

SPARKS

The Paper of the Public Transport Workers
Association

№ 15

Jul - Aug '88

Commuters suffer

How much longer will public transport commuters have to suffer before we have effective government intervention? Surely, there can be very few other essential services besides public transport. Without workers how can the economy function?

Martin Bolger,
Heidelberg.

The strike which shut down much of Melbourne's public transport yesterday prompted some angry comments from readers.

We can't afford it

Partial transport stoppages in the interest of passengers (guards and manned stations) are tolerable but we can't afford shock treatment by rap strikes which reduce confidence and patronage.

Betty Milton,
Ringwood.

Strikers have friends

The cost-of-living train has thundered past leaving our wages standing at the platform. Public transport workers are taking action so that our living standards aren't stranded forever and I, for one, so "inconvenienced", fully support them. Rail workers have friends.

David Pope,

Force them back

Mr Cain should invoke the Essential Services Act to force striking railway workers to return to work. The public should in no way be held ransom.

Max Niggel,
St Kilda.

No second chance

On Wednesday of this week, I entrusted myself to the staff of the Met to get me to and from work for the rest of the week and they kick me in the teeth. They won't get a second chance.

Don Bruce,
Watsonia.

Thank the police

Hats off to the police standing in the rain trying to assist the traffic yesterday morning. How much thanks will the strikers give to the police and motorists who are carrying the burden while they feather their own nests?

Colin Carter,
Hawthorn.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM : WHERE WE STAND

1. Our aim is a free and equal society.
2. We are a revolutionary labour movement that uses, as its only means of struggle, direct action in all its forms - occupations, strikes, boycotts, sabotage, the general strike, etc. We are independent from all reformist and hierarchic unions and political parties, and we are actively creating an alternative to these and to existing society. We do not seek to gain political power, but rather to see it distributed equally amongst all.
3. We are a federation of autonomous anarcho-syndicalist groups practising co-operation and mutual aid. We have no leaders. All members have an equal part in the making of decisions. Responsibilities within the group are carried out by recallable delegates on a voluntary basis. Decisions of the federation are subject to agreement by the member groups.
4. We are engaged in struggle where we work and where we live, to develop self-managed production, distribution, and servicing for the world community, to meet human needs rather than profit. We give solidarity to others involved in these struggles.
5. We are fighting to abolish all authoritarian institutions, such as the state (including its communist variety), capitalism, patriarchy, and all hierarchical and oppressive divisions between people.
6. We have no country and are organised on an international basis in opposition to oppression everywhere.

"SPARKS" is produced by the Public Transport Workers Association.
Send your contributions to, or contact us at:
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The Public Transport Workers Association

NOW MEETS

On the first Monday of the month

AT THE LINCOLN HOTEL

So, if you've always thought about joining us, or you'd just like to see how we work, come along!

Next meeting: Mon Aug 1st, 7.30pm.

The Lincoln is on the corner of Cardigan and Queensberry Sts, CARLTON. Just ask for the meeting room.

VIDEO: On August 1st we will show a short on Driver Only Operation, which was made in London against D.O.O.

Future meetings: Mon 5th Sept & 3rd Oct. (same time, same place.)

by Leigh Kendall,
STH.MELB.DEPOT

atmoea election

On May 26 about 2200 out of 3000 ATMEOA members voted in an election for the position of Assistant Secretary. Three candidates contested the position; Jack Shirley, Rohan Byrnes, and Helen Said.

Jack Shirley is President of the Vic. branch ATMEOA and a member of the ALP. His candidacy was endorsed by Jim Harper and members of the union executive. Jack Shirley sought the vote of members on the grounds that he had the experience and maturity "to deal with the very real threats we are facing, of job losses, inadequate pay, cuts in our working conditions". About 20% of the members voted for Jack Shirley.

At the time of the election Rohan Byrnes was North Fitzroy Delegate and a member of the Communist Party of Australia. His candidacy was endorsed by the delegates from the depots with a reputation for militancy - Essendon, Preston, South Melbourne, and Brunswick. He campaigned on a platform of improved union democracy and improved staffing levels in the maintenance and non-traffic areas. He, and those who support him, said it's "time for change". Around 40% of the members voted for Rohan Byrnes.

Helen Said is a rank and file connie/driver at Kew depot, well known for her activity in the ATMEOA. A former member of the Socialist Workers Party, she was the only candidate who is not a member of a political party nor is she aligned with any grouping in the union. She was endorsed by rank and file members of the union and life member ex-Secretary Clarrie O'Shea. Her campaign called for improvements in wages, conditions, staffing levels, service, and union democracy. More than 10% of members voted for Helen Said.

