

SPARKS

The Paper of the Public Transport Workers
Association



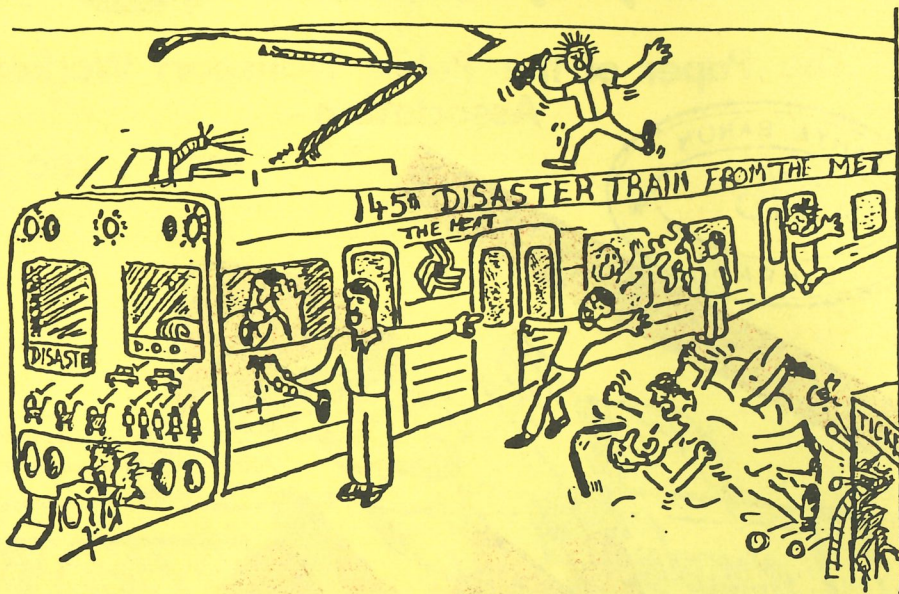
NO.11

DEC '87

SPECIAL STRIKE ISSUE



DRIVER ONLY OPERATION



STICKERS: From PTWA-Po.Box 1066,Nth.Richmond,3121.

TRAIN GUARDS-Your safety is in their hands.

TRAIN GUARDS-You'd notice them if they weren't there.

TRAM CONDUCTORS-You'd notice them if they weren't there.

(enclose a couple of dollars if you can afford to)

DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP

Car cleaners at Sth.Dynon are taking action for the first time in years.They work on cleaning the Overlander(Adelaide),the Vinelander(Mildura) and the Sydney trains.For months they've been doing 13 shifts a fortnight,often working daily overtime as well.Management have been happy-they haven't had to employ as many staff as they should. On Tuesday 8th Dec.the 41 cleaners banned all daily overtime.If management fail to introduce a new roster by Sunday 20th Dec. which includes a maximum limit of 12 shifts per fortnight(every second weekend off),plus the hiring of at least 7 extra cleaners,then the workers are going to implement **their own** roster.This will leave the depot half-staffed at weekends.Keep it up comrades!

ACT NOW

As we go to print-Wed.16th Dec.-the guards strike that began on the 8th Dec.is still continuing.It's vital **all** transport workers identify with the guards struggle.Why?Because if the guards go,the ramifications for everyone of us are enormous.Government success here would pave the way for one person operated trams,as well as an eventual reduction in the train services down to a peak-hour system.Every workers position from the connies,station assistants,maintenance crews,drivers,etc,would be affected by such moves.

These aren't the mad fantasies of the 'SPARKS Mob'-our information is gleaned from the various governmental,departmental and union documents that have been issued over the past year.They indicate where we workers are headed if we don't take a stand **soon**.And since a huge momentum has been built up by the guards strike,NOW is the time to act.

Trammies and bus drivers have untold power in their hands now with the city so dependent on them.ATMOEA members need to act with the other tramway unions(ETU,AMWU,VBU)-bans or go slows on defective trams,general maintenance work,etc.Train drivers,members of the AFULE,have generally got a love-hate relationship with guards and the ARU.Craft differences have to be forgotten.Drivers could ease the pressure on the guards by letting them return to work to earn a bit of money,and then striking for them-and against Driver-Only-Operation.

Disputes are won when the rank & file control things.Don't wait for the union leaderships to act on your behalf:we may be waiting too long for some of them to act and by then it'll be too late.If your unsure about what action to take,then offer whatever assistance you can to those workers on strike or stood-down by the bosses.Start a collection;put info out for your depot or for the users on your routes.Identify with those in struggle.

At a minimum,a 24 hour stoppage of all public transport workers needs to occur.A mass meeting can then take place where the means to defend **and** extend our industry can be natted out.We don't need another mass-meeting that's nothing more than a talk-fest for the officials.**We all know the issues.IT'S TIME TO ACT.**

the long STRIKE SURVIVAL GUIDE

Our pay is so low we can barely save in anticipation of strike action. For all of us extended industrial action means severe financial hardship. The bosses can effectively starve us back to work, hungry, beaten and dejected.

