working with the CIA.

ASIS was doing something there directly contrary to government policy, acting on behalf of a foreign power. Yet the Government, a Labor Government, did nothing to stop them.

Whitlam got very outraged in November 1975, when he found out that ASIS operatives were in East Timor and that they were trying to deceive him, so he kicked out the head of ASIS, Bill Robertson. But he should have closed down the whole outfit, because that is how it normally operates.

Even conservative people like ex-Liberal Prime Minister Bill McMahon are on record as saying they can't see much good that ASIS does.

There is one person who serves to illustrate what ASIS is all about and that is John Ridley. He was president of the Australian Union of Students in the

1960's, and, after working as an ASIS agent for many years, went to work for Andrew Peacock as personal private secretary. Then he went to work for ALCOA in Portland. The Portland people used to say it was amazing how much ALCOA knew about the group opposing ALCOA's plans. However, this was no surprise with Ridley working there, with all his connections with the security police.

John Ridley has now gone to work for the Victorian Liberal Party, where he will no doubt be able to use all the dosiers they have on Labor people, to help the Liberals in dirty campaigns.

**Question:** At the time of the ASIS raid on the Sheraton Hotel last year, it was said that this was a training exercise. What is your view on that?

**Answer:** Although it is not yet completely clear what was involved, I don't accept the story that it was a simple case of a botched training exercise. We have been told only a fraction of what actually happened.

It certainly highlighted again its juvenile idea of what its role is, you know, to go around kicking down doors and all that dramatic stuff, with sub-machine guns and a real jack boot atmosphere.

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## Socialisation Units

Continued from page 12

vent the growth and consolidation of Socialisation Units, they could obstruct the central leadership of the movement.

For example, the 1930 Socialisation Committee had discussed ways of making the committee a body that represented, rather than presided over, the Socialisation Units. To this end, it succeeded in getting a motion through the 1931 Conference giving the new Socialisation Committee the power to co-opt representatives from groups of union and Branch units, not already represented by those appointed by Conference. The new committee arranged for the election of 17 such delegates, and 12 of the successful candidates were members of the Socialism In Our Time current.

However, to avoid losing their control over the committee, the Inner Group delegates, with Grant's support, pushed through a motion denying all 17 co-opted delegates voting rights. Thus they maintained a voting majority of 4 to 3 on a committee of 24.

To get around this obstacle, Kilburn, McNamara and Barker (their ally on the committee) began sponsoring unofficial weekly meetings of the leaders of the Socialisation Units. This body became known as the Inner Unit. While never officially recognised, it became the effective co-ordinating committee of the movement.

The Inner Unit derived its authority from Aggregate Meetings which were conferences of delegates from the basic Socialisation Units and the members of the Socialisation Committee. The Aggregate Meetings were established as an institution by the first Socialisation Committee and



National Times photo of ASIS training camp in Victoria. Sheraton raid showed these secret police are uncontrolled

Labor Militant, April 1984

To be continued in the next issue



## secret police

Continued from page 17

It is very frightening, if you look beyond the sheer idiocy of it all, because there are these secret groups getting around who are unknown and unaccountable to anyone, even the elected government.

The Sheraton case was only one of many similar incidents that we know of, let alone of all those we have never even heard about.

When people claim that the Sheraton raid was a failed exercise, what do they mean by a successful one, what would they achieve in a real one?

It highlights all the points that we have made for eleven years, that these people threaten our democratic rights, in ways that many Australians are only beginning to see.

They are supposed to be there to protect us, to ensure national security, but they threaten the security of all of us, with antics like the Sheraton raid.

What would have happened, for example, if someone at the hotel had challenged them, or died of a heart attack, or if the Victoria police special operations group had been called with all its weapons and gungah approach.

You might claim that all this hypothetical and unlikely, but none of it is impossible.

**Question: Much of the ASIS activity at the Sheraton could easily have been dealt with under civil law, as criminal activity. Can you comment upon its apparent immunity from prosecution?**

**Answer:** If it was you or I that committed those acts, we would have been arrested forthwith and our names would have been front page headlines.

It highlights the power of the secret agencies, that they were able to carry out such an exercise, get picked up by the police, and then senior ASIS personnel could still go to the police headquarters and get them off scot-free, with their names being kept secret from the Australian people.

I think the Victorian Government is to be commended for its attempt to prosecute the case.

There is no doubt of the serious breach of Victorian laws in this matter.

But they are protected by a "D notice", which is not even exactly legal. It is more like a gentlemen's agreement that the media should protect the establishment by not publishing details of security operations, especially agents' names.

So our conservative media would almost certainly refuse to publish, even if the Government were to try to challenge the power of ASIS by providing the names of the agents to the public.

**Question: What should the Federal government have done in relation to the Sheraton raid?**

**Answer:** It should have come behind the Victorian Government in its call for a full and open explanation of all the event around the Sheraton raid. It should have insisted on the publication of names, because the public has a right to know the facts.

**Question: Prime Minister Hawke left the inquiry to Justice Hope. What do you think of that?**

**Answer:** Hope is a conservative and last time around, he was so concerned for the welfare of ASIO that he altered the law to suit it even better than ever. He found that it had been breaking the law, so he altered it to make its activity legal!

To have him inquire into an organisation that he has had such a big role in shaping is absurd. The ASIO Act was passed in 1979, and other changes were carried out, all based on recommendations from Hope's first Royal Commission into security, under the Fraser Government.

**Question: I understand the Hawke Government has given ASIS a 25 per cent increase in its budget.**

**Answer:** Yes and ASIO got a 50 per cent rise last budget, they are a growth industry, about the only one under this Government!

While we have essential jobs being slashed because of "lack of money," we have the security industry, which threatens not only our civil liberties, but also our entire democratic rights, getting vast increases. This says a great deal about where the country is being taken at present.

**Question: What is the state of ALP policy in relation to ASIS and ASIO at State and national level?**

**Answer:** The national policy has only got stuff about controls and audits. But this is meaningless, toothless.

The Victorian Branch position is much stronger.

Our position is for abolition of ASIO and the rest, and it goes a bit further than that. We have got now a more comprehensive policy, which, as a forerunner to abolition of ASIO and ASIS, calls for a full open and public inquiry, a real one, not like the spurious Hope one.

This would enable Australians to see how many agencies there are, what their overseas affiliations are, and what they actually get up to in Australia.

I think that most Australians would be outraged, when they see what is really going on in our own society, with us footling the bill. When I say footling the bill, I don't exclude the fact that these agencies also get a lot of money from

outside sources, under the table.

We also had a policy for abolition of Special Branch in this State, and this has been implemented. There is still the nasty feeling that games continue in the rest of the Victoria police, but at least we had the declaration of where we stand in this State, that we don't like secret police, which is what all Special Branches are. ASIO is very closely linked to them, so if you condemn one, you are really taking on the lot.