The election results clearly show a rejection of the performance of Jack Shirley, Jim Harper, et al. Many members have not forgotten the sell-out of the North Fitzroy bus connies, not to mention the 4% PLD rip-off. The concern for union democracy reflected the lack of contact between the comfy-chair crew at King St, and the membership.

There was worry that the anti-Union Office vote would be split between Rohan Byrnes and Helen Said but it appears that even a brindle bull terrier would've beaten Jack Shirley.

This fear caused many members who would've voted for Helen Said to vote for Rohan Byrnes lest Jack Shirley get in.

But what of the 25-30% of members who did not vote? For sure, some couldn't give a toss one way or the other, but others (PTWA members included) boycotted the election because they want to see a change in the structure of the union and not necessarily a change of faces around the union office. Rohan Byrnes has been elected on a commitment to improved union democracy (What happened to quarterly meetings?), and arresting the downgrading of the system; the embodiment of which is Metplan. Will Rohan become just another beauracrat?...we shall see soon enough. In the meantime the PTWA will continue to push for a rank and file controlled industrial union with recallable and accountable officials based on a federation of workplace (depot, sheds etc) committees.

WHERE WAS THE SUPPORT
(Depot with percentage of vote)

Rohan Byrnes
Essendon (84%)
Nth Fitzroy (76%)
Footscray (74%)

Helen Said
Glenhuntly (36%)
Kew (29%)
Malvern (26%)

Jack Shirley
Camberwell (78%)
Doncaster (61%)
Malvern (47%)





ELECTION TIME (YAWN)

The ARU elections are in full swing now and soon two letters will appear in ARU members letterboxes. One will be from the Electoral Office and contains several voting forms for various jobs in the ARU hierarchy. The other form will be from the misnamed 'Militant Committee'—the Unity Hall crowd—showing you how to vote for them. It's rumoured the funds for the 'Militant' how-to-vote cards come from a cosy "you scratch my back—I'll scratch your's" deal they have going with the ALP over union affiliation fees. Below we suggest ways of dealing with the ARU elections.

The PTWA suggests the ballot papers for State Executive Officers & Delegates to Trades and Labor Council would fit nicely on the bottom of your bird's cage. State Exec. positions include secretary, president and organisers. Some people say "the Unity Hall bunch are bankrupt, here's our opportunity for change". Undoubtedly they are politically and morally bankrupt but change doesn't necessarily come with 'new leadership'. There's a flaw in the idea that with the right leadership all our problems can be solved. History is full of 'benevolent' leadership—it's also full of dictators, the corrupt, etc. Real change needs to be rooted in the desires of the people for control of their environment and being prepared to fight for what they want above the will of politicians. We could go on (and ON and ON) about the numerous sellouts done by Unity Hall but is any ARU member not aligned to the Militant Committee unaware of these????????? Sure the political alignments of the officials affect their behaviour. As well, the fact these bureaucratic officers are no longer working on the job contributes significantly to their out-of-touch goings on. They pop up when a dispute is happening or when they want endorsement on a campaign and that's about the only time we see them.



A.R.U. elections cont'.....

It's at the bottom of the ARU structures that voting can be seen as useful. There are problems; we'll attempt a 'balanced' analysis. Candidates at depot or section level at least have to face up to their members on a day to day basis so if they step out of line they can be pulled up. But ARU structures don't allow members to recall anyone who acts against the members interests. Hauling the local official or committee member over the coals works when the section is strong but even so these people can (and do) ignore censure moves.

The depot or section committee is the only level the ARU has at a local, workplace level and it's the only place where real change is likely to come from. Unity Hall can, under the rules of the union, override any decision of the rank & file, but if the members are determined enough they can go it alone. Hence the people you choose must be committed to your interests. Don't support a candidate just 'cause they SAY they'll do a better job than the others.

Institutional undemocratic structures work against depot/section committees but if the members are determined enough, local empire building can be thwarted.

CN, station worker.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP FRANK.