WHAT WE CAN DO—Food, basic needs, food and shelter:

Other workers and unions will extend solidarity. We appeal to other labor organisations and sympathisers to donate foodstuffs. We write out lists of foods we need as well as quantities. It's bought wholesale or donated and taken to a central spot or if support is wide enough, local distribution centres. We organise a roster for packing teams, and package food parcels for different sized families and groups. We have a weekly distribution where striking workers can pick up their food parcels. **This is solidarity and mutual aid, not charity.**

FOOD HALLS ARE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY—Especially when strikes are more localised. Cooking teams organise and roster themselves to have three meals prepared, with donated food, in a hall where strikers and their dependants can eat. The added advantage of communal feeds are that people come together to give each other spirit and encouragement. And the musically inclined can provide entertainment!

SHELTER—Rents and Mortgages:

In a long strike any money our unions have acquired must be distributed amongst strikers on a weekly basis. Sympathisers can and will get active raising funds. Through our unions we can have letters made out to take to our landlords, estate agents and banks informing them that we will pay according to our means, and that any attempt to evict us, sell our

STRIKE SURVIVAL GUIDE CONTINUED.....

homes, etc, will be met with immediate direct action against them which could be suggested to result in greater cost to them—Yes. Threaten them.

These are some hints gleaned from worker self-organisation and mutual aid in past strikes. **TOGETHER WE CAN WIN**

WORKERS AT PRESTON TRAM DEPOT HAVE SHOWN SOLIDARITY WITH STRIKING GUARDS BY STARTING A VOLUNTARY STRIKE FUND FOR THE GUARDS. THIS SHOULD BE ONLY THE BEGINNING.

In Solidarity, **Tramway Annie.**
(No relation to Railway Annie)

family fun day

FREE FOR STRIKERS

\$4 if you WORK
\$1 if you DONT

NEXT THING, IT'LL BE UNMANNED TRAINS!

FLINDERS ST. STATION
SWANSTON STREET
BRIDGE
BATMAN AVE
YARRA RIVER

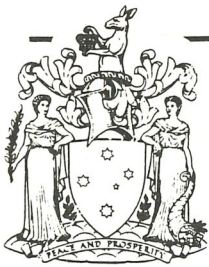
SPEAKERS CORNER
TENNIS CENTER

← 250 yd →

HERE SUNDAY
20th. DEC.
1.PM

ALL CASH RAISED goes To The GUARDS

**GAMES DRINKS FOOD
BAR-B-QUE MUSIC FUN**



PREMIER OF VICTORIA
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne, Victoria 3002

Telephone (03) 651 9111
Telex No. AA32636

Please Quote: MC2
Your Ref: D.O.O.

Mr. Potsy Kennan,
New Transport Minister,
Cowards Castle,
Spring St,
Melb. 3000.

17.12.'87.

Dear Potsy,

DRIVER ONLY OPERATION (D.O.O.) EXAMINATION PAPER

Subject to the rules and regulations of the transport industry, you are required to demonstrate your competency to perform in the function of Transport Minister. As the Transport Minister, you will be required to perform miracles with an antiquated rail system. Therefore, the Premiers Department has completed a simple questionnaire for you to complete. We really hope you can provide a reasonable answer to each question, or else you will meet the same sorry outcome as your predecessor, Snappy Tom.

Read each question carefully. When you think of an answer, fill it out on your own sheet of paper. If you fail to solve the train strike, you will be required to shove unsold "MY BEARS" up your arse.

THE QUESTIONS:

- (A) Currently V/Line Freight trains have a two-person crew, why then is it considered less important to have a two-person crew on suburban passenger trains? Does your government value the private property of commercial freight haulers more than the safety of the good citizens of Melbourne?
Explain in 50 words. 5 mark.

- (B) In future, will train drivers be required to have rubber necks, so that they can look in all directions at once? Or, is it your intention to genetically breed mutants with eyes in the back of their heads to drive trains?
Discuss in 50 words. 5 marks.
- (C) Your Premier has stated that there is no useful role for suburban guards on the train. If guards are useless, why was a suburban guard awarded a bravery medal in relation to the Clifton Hill shootings?
Discuss. 5 marks.
- (D) Since ticket machines are to be introduced, when are the connies getting the chop from the trams?
Discuss. 5 marks.
- (E) Can the new train radios revive a train driver or passenger in the event of a heart-attack?
Discuss. 5 marks.
- (F) The rules and regulations of the railways are enshrined in an act of parliament and altered as a result of coronial inquest. How can you justify alterations to those safe working practices based on the misinformed opinions of Public Transport Officials with no experience in running trains?
Discuss. 5 marks.
- (G) The sacking of the suburban guards is promoted as as cost-saving measure. If the government is serious about saving costs, why have they expanded P.T. management by fifty percent?
Discuss. 5 marks.