Special Branches also play dirty tricks and destabilise, as was graphically shown in the NSW Hilton bombing and frame-up of the Ananda Marga.

We spent years writing the book *Rooted in Secrecy* about our concerns, about how they really do threaten our security, in very basic and drastic ways. If Australians don't wake up, they will find out one day that they are living in what has become a fully fledged police state, because a stand was not taken soon enough.

So nationally, it is a battle, because many of the people at that level get sucked in by all the nonsense about control and accountability of the secret police.

It is fundamental to their nature, that you cannot control these agencies. Firstly, because of the overseas affiliations. Secondly, because they operate on this "need-to-know" basis, so the government of the day not only does not know what the agencies are up to, but also does not even know who they all are.

Whitlam was not told about the existence of ASIS until he became Prime Minister. It had been going for 22 years when he first was told about it.

Very few people know even now about the most important of them all, the Defence Signals Division. The DSD is the one that the Americans most rely on. It is tied up with the incredibly powerful U.S. National Security Agency, which is even more important than the CIA.

To talk about controlling them all when we don't even know all about them, is plain nonsense.

That is going to be the main argument at the upcoming National Conference in July. The people who really support the secret agencies who are pushing the same tired old argument of control and accountability.

They will be saying, "We have got to make them more open and more accountable," when in fact they have got no intention or possibility of doing that at all.

These people are quite happy to see the agencies keep on doing what they always have done.

## Labour History

The NSW Socialisation Units, 1930-32

# Powerful movement for socialism

This is the first of two parts on the powerful movement that developed in NSW around the Party's socialisation objective in the early 1930s. The first part deals with the origins of the movement and the early battles it had with the supporters of the Labor Premier of NSW, Jack Lang. It looks at the way the Units were organised.

The second part will examine the divisions that eventually developed within the movement and will assess its strengths and weaknesses.

On April 4, 1931, Bill McNamara — the son of a founder of the Australian Socialist League and manager, until 1929, of the renowned McNamara's Bookshop — moved a motion which contained the following clauses at the State Conference (then called Easter Conference) of the NSW ALP:

"That a plan, to be known as the 'Three-Year Plan' of social transition, be propagated to provide for Government by Regulations, such regulations to aim at the establishment in three years of a Socialist State by:

"(1) The vesting in the people's government of all the rights of ownership and the control of SPECIFIED property.  
"(2) The administration of all specified industries and the functions of government, including banking, by national industrial Commissions and Sub-Commissions, WITH DIRECT WORKERS' AND PRODUCERS' CONTROL DURING THE THREE YEAR PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

"(3) The establishing of Compulsory Pools for the handling of the nation's entire production.

"(4) The encouragement of workers-and-farmers-controlled Cooperatives."

After heated debate the motion was adopted by a vote of 50-49.

## Martin Tuck

Member of Livingstone (NSW) ALP Branch

The previous day the State Labor Premier, Jack Lang, had given a keynote speech that had been designed to head off growing demands for action on the party's 10-year-old socialisation objective. He had suggested the pragmatic approach was to support his so-called Lang Plan which called simply for greater Government control over the credit system and a propaganda campaign to popularise the concept of socialisation.

Lang had been shocked to find that his decoy plan had not prevented further debate on the subject. McNamara had argued that the Lang Plan was all right, in as far as it went, but that much more was needed. And the majority of delegates had agreed.

However, Lang was not prepared to tolerate such a decision. That night he had his political henchmen in the so-called Inner Group lobby intensively and the next day they managed to secure a revision of the Three Year Plan motion by a margin of 65 to 35.

In its place they inserted the following motion:  
"That the Socialisation Committee be instructed to draw up a plan of operation indicating the steps to be taken as the various stages of transition are reached, and that, until socialisation of credit is achieved, Labor Government's make provision for co-operative societies to engage in banking and insurance."

This, of course, was a deliberately vague proposition that meant nothing in practice. But it did not end the fight over



ONLY ONE REMEDY FOR THIS — SOCIALISATION!  
Well, things are brightening up. Last week I only got enough out of this for the dog; this week there's enough for me, too!

the adoption of a plan for implementing the socialisation objective.

McNamara had presented his motion on behalf of the Socialisation Committee and that committee, in turn, drew its strength from the existence of 97 Socialisation Units established by Party Branches during the previous year.

The defeat in 1931 caused a division in the ranks of the Units, led by the leaders of the Units at the Sydney Kilburn, began to argue that the Three-Year Plan should be seen as something to be implemented after the collapse of capitalism which they considered to be imminent. Another power by Tom Payne, advocated the seizure of political power by the working class and the destruction of the capitalist state as an immediate objective.

But this, rather fundamental, difference in approach did not cause the immediate demise of the Units. In fact the movement as a whole continued to grow to the peak of 178 Units in late 1932.

It was only after Lang declared open warfare on the Units in 1933 that the tide began to turn. Using Left demagoguery, bureaucrats manoeuvring, and a campaign in the pages of the Labor Daily, Lang and his Inner Group scored a decisive victory over the leaders of the Units at the Sydney Metropolitan conference in 1933 — pushing through a motion ordering the Units to dissolve.

In the face of this attack the Revolutionary Socialist wing (that initiated by Payne and his supporters) left to join the Communist Party and the movement remains an extremely important one to study. It was, in fact, the most powerful socialist movement this country has seen. It provides us with many lessons for revolutionary socialist strategy today and so it is important to have a good understanding of the movement's

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## Socialisation Units

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strengths and weaknesses, and the reasons for its demise. To understand this movement it is first of all necessary to trace its origins.

Many of the key figures already had long involvement in building socialist currents. Quite a few had been activists in the one Big Union movement. Some had even been involved in the formation of the Communist Party of Australia and for many years there had been rather disorganised Socialism In Our Time groups within the ALP which had been influenced by American socialist writers like de Leon, Debs and London.

Among the early leaders of the socialisation movement were Donald Grant, one of the 12 International Workers of the World leaders jailed during World War I, and Jack Kilburn, secretary of the Bricklayers' Union and former leader of the OBU.

Strangely enough, the movement that was to grow so large and powerful in 1931 and 1932 had a very innocuous beginning in early 1930.

Acting as an individual, A.W. Thompson, former OBU activist, secretary of the Milk Employees' Union and president of the Enfield ALP Branch, moved a motion at the February Metropolitan Conference recommending that the Annual General (Easter) Conference "set up a committee to devise ways and means to propagate the first and principal plat-

form of the party — the Socialisation of Industry."

The motion was seconded by W. Jones and supported by Donald Grant. It carried unopposed.