The last seven uncomfortable, noisy, drafty, asbestos sheeted blue Harris trains have been pulled out of service—no thanks to Socialist Party member and AFULE Fuhrer, Frank Hussey. This 'communist militant' cares so much for his members health he over-ruled Jolimont AFULE Occupational Health and Safety delegates when they banned these trains in early June because of asbestos fibres floating through them. Seems Hussey came to an 'understanding' with MET management and agreed to get the Harris' running again without any monitoring of asbestos levels. Hussey however doesn't control suburban guards, whose health was obviously just as endangered as the drivers. Their safety delegates promptly banned these trains. This stand was vindicated when extra tests were done that proved asbestos fibres were around in abundance. Management had no choice but to withdraw the trains from service.



guards stopwork

Guards are off the Very Endangered Species list—for the moment. At their stop-work on 20th June guards agreed to significant changes put to them by a union/management working party. These changes include:

- riding in the centre motors.
- giving up all signal observation except platform ones.
- giving up all docking and shunting duties.
- walking (roving) through trains.

WHAT DO THESE CHANGES MEAN??

** Riding in the centre motors is a disaster for station staff. 210 will disappear as guards will now be closer to the barrier gates. (See article on station staffing cuts elsewhere in SPARKS). As well, this move up the train threatens passenger safety. The guard will now be expected to look ahead and behind as a train departs. While he's looking up the train, someone could easily get stuck in the doors behind him. On the scores of curved platforms around the system, this is an obvious danger.

** Roving through trains is downright dangerous. Transit cops go on in groups of four yet guards will be expected to do the 'heavying' alone. Roving could quite easily lead to ticket selling.

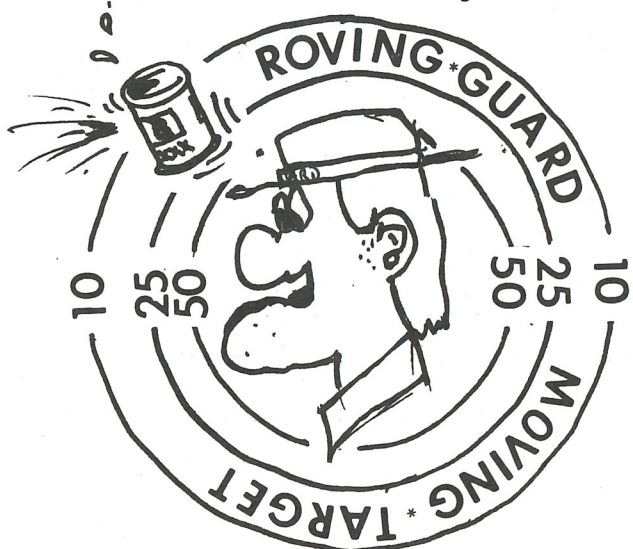
** Giving up most signal observation naturally leaves it all up to drivers. And they're humans not robots—they make mistakes. Automatic train stops on signals are fine where there's no possibility of an accident. But what happens if the train is doing a decent speed and goes through a signal protecting a level crossing or points??

** Between 20-40 positions will go as a consequence of giving up docks and shunts. Trains will have to be modified so that brake tests can be done by just the driver. Those modifications alone will bring Driver-Only running much, much, closer.

So how did such a demolition job on their duties get accepted by guards? The answer lies partly with the ALP-Unity Hall relationship and partly with the 'defensive' nature of so much union thinking today.

An election's due within 9 months. Resistance to D-O-O by guards may have upset the re-election chances of the ALP. Also, the ALP can't afford to have any body of workers in this industry win a complete victory. This industry is being massively restructured for the worse and as the guards proved over Xmas, it's industrial muscle that halts the governments plans. If the guards won, what chance would the government have of implementing further cuts?? A 'face saver' was agreed to by Unity Hall and the ALP, one that apparently offers security in employment to guards but in reality weakens their position so that when the government moves on them again, it'll be much easier to get rid of them. Unfortunately, saving the job no matter what the costs are or what the longer term view holds, is today seen as some sort of victory.

Sibberas, Zangalis and their hacks from the guards section committee relied on fear and threats to get the guards to accept the new job. We were told over and over again "how little choice we had", that if we rejected it the government would move to impliment D-O-O "tomorrow", that if we did reject it, then we'd be fighting on our own. Without producing any proof, Sibberas assured the meeting that those seeking redundancy would be able to get it under this new



proposal. (approx. %10% of guards want redundancy so being an adept politician he was playing to this 'constituency'). And the whopper that stuck... "guards, unlike any other group of workers in the industry, are to be given 5 years guaranteed security of position". Again no proof was produced.

The underlining motivation behind getting rid of guards was politics and it's likely politics will decide how much of the new altered role actually gets put in place and how much doesn't. Lots of questions remain unanswered like what sort of radio are we to get?; will concertina's be installed between carriages; are we going to get self-defence training?; will the promised P.A.'s get put in?? Watch this space for further details.....

