

Sparks

Anarcho-Syndicalist Paper
no 1. May 86

The people who have produced this paper are a group of anarcho-syndicalists who all work in the transport industry. We want to break down the divisions between rail and tram and bus workers. We all have the same boss - the State Transport Authority - we need to organize together.

WE DO NOT NEED bosses or managers - they need us. Their rules and regulations usually hinder our work and in fact it is because we - the workers - co operate and help each other that we get the job done. If we worked to rule and followed all the regulations the result would be chaos.

Our aim in this paper is to give voice to workers who don't want to be told what to do by politicians and bureaucrats. Anarcho-syndicalists are not like the militants of the left-wing parties who want to win power themselves.

We believe in SELF-MANAGEMENT, where decisions are made in meetings of workers and each person has an equal voice and equal decision making power.

Anarcho-syndicalism is also about where we live, our community. It is possible for people to meet together in neighbourhood groups to discuss and decide on issues which affect our daily lives. For example, information about the transport needs of a community is passed on to the transport workers who have the knowledge and ability to act on that information.

Many of the problems of our society are directly related to the fact that control over our daily lives is constantly being taken away from us.

We will no longer elect representatives who promise one thing and do another. We want to work co operatively to do the tasks we all agree need to be done.

If you think that's crazy, look around you. Isn't the world we live in the real madness? Why do we need bosses? Why should a few people have the power to tell the rest of us what to do?

Anarcho-syndicalism is a method for worker-community organization NOW.

NO ONE ELSE DOES YOUR WORK, SO DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE MAKE YOUR DECISIONS!

SPARKS IS A REGULAR NEWSHEET PRODUCED BY A GROUP OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORKERS - BOTH EMPLOYED & UNEMPLOYED. WE ARE ALL MEMBERS OF THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST FEDERATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION, COMMENTS ETC. WRITE TO US AT P.O. BOX 1066 NTH. RICHMOND. 3121

If you dont fight you lose!

The Arbitration Commission has recommended that shunters receive an allowance of up to \$100 per week - depending on their grade - to compensate for the loss of income that resulted from the reduction of shifts from twelve to ten days per fortnight.

As of the end of May, the S.T.A. have not yet acknowledged whether they'll agree with the recommendation, so the possibility of further action by shunters cannot be discounted. We have to understand that what affects the shunters affects all of us.

Our industry is under attack from a government determined to chop out all services it deems "unprofitable" and in the process wipe out 2500 jobs.

The Corporate Plan outlined in detail, the intention to reduce the freight service into a primarily bulk commodity mover. The freight service is where the most militant group of railworkers is - the shunters.

If the government succeeds in cowering the shunters, it knows it has a virtual free hand to do whatever it pleases with the rest of the system.

Already, 850 jobs have been "attritioned" since August last year. If we don't recognise the importance of Solidarity now our jobs, and a viable public necessity, will be at the mercy of people whose prime motive in life is profit.

PROFIT = EXPLOITATION

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THEIR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT

The Public Transport system is under attack by the State government/Capitalist bosses and it is only a matter of time before the system breaks down completely under this pressure.

And yet, despite the attacks, Public Transport workers remain divided. We continue to struggle separately against the same problems. It is about time we came to terms with the fact that the railway workers fight is the tramway workers fight and vice-versa.

We are all afflicted with burgeoning bureaucracies that are inefficient, non-productive, and costly. More and more labour costs are being squandered on top management positions.

Staff shortages in both the railways and tramways has resulted in train and tram cancellations, station closures, overloaded vehicles, and excessive overtime with the resulting health and safety problems.

Inadequate wages forces both tramway and railway workers to work longer hours for a liveable wage. All workers have suffered close on a 10% cut in real income over the last few years. We have handed back wages and conditions won after hard struggles by workers without even questioning it. The Accord, untouchable weapon of the bosses remains a major contribution to the decline in living standards.

We are all threatened by "rationalisation", the bosses word for slashing services and cutting jobs.

The issues are the same for us all. We are all Public Transport workers. We are all under attack.

The State government cannot afford to drive us together and will continue to attack each section of the industry separately. Our union bureaucrats perpetuate the divisions, assisting the bosses in keeping us apart with demarcation disputes, petty squabbles, diversions, stalling tactics, compromises and sellouts. We cannot afford to allow them to get away with this divide and conquer policy.

It is essential that we unite as rank and file Public Transport workers to fight the cuts. We must take combined action in defence of our wages and conditions, indeed of our very jobs.

It is vital that if one section of the industry is pushed into taking industrial action, that all sections, all tramway and railway workers, take industrial action in support. An attack on one is an attack on all.

Combined and united, Public Transport workers are unbeatable. Organized together as rank and file workers, making our own decisions, our strength is enormous.

The whole system depends on us. We take the workers of other industries to their factories, their offices. We take the consumers to the business districts. We take the young to their schools.

With combined action we can stop the city and win the struggle. It is time we understood this. It is time we organized ourselves into elected shop floor committees, industry wide, free of union bureaucrats, in defence of all our interests and the interests of the communities we serve.

THEIR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT is not just a slogan.

RANK AND FILE WORKER
STH. MELB. TRAM DEPOT

Tram Conductor

A tram conductor.

You say to me,

"Gee,

that'd be a great job.

All the interesting
people..."

Yeah.

All the interesting
people.

Giving you

the shits

with all their stupid

questions;

their copper coins.

Their patronizing

looks;

their young children

whom

they beat and yell at.

Their banal

chatter,

their drunkenness,

their vomit,

their stinking McDonald's,

their germs,

their abuse.

Except

it isn't them,

it's you.

You,

you understand!!

And can you

get up at 4:00

in the morning

six days a week,

then get home

at 2:00

in the morning

for the next six days?

(You didn't know that

we work six days a week, did you?)

And can you work

over Easter,

Christmas,

New Year?

Do you like

wearing a uniform?

Do you like bosses

who threaten

to sack you

because you look scruffy?

Have you ever been told

that you

can't work

because your shirt isn't ironed?

Do you like

constant noise?

Huh?

So unless you can take

all that shit

for six days a week,

don't say to me,

"Gee,

that'd be a great job".