Presumably the Langites could see no harm in such a committee, but the former OBU members considered it to have great potential. They therefore put their weight behind the motion to the Easter Conference, moved by Kilburn, and seconded by Grant. A committee consisting of Kilburn, McNamara, Grant, Barker, Cook, Saldy, and Mrs. L. Lurch — all members of Socialism In Our Time group — was appointed as the Socialisation of Industry Committee. The name was soon shortened to Socialisation Committee. Kilburn was appointed president and McNamara secretary.

McNamara announced the formation of the committee in a letter to the Labor Daily and called on Party members to assist the campaign in the following ways:

- (1) By addressing public meetings either open air or indoors.
- (2) By distributing leaflets on socialisation which the Committee hopes to publish.
- (3) By organising Units or groups for the above purposes.

(4) By donations to the printing or propaganda fund which the Committee hopes to establish.

(5) By any other means . . .

It was in response to the third point that some Party Branches began to establish the first socialisation propaganda units, later called simply Socialisation Units, on

which the movement was to be based.

The Socialisation Committee also began to publish a weekly Saturday Supplement in the Labor Daily under the heading Socialisation of Industry and this clearly struck a chord with many Party members. It wasn't long before Party Branches were discussing the ideas proposed by the Committee, inviting Committees representative to address their meetings and setting up more Units.

By the second half of 1930, the movement was given new impetus by the gathering gloom of the Depression.

The Socialisation Units proved to be attractive to young workers who had not previously considered joining the ALP. They wanted to take action to save their jobs and the Units provided an opportunity to pursue that objective in the political sphere. In many cases the Units grew much larger than the Branches that had established them. After just one year, there were 97 of them.

Given the fact that they eventually conjured up every trick they could conceive to smash the Socialisation Units, it is perhaps surprising that Lang and his supporters did not act sooner to try and contain the growth of the movement. There are a number of reasons for this.

By 1930 Lang himself was using liberal doses of Left demagoguery to maintain his electoral standing.

Before entering Parliament he had been a real estate agent and in his early career had been considered a conservative. As State Treasurer from 1920 to 1922 his economic policies had been anything but radical.

However, when he became Premier in 1925 his Government had initiated reforms which had given Lang the reputation of being a partisan of the working class. These included:

- (1) Introduction of the widow's pension.
- (2) Introduction of a workers' compensation scheme
- (3) the restoration of the 44-hour week (which had been taken away under the pretext of military needs during the war).
- (4) restoration of seniority to railway workers who had been demoted for their role in the 1917 general strike.

In the late 1920s, Lang had been an outspoken Left critic of the Federal Labor Government — demanding, for instance, that it use the army to open mines when miners were locked out by the mine owners in 1929-30.

In 1930 he put forward his Premier's Plan (Lang Plan) in opposition to reactionary economic advice given to the Government by Otto Niemeyer of the Bank of England.

So it would have been difficult for Lang not to have tarnished his own image by attacking the socialisation movement in its early stages.

Secondly, Lang knew that as long as he could keep his machine — the Inner Group — together and in tight control of the Party executive; and as long as he could tie up the vote of trade union delegations at Conference, he would be in a position to out-manoeuvre the leaders of the Socialisation Units.

In fact, it was only when the Socialisation Units began serious work to penetrate into the ranks of the unions that Lang launched his all-out attack.

One key aspect of Lang's strategy had been an alliance he made in 1925 with Jock Garden and his so-called Trades Hall "Reds."

Garden had been a member of the Communist Party in its early days and had been involved in the effort to set up an Industrial Socialist Labor Party in 1919.

But, after becoming secretary of the NSW Labor Council in 1919, he steadily evolved in a rightward direction and his group of Left bureaucrats played a big role in strengthening the Lang machine that eventually defeated the thrust of the Socialisation Units. As long as Garden could deliver the votes of key trade union delegations at ALP Conferences Lang was safe.

So Lang and his Inner Group had the organisational structure of the ALP under tight control and, furthermore, the



leaders of the Socialisation Units were slow to see the need to break this control. In 1930 and 1931 McNamara and Kilburn campaigned against proposals to stand candidates for the Party executives, believing that they could actually convince existing Party leaders to support the campaign for socialisation.

In fact, it wasn't until about mid-1932, after Lang had backed away from organising a fight against the sacking of his Government by Governor Phillip Game (and had lost office in the ensuing elections) that the leaders of the Units decided on a campaign to capture control of the Party apparatus.

But it was a bad time for such a move. The mood in the Party ranks was a mixture of sympathy for Lang because of his sacking and the constant attacks on him in the capitalist press, and of demoralisation at Labor's failure to really fight the sacking. So a campaign, that might have succeeded a year earlier, ended in failure.

There is another major reason why Lang was unwilling to try to smash the Socialisation Units earlier than he did. This was the fact that he was also involved in a major fight with the right-wing leadership of the Federal ALP and, after 1931, with a right-wing splinter group from the NSW Branch.

In 1931 Lang had presented his economic plan — which, at this point, included a proposal to defer payment of debts to British shareholders until interest rates were readjusted — to a Premiers' Conference.

It was rejected by the Federal Scullin Labor Government. The Federal executive of the Party then directed the NSW Branch to defend the proposals put forward by the Scullin Government. However, the Langites on the NSW Branch executive defied this and fought a by-election in 1931 on the basis of the Lang Plan. Their candidate, Eddie Ward, won but was not allowed into the Federal caucus.

This soon led to a split. The Federal executive expelled the NSW Branch and the Langites expelled members of the Scullin Government from the NSW Branch. The Federal executive tried to form a new Branch in NSW around the Treasurer in the Scullin Government, and former Premier of Queensland, E.G. Theodore. In return Lang began organising a caucus of his own supporters in the Federal Parliament.

The splinter group around Theodore did not seriously weaken Lang's position in NSW. But, in view of the fact that he was trying to outmanoeuvre the Right in the Federal sphere, it would have been a bad time to launch a purge of the Left in NSW.

While not prepared to gamble on an all-out attack on the leaders of the Socialisation Units until 1933, Lang was determined to contain the growth of their influence from the beginning of 1931.

In February 1931, Garden presented McNamara and Kilburn with an ultimatum. If they did not accept the nomination of three Inner Group members on the Socialisation Committee at that year's Easter Conference, the Inner Group would ensure that McNamara was prevented from being elected as a delegate to that Conference.

So, the Socialisation Committee was left with three representatives from the Inner Group, and four previous members of the committee.

This wouldn't have been so bad except that Garden and his cronies had also been secretly working on Donald Grant and so again after Conference it became clear that the man who gained fame as a martyr for the IWW, had switched sides and was voting with the Inner Group representatives.

Grant's defection proved to be something of a turning point for the movement. For, while the Inner Group representatives on the committee could do nothing to pre-



BLOODY, BUT UNBOWED

Oh! Labor! must there be yet another Easter Crucifixion before Farm and Factory Worker unite to hail the Risen Sun?