Adam Muyt & Iain MacPherson—guards.



RAILFAN SHOP DERAILED

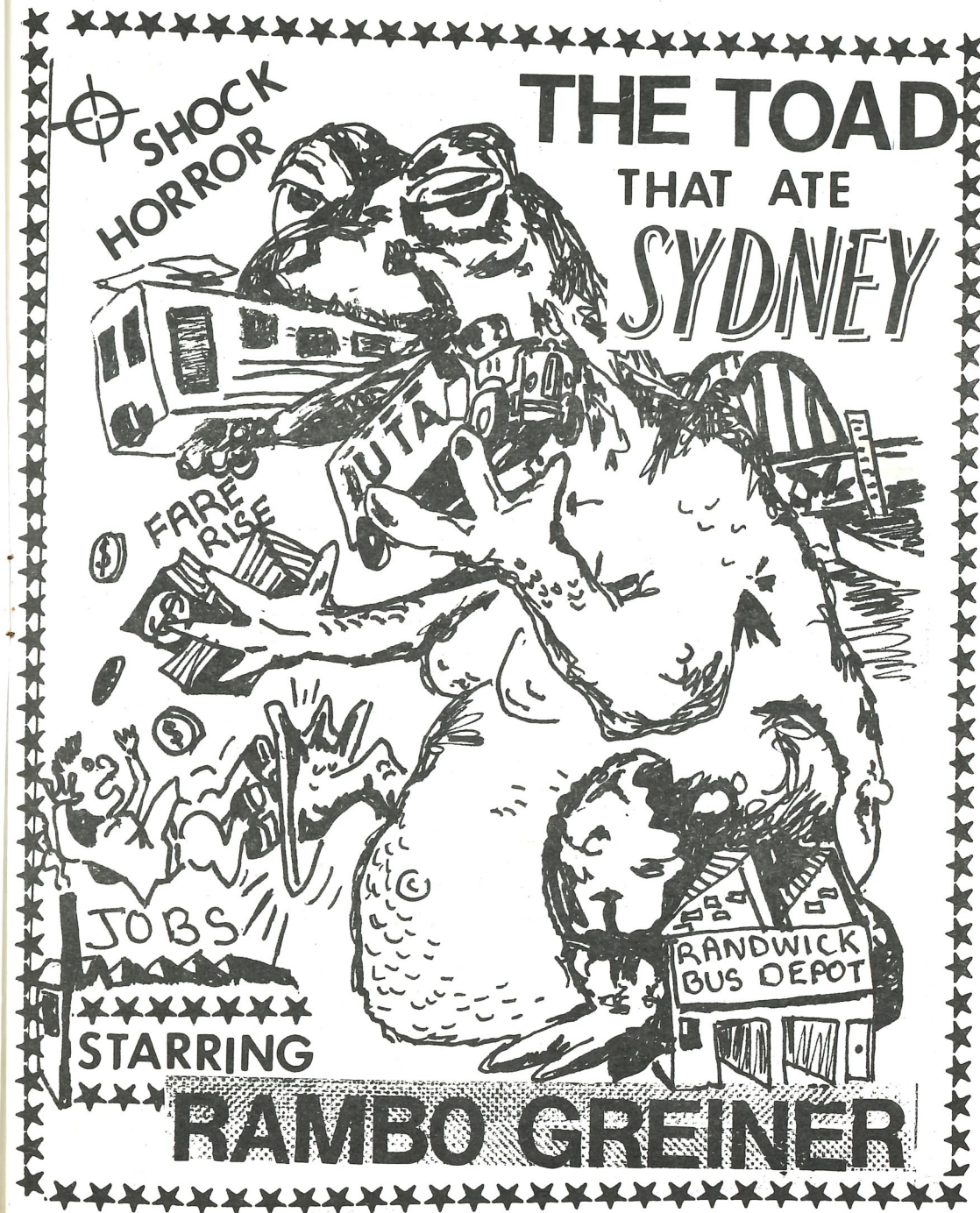
In Transport House there's a shop called the 'RAILFAN SHOP'. This is a subsidiary of an enthusiasts group called the Association of Railway Enthusiasts who operate the business as ARE Retail Pty.Ltd. with V/Line who operate their share in the shop as a subsidiary of VicRail Pipelines Pty.Ltd. The shop was set up with the aim of selling books and railway artifacts to people interested in transport. Five years ago it was decided to go into partnership with V/Line sharing profits %50% each way. It was claimed books, artifacts, etc, would be sold at a reasonable price. Unfortunately this was not to be. Old rail equipment was sold for inflated prices thus most enthusiasts wouldn't buy the items. Also, although V/Line owned %50% of the shop they still charged a high rent. The manager was hamstrung having to pay bills via the ARE. treasurer thus bills were not paid, suppliers would not supply their material, hence people missed out on up to date goods. The business lost money-about \$19,000.

