

### HOW DUCKER SELLS OUT THE UNEMPLOYED

When, on Queen's Birthday weekend, the New South Wales Labor Party holds its 1978 State conference, the facta sheds and docks will not be watching the debates and the voting with hope or expectation. The Ducker machine, Sydney's Tammany Hall, has controlled New South Wales Labor now for so many years that the results of any Stal conference can be predicted without the aid of a computer. At a time of a general swing to the right among the middle class, Ducker will try to turn a drift to the right into a total reactionary retreat all along the line. And as always the "left" opposition, the Steering Committee, foully devoid of significant working class backing, will not fight on any of the important issues, having long ago decided that socialism meant more protection money for Australian manufacturers.

After four years of electoral failures, during which time the right wing held all the responsible positions and Ducks became senior federal vice-president, the federal and New South Wales machines have nevertheless tried to blame tF left for every election defeat since 1975. This is nonsense, but no one is denying it, within the Labor Party, certain not the Steering Committee. Following up the general right-wing offensive against the left, epitomised by the total pointless ban on the harmless, legalistic, social democratic newspaper Direct Action, Ducker is using the state conference as his platform to declare that "democratic socialism" should be struck from the A.L.P.'s objectives. In any decent party this open attack on the history and tradition of the working class would instantly be met with expulsion. But then the A.L.P. is not a decent party.

In choosing this moment to renounce socialism in any form, Ducker is scabbing on the New South Wales party's own program to fight unemployment, drafted by his own mate Labour Council secretary Unsworth in 1977. The industrial report to the New South Wales State Labor Conference in 1977 recommended that as part of the fight against unemployment "efforts should be made to expand public ownership of manufacturing and commercial activity wherever possible". How serious this recommendation really was is shown by the suggestion that it would be implemented if the Government Insurance Office entered the field of vehicle smash repairs. Public ownership was seen in liberal terms as desirable to provide competition with the private sector. In the case of shipbuilding, however, the British solution of "national public ownership" for shipbuilding was seen as vital to safeguard employment in that industry, even if only "in the long term". The 1977 Industrial Committee did recognise that the return of capitalism to the pre 1974 level, to "recovery", would not mop up existing unemployment in New South Wales. Its alternative program was hardly socialism, but it did recognise a real problem if it provided totally the wrong answers to it. Ducker in 1978, refuses to recognise the problem. In spite of the rapidly increasing unemployment, in spite of the increase in branch resolutions demanding socialist policies, Ducker will not make the smallest attack on the capitalist system to give jobs to the jobless. The only industrial "transformation" that Ducker now supports is a guaranteed 51% Australian equity in new industrial developments. Instead of workers' ownership Ducker wants Australian ownership - and even a bit less of Australian ownership. Labor is ceasing to be a workers' party to become a nationalist party. But along this line the superprotectionist Steering Committee has no objections. In spite of its talk, it will sell the party's basic objectives out to Ducker if the Labor Party sells out to the manufacturing pressure groups. And this happens at a time when the A.M.W.S.U., for all its rotten economic nationalism, has been forced to label the Australian B.H.P. the worst employer in Australia!

If occasionally it looks as if the only real opposition to Ducker within the A.L.P. is coming from Unsworth, it is worth pointing out - especially for the benefit of those small sects who want to nationalise everything in sight - that some of Unsworth's associates support nationalisation, not because it would help the workers, but because the State or Federal Government could stop strikes and halt union disruption better than private employers. There is a fascist, as well as a "socialist" concept of nationalisation, and undoubtedly this was in the back of Unsworth's mind when he wanted public ownership of the Newcastle dockyards. It is such an anti-union policy - not in Wran's case, at the fascist stage - that is the basis of the present Wran government policies to the Newcastle dockyards. The communist program is not for nationalisation, that much discredited word, but for expropriation, the direct seizure by the workers themselves of industrial workplaces to control their operation themselves as a step to the seizure of full economic and political power by the workers through a revolutionary communist party. This was the Communist Left policy to halt the sackings at Chrysler. It is clear how far this is from the position of any grouping within the Labor Party. Those groups who talk about nationalisation simply do so because they do not want any attack on capitalist prerogatives now. The Steering Committee could not even agree to put in their manifesto a proposal for the nationalisation of one specific industry - some of the manufacturing giants whom John Garland is on such good terms with might have been offended. The solution of the problems of manufacturing in Australia lies not in protection or "Australianisation" but in expropriation. No policy of shorter hours at increased pay rates to cover real rises in living costs can be successful except on the basis of expropriation. The 1978 Industrial Committee report notes that a shorter working week has already been achieved in stevedoring, mining and oil and in sections of Commonwealth and State Government employment. It does not say how many more workers have got jobs as a result of these reductions in working hours since the answer is - none.

The Legal and Constitutional Committee of the party have made uncertain steps toward an uncertain conversion to republicanisim in order to offer the party a suitable long-term objective in the place of socialism. The right wing however decided once before that the risks involved in abolishing the entire existing Australian constitution - which lays down legal barriers to nationalisation of industry more stringent even than those in the United States constitution - might take Ducker and his friends further to the left than they intend, and open possibilities of direct working class action to destroy the existing legal framework. Their supine worship of legality is well demonstrated by the whole Party's (including the Steering Committee's) refusal to abolish the undemocratic New South Wales upper house, but merely "reform" it. If there were one single parliament for the whole of New South Wales, it might repudiate the overseas debt again, as Lang wanted to do. Against such horrors, Ducker and the Steering Committee constitute themselves a watchful guard for big business. What the workers need is one government for Australia - the State Governments create totally unnecessary bureaucracies for which the workers pay, which allow opportunists like Wran - the best Liberal premier New South Wales has ever had - to conspire with American investment to keep out a federal Labor Government. With full bourgeois democracy, it will be impossible to blame Governors or upper houses for blocking left legislation, and Hayden, Wran, Ducker and their friends will have to take the full responsibility for their failure to take any left-wing action to protect the workers. In such a situation, class struggle will be intensified, and the building of a revolutionary party will be accelerated.

The New South Wales Labor Party Conference will once again demonstrate that Labor is a capitalist workers party. The workers must break from capitalist policies and build a revolutionary communist party