Socialisation Call, April 1933



## victoria

Young Fabians' seminar

# Forum for Hawke's supporters

Fabians are supposed to be in favour of "democratic socialism." But a recent seminar organised by the Victorian Young Fabians on the title "Unions and the ALP" simply gave members and supporters of Bob Hawke's Labor Unity faction the opportunity to explain why they supported the affiliation of unions dominated by the extreme right (and strictly anti-democratic) National Civic Council to ALP.

**Paul White**  
Secretary Kensington (Vic) ALP Branch  
Subbranch secretary ACOA

This confirmed the fact that the Fabians in Victoria have become a front group for Hawke's faction.

The seminar was opened by well-known right wing witch-hunter Bob Bladner, who is himself a good barometer of just how far to the right Labor Unity has travelled. Six years ago, Bladner was a key operative in a move to unseat a pro-NCC leadership in the shop assistants' union. Now he is actively seeking the admission of his former enemies into the Labor Party.

Bob Hogg was the first speaker. Hogg, of course, used to be a leader of the Socialist Left, as well as State Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the ALP. That is until Bob Hawke offered him a job as his Senior Adviser in reward for his leading role in destroying the Party's anti-uranium policy at the 1982 National Conference.

Hogg's speech was generally rambling, repetitive and not very informative. He dropped in a thoroughly abstract style, and the benefits of unions affiliating to the Party. He could have been giving an "educational" talk to high school students.

Hogg was not amused by some of the questions put to him following his monologue. One person pointed out that the timing of the seminar was no accident. It was aimed at supporting the move by the four pro-NCC unions to affiliate to the ALP. So, Hogg was asked for his attitude to the policies and practices of the NCC. Did he think that support for the NCC should be a question considered by the Party in accepting or rejecting applications from union leaders for affiliation of their unions to the Party?

Hogg refused to be drawn. Using the rather lame excuse of "the nature of my job" (as Hawke's adviser), he would only state that it was "up to the Party to make decisions." He claimed to know nothing of the attitude of the rank and file members of the four un-



Bob Hogg, used to disguise right-wing flavour of seminar

ions concerned on the question of ALP affiliation now. Later on, however, the mask of neutrality slipped a little. In answer to another question, he alleged that there was "much paranoia" about the NCC in the labour movement.

So what point was there in having such a non-committal (and frankly boring) speaker? The answer is simple. He wasn't there for his eloquence, or lack of it, but in the hope that his former reputation as something of a Lefty would help disguise the otherwise rabidly right-wing complexion of the seminar.

Next came Jim Patterson, Victorian secretary of the train-drivers' union, AFULE. Patterson was filling in for Federated Clerks Union official Mike O'Sullivan, who was unable to attend. He quickly left us in no doubt about where he stood. He regards Left forces, such as the Socialist Party of Australia, as bigger threats than the NCC, and crowded about his defeat of a left-wing leadership in his union. He strongly denied any disloyalty to ALP policy.

Patterson could not control an urge to inject crude racism into the proceedings. When explaining why he thought the NCC-dominated unions should be in the Party, he said: "It's a question of whether you want an Arab outside your tent pissing in or inside pissing out."

Pastrycooks Union secretary Bill Nowak followed. Like the AFULE, his union has traditionally affiliated to the ALP. Yet, after hearing Nowak, one wonders what the rank and file of his union have ever got out of it. Nowak's

main point seemed to be that ALP affiliation was a good idea for unions because they can use it to get their officials into parliament!

The final trade union speaker was Tony Tuohy, Victorian Branch president of the Municipal Officers Association. The MOA split from the Municipal Employees Union some 25 years ago. According to Tuohy, the split was due to opposition to affiliation to the ALP and the ACTU. The union is now reconsidering affiliation, he reported.

The right-wing politics and duplicity of these trade union bureaucrats was further shown in the question period which followed their contributions. For instance, Patterson was challenged about the real motives of the four unions in seeking affiliation. It was pointed out to him that all four organisations were supported in their move by the Labor Unity faction in order to enhance its own strength.

Replying to this, Patterson conceded that the NCC was not dead: "But the rank and file members of these four unions will remain in the wilderness if they are not brought into an arena where fair comparisons can be made with the wages and conditions of other unions." Such an arena, he maintained, was the ALP. Once these unions are in the Party, he claimed, "we can expose some of those leaders."

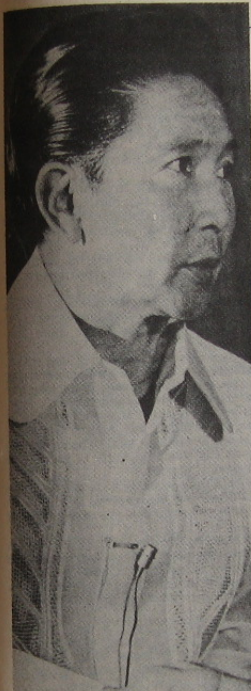
He refused to respond when someone asked why these leaders had not previously been exposed in the arena of the ACTU.

Patterson also repeatedly evaded answering another point. He supported blocking Party membership for known pro-NCC figures like Maynes of the clerks' union. But he would not comment on the point that these ultra-right leaders would still control the policies of their union's delegates because of the undemocratic nature of their control.

The three unions represented at the seminar revealed an interesting attitude to democratic decision-making in their own unions. Only one — the delegates through a direct rank-and-file ballot (a procedure that predates the current right-wing leadership). Nowak reported that his union leaves the selection of Conference delegates to the committee of management. And Tuohy the MOA would do the same. It is accepted as an affiliate. According to Tuohy: "Any union official that can't control his own numbers doesn't deserve to be a union official."

The day ended with a session entitled

Continued next page



President Marcos. Meeting condemned Australian aid to his regime

Continued from previous page

"Unions and a Labor Government," which began with a talk by Bob Carr.

Carr is currently a member of the NSW parliament for the seat of Maroubra. He was formerly an official in the right-wing Ducker machine at the NSW Trades and Labor Council. He also worked for six years as senior industrial and political journalist for the reactionary Bulletin magazine. In this milieu of management and Dockers which sparked off Fraser's witch-hunting Royal Commission. (The Hawke Government has continued with the witch-hunt of the Painters and Dockers).

Carr is a prominent front-runner for the NSW Centre Unity faction, so his contribution provided a good insight into the politics of that group. He spoke

Labor Militant, April 1984

## victoria

# Meeting condemns aid to Marcos

"This meeting calls on the Australian Government to take a much stronger stand towards the Marcos Government, by ceasing all military aid to that Government, and by reassessing Australia's economic and development aid."

The above resolution was passed at a meeting of over 200 people in Melbourne on March 20.