As a result of no profits, in early April V/Line panicked and said the shop would have to close. The ARE Board were able to get a reprieve but heads had to roll. The manager was called upstairs and in the presence of a senior V/Line account, the ARE Treasurer and an ARE board member was told "his services were no longer required". No notice was given to the manager. A week later the assistant manager was sacked after refusing to work part-time. He'd been told they couldn't afford to employ him full-time.

The shop now runs with a staff of two plus volunteers on weekends, who are ARE Board members. An ironic twist to this is that the April 'V/Line News' ran an article about the shop—all positive stuff—even including a picture of the sacked manager!

The ARE Board hasn't the guts to tell members why the manager was sacked. Two ARE newsletters have passed. Perhaps they're frightened people would go elsewhere if the truth was known. In conclusion I have decided to let your paper know as you are likely to print the truth about this sorry affair, particularly the shabby treatment metted out to the manager who kept the shop running under trying circumstances for seven years.

Railfan Rex



Randwick Depot

In late May 150 workers at Randwick bus maintenance depot unanimously rejected government proposals to close the workshop down. It seems the government is looking at privatising/contracting maintenance work.

Here's hoping transport workers don't get caught up in seeing this as just a typical Liberal Government move, with the solution lying in a return to office of the Labor Party. The Labor Party is notorious for strong stances in opposition and sellouts in office. Labor's public transport record in Victoria over the past 6 years gives a pretty good indication of this pattern. In 1980/81 it swung right behind workers and users fighting the then Liberal Governments planned line and service cuts. It is a recognised fact Labor's transport policy played a significant role in getting them into office in 1982. Since then the cutbacks have been severe: 3500 jobs have gone, country passenger and freight services have closed, suburban train and tram lines have gone.

As an anarcho-syndicalist organisation, the Public Transport Workers Association sees the solution to cutbacks lying in the hands of those who run the industry...us workers. We believe we can control this industry, for ourselves and for the community. Obviously this couldn't happen in isolation from the rest of society. This world needs changing. We've had enough of politicians, bureaucrats and other assorted power-junkies determining the shape of our lives, putting profits before people. Anarcho-syndicalists are actively building alternatives across the face of this society: in the railways, education, postal and communication services, in hospitals, on the streets!!

SYDNEY SYDNEY STATION STAFF CUTS

The Greiner government has announced plans to remove station staff from many locations, supposedly for a saving of \$5 million. An 'open barrier' system will operate and fare collection will be on an 'honesty' basis. This is where users purchase their correct ticket from newsagents, ticket machines, etc. They're supposed to be sufficiently scared of getting caught out by spot ticket checking from the revenue cops that they'll always be 'honest' and pay for the right fare.

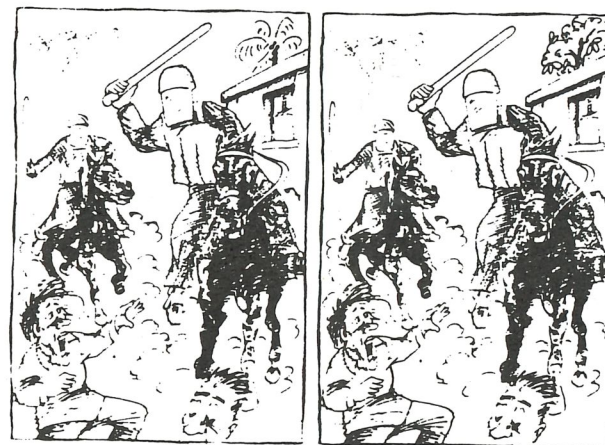
The PTWA does not support the retention of station staff because of their role in preventing fare evasion. We advocate free public transport, seeing it in the same light as say the health services or housing—a basic necessity of life. The more people using it the better off we'd all be: less pollution, accidents, etc. We see it as vital to have a human face on the body of the industry.

Station staff offer assistance, provide information, give reassurance and security. This ludicrous 'honesty' system means less info., less assistance, less security so why shouldn't passengers get their own back by fare evading as often as possible?