Please forward your completed questionnaire to: **Guards Depot, Gate Six, Batman Ave, Melb.**

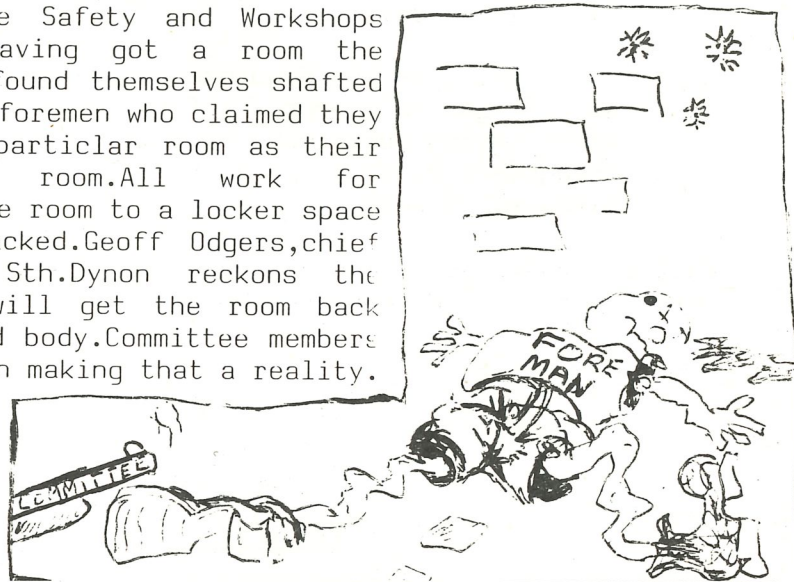
Yours Sincerely,


JOHN CAIN
PREMIER

POISONED AT STH. DYNON

At the Sth.Dynon Locomotive Workshop, the diesel maintainers are being subjected to daily soakings in a rust inhibitor called CHROMATE, a proven cancer causer. Obviously the locomotive engines have to have the rust inhibited in some way but not at the expense of workers lives. Alternatives to CHROMATE including better maintenance procedures and different, less dangerous cleaning agents, have been put to management by the Workshops Committee. Management want the issue to go away. They called in some 'expert' from Occupational Health and Safety who informed the workers the quantities of CHROMATE being used were safe and that cancer rates from exposure to the stuff were "not much greater" than the normal cancer rates in the wider community. His statement did absolutely nothing to pacify the workers. They've demanded overalls be washed at the Workshops to avoid exposing families and friends to CHROMATE. As well the Workshops Committee intends to take action over the issue soon.

Also happening at the Dynon Workshops is a dispute with local management over access to a private room with phone, for the Safety and Workshops Committees'. Having got a room the Committees' found themselves shafted by the local foremen who claimed they needed that particular room as their new locker room. All work for converting the room to a locker space has been blocked. Geoff Odgers, chief foreman at Sth.Dynon reckons the Committees' will get the room back over his dead body. Committee members are working on making that a reality.



MTA Change Projects equals Job Losses

over 800 jobs to go in Tram and Bus Division by Dec. '88

CASUALTY LIST

630 connies to go - new ticketing system, LRV, removal of 'Z' seats.

50 maintenance positions to go - review of work practices.

35 revenue clerks to go - review of work practices, new technology.

30 Operations Inspectors to go - introduction of AVM.

30 Tram drivers to go - introduction of LRV.

30 Bus drivers to go - introduction of articulated buses, service cuts in St. Kilda Rd.

The MTA is planning to introduce microprocessor based ticket issuing and cancelling technology and the use of off-vehicle ticket selling systems to facilitate one-person-operation (OPO) on trams (Change Projects MC56,57). Further reductions in the number of conductors are expected with the planned introduction of LRVs on seven existing tram routes (Change Project MC34). This is expected to result in the loss of 630 conductors by MTA estimates. Plans are already underway to remove connies from all 'Z' and 'A' Class trams (Change Projects MC56). Preston Depot recently banned two "Zeds" that have had connee seats removed. There is even a suggestion that 'W' Class trams be modified for OPO.

Regarding OPO the MTA document "MTA Change Projects" (dated May 1987) notes "Managements position is that this change is not feasible without a major change to the ticketing system" implying that the ATM/OEA has had discussions with the MTA about it - but what details have the union given its members? **SPARKS** is yet to substantiate a rumour that the MTA has signed a contract with Amcal Chemists to install ticket machines in their outlets.