**Chris Slee**  
Member Blackburn South (Vic) ALP Branch  
and AT&MOA

The meeting, organised by the Philippines Solidarity Committee, was focused on the case of Fr. Brian Gore and the "Negros 9", but also dealt with the whole question of human rights in the Philippines.

Jeff Kildea, representing the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, described the poverty and exploitation of farm workers and particularly on the island of Negros where Gore worked. He explained that the "Negros 9" saw the role of the Church as being to "teach people to stand up for their rights." This was their real crime in the eyes of the big landowners and the Government.

Kildea also criticised the Australian aid project on the island of Samar, which fails to benefit the poor. Road building is not much use to those who cannot afford road transport, while

mainly on "making the Accord work."

His central point was that "Australia's industrial relations system causes wage inflation." Echoing the Liberals' propaganda, he asserted that wage rises cause inflation.

He then went on to say that an incomes policy would only work if penalties were provided for unions that strayed outside wages guidelines. He said he agreed with what he claimed was the opinion of Bob Hogg, that it is "very unfair for the BLF to take advantage of the fact that the Government is pumping money into housing," by making-Union which sparked off Fraser's witch-hunting Royal Commission. (The BLF claim "was sectional, indefensible and will affect jobs." He stressed his view that "Hawke is entirely right to re-vely deregistration threats against the BLF."

Carr praised the Swedish trade union movement, which suffered under an

"agricultural development" is based on expensive inputs such as fertilisers which poor farmers cannot afford.

Cliff Dolan, President of the ACTU, spoke on the repression of trade unions in the Philippines. He said he was not happy with the attitude of the Australian Government. He said it should be more forthright in taking up human rights issues.

Ana Maria Nemenzo reported on the oppression of women under the Marcos regime. She said that Australian military aid "contributes to the repression of our people."

ALP Senator Michael Tate called for the suspension of the "defence co-operation agreement" between Australia and the Philippines until it can be proven that it does not contribute to the suppression of human rights. He is noting that 112 Filipino military personnel were trained in Australia in 1982/83 he argued that the expenditure of Australian taxes in ways that aid the suppression of dissent was "not acceptable."

Dr Alfred McCoy spoke of the decline of the Marcos dictatorship and the rise of a popular revolutionary movement, based particularly on the peasants. He pointed out that the Australian Government, while it protests over the Gore case, supports the Marcos regime. It views the U.S. bases in the Philippines as essential to the ANZUS alliance.

Accord-style social contract for several years. He thought Swedish unions were to be especially commended for being prepared to live with a drop in real wages, in the interest of "national competitiveness." And he concluded: "This is where we've got to get unions here to."

Not surprisingly, Carr did not support one aspect of the Accord — price control. In his view, "a strong Prices Surveillance Authority would curtail growth. Only when firms again become profitable will they again employ more." On a similar basis he also excused the failure of the Hawke Government to increase the real value of welfare and social security payments.

At least the Young Fabians' seminar was good for one thing. It exposed the policies and practices of those who support the reaffiliation of the unions dominated by the extreme right.



Debates

## Opposing U.S. war plans

Dear editor(s),

I wrote the enclosed for our local disarmament groups newsletter. It is informative though not with an overt socialist flavour. Nevertheless your(our) readers may find it useful in determining strategies for working within the anti-war/peace, disarmament movement.

Mark Delmege  
Fremantle Branch W.A.

This year visiting warships and submarines will bring Cruise missiles into Fremantle Harbour. They have the same capabilities as the ground-launched version introduced into Greenham Common, England, last year.

The U.S. has been developing and researching Cruise missiles now for over ten years. In 1982 the first of an estimated 4,000 air-launched Cruise missiles were deployed onto U.S.-based B53s.

Cruise missiles are a new generation missile system. They have a range of 2,500km. With a CEP (accuracy) of about 40 metres, they are about the most accurate long range missile ever devised. Nine hundred sea-launched Cruise missiles are scheduled for production by 1985 and 60 per cent will carry a 200kt nuclear warhead.

In the past, visiting warships and submarines have carried nuclear weapons. But their potential use in nuclear war was confined to a theatre role and to be used primarily against other naval craft.

With Cruise missiles this will radically change. Cruise are an offensive land attack weapon, they will give many classes of surface warships and submarines a strategic missile capability.

The significance of this should not be underestimated. At a time when the Federal Government is quibbling over dry docking of nuclear warships, the role being played by them is being upgraded in an unprecedented manner.

As Gerald Smith, chief negotiator for SALT 1 under Nixon, suggested "the deployment of sea-launched Cruise missiles will give credence to the growing fear that the U.S. is not only planning to fight a nuclear war, but that it is planning to fight a protracted nuclear war".

Cruise missiles on visiting warships and submarines further undermines the Hawke Government's claim to support nuclear disarmament and the Indian and South West Pacific Oceans as Zones of Peace.

It also indicates the inability of successive Australian governments to pursue independent foreign policies and defence initiatives. Australia is being webbed more deeply into U.S. strategic military planning.

Christmas Island, 1,800km North-West of Port Hedland, is the site of a top secret underwater listening device. Operation Flowerless is part of a \$5 billion U.S. effort to detect and identify human activity in the U.S. oceans.

One of the goals of this project is to track Soviet ballistic missile submarines as they move through the world's oceans. The sea bed sensors are huge hydrophones positioned on the edge of the continental shelf. They are connected to shore facilities by long cables. They are continuously relayed to the U.S. via satellite for analysis in one of the world's biggest computers.

It's claimed that the Christmas Island facility has a detection range from the Sea of Japan to the Persian Gulf. With an on Cocos Island and Rest and Recuperation facilities Australia contributes significantly to the U.S. naval activities in the Indian Ocean.

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) is no longer the cornerstone of the deterrent theory. Technological achievements, such as Operation Flowerless, Cruise, Pershing, MX and Trident missiles have contributed to this change in

military thinking.

The stated policy is still one of deterrence. However technology and the will to fight a nuclear war have transformed the meaning of deterrence.

Today's policy is to severely limit Soviet responses in a nuclear confrontation.

We may choose to believe Reagan in an election year when he states there can be no winners in a nuclear war.

But through his (and previous) administration's military preparedness, the U.S. is moving towards a first-strike capability.

With Operation Flowerless, the U.S. has the ability to track and destroy Soviet ballistic missile subs, thus reducing Soviet retaliation in time of war.

MX, Pershing and Cruise could theoretically reduce Soviet land-based ballistic missiles to dust. In the eyes of the U.S. military, this could make nuclear war more containable and more winnable.

At best the U.S. may be sincere in its belief that a U.S. preparedness for nuclear war is the best way of deterring war. But the more that operational details of nuclear war fighting are refined, the more possible it becomes.

