Renegotiating ANZUS

The New Zealand Labour government's stance against visiting nuclear armed or powered warships has received much publicity here in recent weeks. Understandably, it is something new to hear of a Labour government, and prime minister, that is prepared to stand by party policy and implement it, word for word, instead of merely interpreting its "spirit".

Speaking in Sydney last month, at the invitation of People for Nuclear Disarmament, was Helen Clark, chairperson of both the New Zealand Parliamentary Select Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Disarmament and Arms Control. Ms Clark pointed out that her government's action was a "valid and indigenous" response to the very grave threat of nuclear war. In Australia, and especially in the United States, she said, the New Zealand government had been misrepresented. The Wall Street Journal had referred to "the Greek disease" and The Washington Post to "Hollanditis" claiming that New Zealand, like these countries, had isolated itself from the realities of the rest of the world.

Far from being a new or rash step, the development of New Zealand's anti-nuclear position dates from as far back as 1966, when the French first began testing in Polynesia. Having gone on to win their election in July this year precisely on this issue of national security and ANZUS. In fact, says Clark, it was largely fought on the economy and other domestic issues though both Muldoon and, strangely enough, the US Ambassador, tried to turn the focus back on ANZUS. Helen Clark was shocked that a US Ambassador could issue statements in the run-up to an election, depreciating the opposition's policies, which is just what the US Ambassador did in New Zealand. Those familiar with the role of Marshall Green, US Ambassador to Australia under Whitlam, may not be surprised.

But public opinion in New Zealand on the nuclear issue is very strong and many of the tactics of the right and the US were less than productive. During Hiroshima Week last year, the US sent one of its largest nuclear-powered warships into Auckland Harbour. This provoked an extremely negative reaction from the New Zealand people. Over 50,000 came out into the streets to demonstrate — one in 15 of Auckland's population.

The New Zealand Labour Party (NZLP), in standing by its anti-nuclear policy, has gained support from the New Zealand people rather than lost it. In a national poll taken just after the general election in July, 76 percent approved of the NZLP policy of "no nuclear-armed ships". Perhaps even more surprisingly, 60 percent approved of the policy calling for the renegotiation of the ANZUS Alliance itself. The NZ government's policy is clear and uncompromising:

1) Legislation for a nuclear-free NZ, specifically no land-based nuclear weapons, no nuclear armed or powered ships, no nuclear power generation and no nuclear processing or waste (except for bona fide medical or scientific research).

2) A pledge to renegotiate ANZUS along the following lines: NZ participation only on the basis of its non-negotiable non-nuclear stance; moves for a nuclear free Pacific; partnership where all signatories are on equal terms and make unanimous decisions; the absolute guarantee of NZ security.

Finally, Helen Clark was adamant that it was possible for a small country to refuse to accept a super power's veto over its own sovereign affairs. In Greece it has been done, in Romania it has been done, the latter never having accepted nuclear weapons on its soil though it has always remained a member of the Warsaw Pact. Similarly, both Denmark and Norway will only remain in NATO while no nuclear weapons are on their soil in a time of peace.

The obvious question remaining is what we can now expect from the present Australian Labor government. If the NZLP can successfully renegotiate ANZUS, then even following Bob Hawke's and Bill Hayden's own reasoning, it must be possible for Australia to do the same.

Daryl Dellora

Cockburn Sound Protest

Women's anti-nuclear groups around Australia are preparing a two-week protest against US bases in Australia at the Cockburn Sound US military base in Western Australia. The demonstration is planned for December this year and over 1,400 women are expected to take part.

Simultaneously, a travelling women's peace camp will travel throughout the Sydney suburbs from 3 November to 2 December so that women unable to go to Cockburn Sound can participate. This NSW protest will be one of many actions held around Australia to demonstrate concern about the pres-
The left's sixty percent to forty percent victory was so decisive that it has forced the Reform Group out of the next ballot for national positions to be held in December. The leftwing team of Dick Scott (president), Greg Harrison (leftwing nominee to replace Laurie Carmichael as joint assistant secretary) and Bill Martin (national organiser) has been returned unopposed and the rightwing push led by Rod Kelly has come to a halt, at least for the time being.

At the time of writing, the Kelly group had lodged an objection with the Industrial Registrar about the nomination procedure for this next ballot but it is highly unlikely that this manoeuvre is anything more than a disruption tactic. It would have been easy for the right to nominate by the deadline even while lodging an objection, yet they did not.

The left vote in the September election, held at about the same level as the vote for defeated left candidate Bob Adamson in the previous ballot last January for one national organiser. Adamson lost the ballot by just 2,000 votes in a total vote of 45,000 after a particularly vicious anti-communist campaign was waged against him, and the rightwing candidate's leaflet contained a picture of himself (Charlie Bali) and Bob Hawke, implying Hawke's support.

However, the Reform Group's vote this time plummeted by about 10,000 (from about 23,500 in the January ballot to about 13,500), raising some interesting questions about the sudden desertion of "votes in the bag" for a group which claims the support of the majority of members. Among possible explanations is that earlier supporters drawn in by the Hawke photo subsequently realised they'd been conned and refused to vote this time.

Whatever the reasons, the rightwing in the labour movement has dealt a severe blow in its continuing attempts to take this and other key unions away from the left. The aim is not just to shift the policies of individual unions but to change the nature of the wider labour movement, including by taking away a significant bloc of left votes at both ACTU Congresses and state ALP conferences.

There is no doubt that the NCC is in this campaign up to its neck. We have that on no less an authority than B.A. Santamaria who, in a speech in Brisbane last year, which got an unauthorised public leaking, targeted the Teachers Federation and the AMFSU as the main left "citadels" to be captured.

However, the NCC is not the only force involved in this work and may well not even be the main one. The extreme rightwing ALP machine would also dearly love to wrest unions like the AMFSU from the left, if only to alter the balance of forces within the ALP itself. And the huge injection of funds for the Kelly group (probably nearing one million dollars over the last four years) can only have come from very wealthy backers indeed, unlikely to invest such funds solely with the NCC.

It remains to be seen whether such hard-headed investors will continue to invest in expensive ventures which, so far, have provided little return.

Brian Aarons

Palestinians have once again been defamed as the result of problems in the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

Ironically, the renewed attack by a government agency on the Palestinian community comes at a time when the Hawke government professes abhorrence of racist slurs on the migrant community. ASIO's unsubstantiated allegation was revealed by journalist Laurie Oakes on Channel Ten on 16 July. Oakes said the ASIO has a history of disinformation odour public relations. The latest ASIO claim has the usual disinformation odour surrounding it, as the Palestinians have become the new scapegoats used to justify ASIO's breaches of civil liberties. As with ASIO's previous anti-Palestinian allegations, no scrap of evidence has been produced, presumably because none exists.

From an article by Frank Carpenter in Free Palestine No. 31, July-August 1984.