Talk of getting rid of connies has been around for years, the only thing that deterred Management from bringing it in sooner was a militant response from the rank and file. Drivers must support connies on this issue - don't be sucked in by a measly increase in pay (\$3.65 for LRV!). A loss of a connee means a weakened industrial position, a poorer standard of service, and decreased staff security (ask any Doncaster driver).

CHANGE PROJECTS cont.

The PTWA considers any industrial tactic a legitimate response when it comes to defending jobs and conditions.

Connies won't be the only ones to cop it under the projected changes. The MTA is looking at a reduction of revenue clerks and DM's clerks (by at least 35) with the introduction of new technology and the re-negotiation of work practices (shades of the New Right!)

At least 50 maintenance positions are to go through a general review of work practices and the introduction of new traction sub-station equipment.

30 Operations Inspectors are expected to go with the introduction of Automatic Vehicle Monitoring (AVM). All government owned MTA buses have AVM but since its introduction many drivers have complained of breakdowns in the system - some drivers don't even bother using it.

With the introduction of articulated trams and buses there will be one less driving job for every articulated vehicle brought into service and the review of services in St. Kilda Rd. will a loss of 15 jobs at Elwood Depot.

MTA Changes Projects is typical of the New Right mentality currying favour amongst MTA bureaucrats. It is obvious from MTA Business Planning Report No.1 that the MTA intends to sack staff, increase the workload on remaining staff, reducing wages in real terms, reduce burden on government coffers (after all, there are Taberets to build and Ministers to pay) whilst increasing subsidies to private bus contractors.

What does all this mean for public transport workers? Increased workload and stress for less pay (for which hard-fought-for conditions have been traded off), lower work morale, higher staff turnover, poorer service to the public. In short, the MTA is to reduce the cost of public transport to the government at the expense of public transport workers and users. The ATMOEA has shown no desire to seriously resist these attacks despite their preliminary discussions and consultative structures.

It is up to us - the rank and file - to gather information, to talk about and discuss the issues, and begin to organize and fight. It is our responsibility to ourselves and the public transport users of Melbourne to prevent this vicious attack on the service.

THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN REPRINTED FROM SPARKS No.10 (incase you missed it!)

PORT MELBOURNE LIGHT RAIL

Having lifted the ban on the St.Kilda Light Rail earlier this month Sth.Melbourne trammies black banned the Pt.Melbourne line in the face of continuing management intransigence in relation to demands concerning crew and passenger safety and and working conditions.As usual Exec offices of the ATMOEA did their best to thwart the action of it's members in the 'interests' of good publicity for their Labor Government.



WORKERS FREE TRAVEL

The ATMOEA has indicated it'll pull out of the Reciprical Travel Agreement signed in March '86 by all unions in the MTA and STA*.This has been done because ATMOEA members have been booked and in some cases issued with summons,particularly along the Geelong Line.

Perhaps the failure of the agreements on the part of the unions is a reflection of the lack of communications between the ARU and the conductors on the Geelong line.Ultimately,governments and unions do not decide who will or will not travel for free.**That decision is up to the workers.Since we're all in the same industry all transport workers should travel free on the different systems.**

The Reciprical Travel Agreement means that P.T.workers recognise each others employees passes as free travel passes.

LEIGH KENDALL,Driver,South Melb.



GUARDS

**YOUR SAFETY IN
OUR HANDS!!!**

The move to kick guards off trains is a cost-cutting exercise--that must be understood. The government p.r. unit has worked overtime in pushing the idea that technology has superceded guards duties. That is utter rot. The radios guards fought for in March after one guard was brutally bashed, we have. They do the job adequately. The radios now being promoted by the government will take away certain duties of the guard, leaving major safety issues in the lap of the gods. Our arguments are not directed at those radios. Safety issues have been shunted aside by the government as it pushes through the Driver-Only scheme-to save money.

The MTA bosses running the D-0-0 project have told guards delegates "passenger safety is a philosophical question" that will not be addressed by the D-0-0 'team'. In other words these bureaucrats are focusing on the technical aspects of train running and coming up with the only answer their after: trains don't need guards. Which is true up to a point-on paper it could appear feasible. The reality is Melbourne's train network is 19th Century designed. Freight trains run on the same track as suburban trains while there are scores of level crossings throughout the system. In the event of an accident with a freight train or a truck, will the coroner consider passenger safety a "philosophical question"??? Every overseas D-0-0 network has either been designed from scratch to operate as such, or the system's run underground or on overpass'. Obviously these conditions cannot be met here in Melbourne.....(safely).

ADAM MUYT, sub.guard.

SPARKS is produced by the PUBLIC TRANSPORT
WORKERS ASSOCIATION

The PTWA is a federated member group of the
Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. We can be contacted
at: P.O. BOX 1066, Nth. Richmond, 3121.