Parallel with this sort of thinking is the integration of nuclear weapons into conventional war fighting scenarios. The neutron bomb is one example of this. Its value for the military is seen in its supposed capability to prevent or retard conventional wars in Europe.

But its deployment in Europe would considerably blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional war.

More importantly neutron bombs could be used outside of Europe.

Rapid Deployment Forces could be used in regional wars, where the U.S. interests were less easily preserved than in Grenada. To avoid heavy losses (as in Vietnam), neutron bombs may be preferred by the military and accepted by a sedated U.S. public to budgeon its opponents into early surrender.

It's commonly accepted that nuclear war could emerge out of regional conflicts. Yet the U.S. refuses to promise not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. This is nuclear blackmail — not just against the Soviets but also against the newly emerging independent and socialist states.

There is an old dictum that says war is a continuation of politics by other means. This is no less true today than it was last century. To understand the nuclear terror of today, we should step back a little and seek an understanding of the wars today.

I feel that nuclear disarmament groups tend to make a fetish out of nuclear weapons and tend to lose sight of why the nuclear terror exists and how it is used.

With an understanding of regional conflicts, such as the Middle East and Central America, we would be in a better position to oppose the deployment of nuclear weapons, and to counter the sort of propaganda that may lead to their eventual use.

This would not divert the movement's attention away from their real concern with nuclear weapons as some fear. Interventions against liberation movements.

Operation Flowerless and Cruise missiles contribute to the drift towards nuclear war. But we shouldn't lose sight of the possibility that nuclear weapons could also be used against non-nuclear states.

The U.S. fought its war of independence against its colonial master, Britain. The struggle against neo-colonialism today will result in continued regional conflicts for some time to come. We must not allow these conflicts to be used as an excuse for the use of nuclear weapons or as a spark for global nuclear war.

east timor

## Broad support for Party policy

The following is an interview with Pat Walsh a member of the East Timor Association, and East Timor adviser for the Australian Council for Overseas Aid.

**Question:** What is your view of the significance of the 1984 ALP National Conference for work in solidarity with the people of East Timor?

**Answer:** With the ALP now well established in national Government, the Conference is of deep interest to everyone concerned about Indonesia's denial of national self-determination to East Timor.

We hope to help ensure that the ALP as a Government, if I can make the distinction between the Government and the Party, will come to grips with the issue.

By reasserting Party feeling and policy at the Conference, we want to encourage implementation of the policy.

Although prepared for some conflict, we are confident that the conscience of the ALP will triumph.

**Question:** How do you assess the role of the ALP State Branches on East Timor?

**Answer:** All the State Conferences I know of in 1983 reaffirmed the 1982 policy.

Some Branches, like NSW and Queensland, felt that the timing of policy implementation ought to be left up to the Government.

But the main point is that every Branch, even most recently Tasmania, recommitted the Government to the 1982 policy.

Nothing has changed, either internationally or in Timor, to warrant any move against the policy at National Conference.

**Question:** Do you think that the tour here last year by FRETILIN representatives helped to build support for East Timor?

**Answer:** Certainly, since we heard from them a lot of facts about a situation that was almost unknown in the ALP, let alone the public.

It was an eye-opener to many ALP members, such a good picture of FRETILIN's organisational gains and the politico-military changes that were occurring in East Timor in 1983.

But it goes much deeper than that. It was not only the ALP responding to a short diplomatic campaign and the resultant public sympathy.

The consolidation of ALP support during 1983 was also very much an honoring of longer term philosophy and sentiment.

**Question:** What is your view of the Indonesian military offensive reported in the Australian media earlier this year?



FRETILIN troops on patrol. Able to withstand Indonesian blitz and launch counter-strikes

**Answer:** The head of the Indonesian armed forces, General Ben Murdani, began this as far back as July 1983, because the Indonesian High Command saw that the talks initiated in March were working to the advantage of FRETILIN.

Internally, they used the time to reorganise and increase links with the population in areas still controlled by Indonesia.

On the diplomatic front, FRETILIN could point to the negotiations as evidence that, for the first time in eight years, they were strong enough to force Murdani, who was appointed in early 1983 because he is for a military solution, gave notice of the onslaught in July.

It began in August, with the Indonesian Government hoping that, as in 1975, they could quickly subjugate the people.

Now it is February and there is no evidence that they have made any real progress.

In fact, not only has FRETILIN withstood the blitz, but is also making its own tactical counter-strikes.

Contrary to Indonesian claims that FRETILIN is tied down, they retain enough mobility and initiative to make those good opportunities to discourage attacks in the centre and west, which are diverting pressure from the east and south.

**Question:** Is there a danger of a repeat of the famine and social calamity caused by Indonesian operations in the early years of occupation?

**Answer:** Not just a danger, this is already happening. Both the Governor of East Timor,

Mario Carascalao, and the church have deplored the ongoing Indonesian military activity and called for more outside aid to counter the disastrous effects.

**Question:** Can you comment about efforts by some sections of Australian mass media to foster the idea that East Timor is exclusively a hard-line left-wing cause?

**Answer:** The fact is that East Timor is of concern to the broad Australian community.

Support ranges across the whole ideological spectrum in the ALP, as is reflected in the firmness of policy at all levels.

Even the Australian Democrats and some individual Liberals are for self-determination in East Timor.

Those who promote the left-wing conspiracy myth on this, do it to isolate principled activists, in the futile hope that awkward issues will eventually fade away.

Just look at the ALP State Conferences.

By no stretch of the imagination can anyone say that they are all left-dominated.

If they were, there would not be so much problem getting good policies implemented.

Looking beyond the ALP, take the organisation I work for, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid.

ACOA strongly supports the East Timorese, yet the 50 affiliated non-government groups also vary greatly in political complexion.

**Question:** It is often said that the Australian Government can do very little to influence the situation in East Timor. What do you think?

**Answer:** Australia could do far more.

We are probably in the best position to influence Indonesia, because of our geographic proximity and economic and military links.

It is alarming and tragic to see already from the present Labor Government, a re-run of the shameful role played by the Whitlam Government in Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor.

Prime Minister Hawke and Foreign Affairs Minister Hayden visited Indonesia last year, but they did not use those good opportunities to discourage Indonesia from the current offensive, which was openly being planned at the time.

If anything, this was a worse failure than 1975, since Hayden and Hawke ignored the spirit and letter of the present ALP policy, which explicitly stipulates action to influence Indonesia, including withdrawal of military aid.



reviews

# Under Fire Taking sides in Central America

Directed by Roger Spotswood  
Starring Nick Nolte, Joanna Cassidy  
and Gene Hackman

"I don't take sides, I take pictures" says Russell Price (Nick Nolte), photographer of Third World wars and hero of Under Fire. He is in Somoza's Nicaragua only weeks before the regime was overthrown by the Sandinistas. Price is an obsessive photographer, risking death for his shots, and absolutely unconcerned about the people he photographs. However, Nicaragua transforms him, teaching him, and the other two American journalists with him, that there is no neutrality in this kind of war.

Janet Burstall

Member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP  
Branch, Municipal Employees' Union

We are shown the brutality and cynicism of Somoza himself. The film comes out unequivocally on the side of the Sandinistas, against Somoza, by showing the American journalists learning to support the Sandinistas.

Although the American journalists, and not the Sandinistas, are the main characters of the film, Under Fire is a refreshing change from those films which use political struggles merely as a backdrop, without illuminating the struggle. The Year of Living Dangerously was such a film.

The film has obvious appeal for those of us who have been supporting the Nicaraguan revolution for some time. But could it shed any light, could it convince people who, like Price at the start, have not taken a side? There are a number of aspects of the film which suggest it might.

The use of journalists as the protagonists is an effective device for filling us in on the political situation. They take us to meet a range of characters from all walks of Nicaraguan life; credible characters who provide plenty of thought provoking material. One convincingly obnoxious character is an American soldier (Ed Harris).

Through the eyes of the journalists we also see the devastation of the civil war, the war of the streets, and the conditions of poverty in which the people lived. The photographs in Susan Meiselas' excellent book on Nicaragua, are now moving.

Superficially the story of the film concerns the careers and love affairs of the three American journalists: Claire

Stryder (Joanna Cassidy), Russell Price (Nick Nolte) and Alex Grazer, (Gene Hackman). While this may be disappointing for those who would like to see Nicaraguan characters playing more of a leading role, it may provide the film with enough commercialism and a point of identification for Western (or Northern?) audiences.

The love story is a standard one. It seems irrelevant to the rest of the film and is not involving in itself. If its incorporation was intended to disguise the film's political message, it did not seem to work in the U.S. where the film was a box office flop. It probably didn't get much promotion from the moguls of Hollywood who have their own favourite actor in the White House.

In fact, the film only really becomes engrossing a good half way through, as the fighting reaches Managua, and Grazer and Price get lost in National Guard territory. From then on it's as though you're in an aircraft ac-

celerating for takeoff, when previously it had been taxiing the runway waiting for clearance.

The shooting of one of the American journalists is based on an actual event in 1979 when the murder of an ABC reporter by National Guardsmen in the streets of Managua was filmed by television cameramen.

A grief-stricken Stryder is comforted by a Nicaraguan doctor. She suggests that, since it took the death of an American Journalist to make Americans aware of the deaths of some 50,000 Nicaraguans, perhaps the Nicaraguans should have shot a journalist 50 years earlier.

The superficial treatment of the Sandinista movement is a disappointing aspect of the film. There are many sympathetic Sandinistas, who are mainly very young. But the journalists' quest for the elusive, enigmatic, leader, Rafael, turns him into a cult figure. He

Continued next page

## CISCAC campaign

"It is the hour for unity of action." These are the words of Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega in response to the growing threat of a U.S. invasion of Central America.

CISCAC is calling for an immediate emergency campaign to help prevent that invasion or to raise the biggest possible response if and when it occurs.

On a national scale, preparations have already been made for:

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ADELAIDE: PO Box 428 Unley 5061
- BRISBANE: PO Box 141 Ashgrove 4060
- CANBERRA: PO Box 606 Dickson 2602
- HOBART: PO Box 532 Sandy Bay 7005
- MELBOURNE: PO Box 5421CC Melbourne 3001
- NEWCASTLE: PO Box 253 Newcastle 2300
- PERTH: PO Box 118 Victoria Park 6100
- SYDNEY: PO Box A431 Sydney South 2000
- WOLLONGONG: PO Box 1976 Wollongong 2500

reviews

Continued from previous page

is portrayed as the central inspiration of the revolution, to the extent that the Sandinista victory rally in Managua contents itself with chanting his name.

Of course the film does not confuse the fact that the Sandinistas understood that the overthrow of Somoza was essential, but it does not convey much of their positive aims.

Although it is nearly 5 years since the events portrayed in Under Fire, its release is very timely. Not only are the Nicaraguans desperately trying to defend their revolution and avoid a U.S. invasion; they are also holding their country's first genuine elections. This is in marked contrast with Somoza's elections where (as Stryder points out in the film) more ballots appeared in the boxes than the number of registered voters.

We can also imagine that El Salvador today looks very much like Nicaragua in Under Fire. El Salvador is having a fake election on March 25 where the people get to choose between a man who already failed to stop the violence in 16 months as president and a man who is alleged to have directed the death squads and ordered the murder of Archbishop Romero in 1980.

Australia, even under Labor, provides assistance to U.S. efforts against the Central American revolutions. U.S. warships in Fremantle replenish their supplies and refresh their marines for service, possibly against Nicaragua and the Salvadoran FMLN. After visiting Ronald Reagan in the White House last year, Hawke said publicly "we recognise the legitimate concern of the American government in regards to developments in this area."

We are safe in our cinema seats, watching the scenes in Under Fire, but, hopefully, it will do something to inspire more Australians to take the side of the revolutionaries in Nicaragua and El Salvador. There is a lot we can do, even from this distance.

## Back copies

Back copies of most issues of both Labor Militant and Socialist Fight can be made available on request. For a period of time we are charging only 20 cents a copy. Write to Labor Militant PO Box 372 Broadway NSW 2007

# On the Waterfront

Waterfront had all the ingredients of successful television — violence, romance, prejudice and heroism.

Like many other TV dramas it was set in the past. But what was unusual about it was that it depicted an important part of Australian labour history.

Tony Brown

Member Rozelle East (NSW) ALP Branch

The six-hour series told the story of the waterside strike of 1928. Many of the characters were based on real people and the events were similar to those that took place during what has become known as the "employers' offensive."

The offensive came at a time when the effects of post-War prosperity were beginning to wane and the employers in the shipping, timber and coal industries launched a drive to reduce wages and/or take away working conditions.

The pretence that the arbitration system is an instrument of social justice was shattered by the coercive methods introduced during this period, especially in the waterfront and timber disputes.

On September 10, 1928, Justice Beeby (a former Labor politician) handed down an award that required wharves to attend two pick-ups a day rather one. This meant that labourers could wait a whole day, not get picked up and go home without any pay.

The east coast ports struck in protest and, by the next week, Fremantle and Adelaide were also out. Stanley Bruce, the Conservative Prime Minister introduced the Transport Workers Act which Max Woodbury (Jack Thompson) of the TV series called the "Dog Collar Act." This Act meant that all waterside workers were to be licenced and that their licence could be withdrawn if they refused to accept an Award.

By early October, most of the 50 ports had given in, but not Port Melbourne. Against this background, Waterfront community to give a view of life in the one of the women in the wharfie community, Vera, embrace and agree that the fight must go on. It is a welcome change to see such a conclusion being drawn by two women who have learnt much from their participation in the struggle.

Many of the Italians had come to Australia to escape fascism. They were country and were often unaware that they were being used as scabs. Racism was fuelled by the legitimate anger at the use of scab labour.

The series succeeded in portraying the disorientation of the Italians in an

unfamiliar country. It showed the determination of the wharfies and their families; the toughness of union secretary Sam Elliot; and the racism of the Australians.

It showed signs of an emerging fascist movement in Australia and revealed the links between the Police Commissioner General Blamey, the Conservative Opposition leader and the Governor.

The bitterness of the dispute is well captured, particularly when the violence came to a head. On November 2, police opened fire on unarmed workers demonstrating against the scabs. Four were wounded and one, Alan Whittaker, died.

At the time Victoria had a Labor Government although Premier Hogan became a deserter in the mould of Billy Hughes and Justice Beeby.

The hatred of scabs is also well portrayed. You see why the wharfies took to bombing migrant clubs and boarding houses and throwing two Italian workers from a railway bridge. In the book Weevils in the Flour Tom Hills, who was a wharfie in 1928, recalls how intense the anti-scab feeling was at the time. He recounts seeing a funeral procession one day and being told not to take his hat off by a fellow wharfie because the dead man was a scab.

"When was he a scab?" asked Hills. "In 1890," came the reply.

The use of scabs on the wharves led to a serious undermining of hard-won conditions. And it was not until 1935 that the first steps were taken to unionise the scabs. The last port where this happened was Bundaberg in Queensland where any wharfie found talking to scabs was fined 5 pounds by the union — the equivalent of a week's wages.

The best aspect of Waterfront was the fact that the characters developed throughout the course of the strike. Max Woodbury gets a crash course in union politics and his romance with Anna (Greta Scacchi) establishes contact between the two warring communities.

The closing scenes show Anna and the women in the wharfie community, Vera, embrace and agree that the fight must go on. It is a welcome change to see such a conclusion being drawn by two women who have learnt much from their participation in the struggle.

If Waterfront is an indication of what they can do, let's hope that more television scriptwriters will turn their attention to other episodes in Australian labour history.



# Burke 'outliberalises' the Liberals

The February 5 edition of Rupert Murdoch's Perth paper, the Sunday Times, said this about the economic policies of the WA Labor Government of Brian Burke:

"What! . . . A Labor Government outliberalising the Liberals?"

"As fantastic as it may seem that appears to be the way that Mr Burke is heading.

**Frank Noakes**

Member of the Whitfords (WA) ALP Branch

"The news this week that private enterprise may soon be invited to take a share in some state government businesses must have Ben Chifley, who lost office over a proposal to nationalise banks, turning in his grave.

"Mr Burke and the ruling elements of the WA Labor movement should be applauded at having learnt their lessons from the days of Gough Whitlam."

The Government's economic policies have also won endorsement from other unlikely sources, such as the former senior executive of Western Mining Corporation, Sir Lawrence Brodie-Hall, who told a meeting of the WA School of Mines advisory council in the first week of March that:

"I am a supporter of free enterprise and political parties that support free enterprise. It was with some foreboding and some fear that I greeted the change of government. The events of the past 12 months have dispelled those fears."

At the same time some of the worst fears of socialists in the Party have been confirmed.

The same issue of the Sunday Times which editorialised in support of Burke's economic policies carried what it described as the "Burke Manifesto." This was the first time that Burke had published a broad outline of his economic policies and philosophy.

Burke proposed that there have been two main ways in which Labor Governments have approached economic policies which: "I've termed the 'primitive way' and the 'traditional way' . . ." He continued:

"The 'primitive way' is the most direct: blunt imposition of control through nationalisation or socialisation.

"Not only is this approach irrelevant to today's Australia, it is constitutionally and politically impossible for any State Government.

"The 'traditional way' is a mixture of small doses of the 'primitive way' combined with what is generally regarded as 'high tax government.'"

## Sunday Magazine

The Premier looks at his first year in office

### The Burke manifesto



Against these two courses Burke proposes a different solution.

"The 'positive way' accepts that the critical consideration is not the direct involvement of government in wealth creation, but maximising wealth created so that the share accepted by the community as legitimate for the Government increases."

Just what Burke means by this gobbledy-gook includes such "positive" measures as:

- The selling off of part of the State Government Insurance Office to private enterprise.

- Selling large tracts of Housing Commission land.

- Getting rid of 2000 jobs in the public service in one year.

- Supporting the wage-cutting Prices and Incomes Accord.

- An increase of Government rates and charges by 30 per cent.

Apparently it also involves sending cops onto Perth City Council garbage workers and supporting deregistration proceedings against the Electrical Trades Union.

Burke says that his Government's policies will "stimulate growth and increase the community's wealth. . . ." However, the only wealth that is growing is in the form of private profits, and the "distribution of resources to be devoted to public purposes" is really a cover for distributing resources away from the vast majority to the ruling rich.

Of course, Burke explains that selling off part of the SGIO will expand income, as will the sale of Housing Commission land. But they do not create wealth. They merely run down Government assets.

He also presented the Government's purchase of five per cent of the Ashton diamond joint venture as an example of the "positive way." But the Government obtained this by a fluke that isn't likely to be repeated.

Under existing State laws any new mining venture in the remote areas of the State, employing a large number of workers, has to provide housing and other facilities. Since the Ashton project is near the township of Kununurra, most of these facilities will not be required, so the Government let the company off the hook in return for the five per cent share.

In reality, the Government's policies cannot be credited for creating any new wealth, much less for distributing any more of it to working people. In fact, on closer inspection, Burke's "positive way" looks suspiciously like what he rightly termed the "traditional way" of Labor Governments: "small doses of the 'primitive way' combined with what is generally regarded as 'high tax government.'"

In his zeal to throw out the "primitive way," Burke has to lie. For example, when he says that nationalisation of industry is "constitutionally . . . impossible for any State Government," he contradicts no less an authority than Commonwealth Attorney-General Gareth Evans. In his contribution to the book *The Socialist Objective* Evans wrote:

"There is no constitutional difficulty about the states nationalising enterprises and industries operating solely within their own borders." And further: "Any state government can acquire any business operating on a purely intrastate basis at any time, for any purpose; whether it pays any compensation in return and whether that compensation is adequate are matters for state law to determine."

Burke's real objection to nationalisation is that it leads in the opposite direction to where he wants to go. Nationalisation means depriving some capitalists of their private assets and their ability to rake in private fortunes. It means turning these sources of wealth into public assets for the good of the whole community. Burke prefers to strengthen private enterprise by boosting profit levels. As the Murdoch press put it, he wants to "outliberalise the Liberals."

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