As a first step in fighting for their jobs, station staff should immediately refuse to collect or issue tickets. This is always popular with the users. Leaflets and posters can be put up at stations to explain what sort of service will follow the job cuts. From here it's essential to draw in train operating grades since a less safe station environment will rebound on them. They have the muscle to stop the service.

PK - Sydney.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Argentina (1982)

Britain 1984

Or Poland (1981)
or South Africa (1987)

OR AUSTRALIA (199?)

SACK — FOR TAKING TOO MANY SICKIES

"Daily Mirror" June 9, 1988.

BUS and ferry workers who take too many sickies now face the sack under a UTA crackdown. The get-tough policy is aimed at halting soaring absenteeism among Urban Transport Authority employees who average 13 sick days a year — one and half more than rail staff who are notorious for sickies.

NSW Transport Minister Bruce Baird said today the situation was out of control.

"Our absenteeism rate per employee is double that of the private sector.

"Our level of sickies is out of control. Those who take too many sickies will be asked to explain."

The UTA will use a computer register to monitor the number of sick days taken by each employee. Those with poor records would be interviewed by senior staff and continually monitored.

"Basically it is about making the UTA more efficient," Mr Baird said.

"We would be prepared to sack staff who take too many sickies — those who are clearly rotting the system."

Mr Baird said he was not worried about a union backlash.

"Sick leave is evidence of

● Continued page 2

"Sick leave is evidence of something wrong in the way the organisation is run."

Yes Minister, Mr Baird, but unfortunately you misunderstand the problem. What could we expect of a mere politician?

Sick leave sure is evidence of something wrong. It means people are sick.

Sometimes we are just sick of work. We've just had enough and we take a sickie or we go nuts. Yes, there is something wrong. Forty hours a week for a barely living wage is wrong. Enforced overtime on top of that is very wrong.

This is all what it basically comes down to — in any job — overwork and shift work make us sick.

Sometimes we just have better things to do.
cont' over...

UTA sack threat on sickies

● From page 1

something wrong in the way the organisation has been run," he said.

"My aim is to get sick leave down to around five or six days per year per person — a normal level."

Mr Baird said UTA unions had blamed low morale for sickies and making workers "clear about their role" would help reduce the problem.

The UTA has set up an Absence Control System — a computer program specifically designed to control absenteeism.

It will also counsel and discipline employees with poor records to stop them rotting the system.

Mr Baird said workers who then continued to take sickies would be sacked.

BEWARE! THE ABSENCE CONTROL SYSTEM!!!!



Like go to the footy or do a bit of socialising, or resting.

Sometimes we just can't get someone to take care of our kids.

Then we get the flu. Traffic staff get sneezed on all day, and with being overworked on shiftwork, we come down with all the flus. To get over a good dose of the flu our doctors tell us to take 3 to 5 days off. They charge us 20 bux for telling us that, and putting it down on the medical certificate.

Twenty bux. Two flus a year and you're gonna put the ABSENCE CONTROL SYSEM on to us.

Yes Minister Baird sick leave is evidence of

something wrong in the way the organisation is run. What's wrong in the way the system is run is that you nincompoops (politicians and bosses) run it.

When we workers take over we'll halve our hours and invite our number again to join us in running our public transport system. Then we'll invite more again and we'll double the service. We'll run all night too if people want. We'll improve our workplaces and have quality childcare. And we'll start to enjoy our time in a free society. We'll probably feel better straight away, sir.

Ⓐ narchy — for all your social ills!

Tram drivers oppose plan for lone duties

Northcote "Leader" mid June, 1988.

PRESTON tram depot drivers have threatened to resign if they are forced to work alone on trams under a new Metropolitan Transit Authority proposal.

The Met plans to scrap 1400 conductors' jobs in the next 15 years and drivers fear for their safety without protection in numbers.

Union representative at the depot, Mr John Fennick, said assaults on workers on the Preston tramlines were common.

"If it ever became a one-man operation, I'd leave," Mr Fennick said.

"I have a family and I'm not putting my life on the line."

Mr Fennick said he was speaking on behalf of most of his fellow workers.

The Met plans includes a 70 km extension to heavy rail, a new light rail and bus network.

The controversy is over a new flexible ticketing service, enabling

commuters to buy tickets in shops and by mail.

The Minister for Transport, Mr Kennan, said a network of ticket sale outlets in post offices, news-agencies and convenience stores would help boost public transport usage to 20 per cent over the next 15 years.

The strategy would make most conductors' jobs redundant but tram workers say conductors also provide protection for the public.

One conductor said the transit police were rarely seen on trams and when they arrived it was usually too late.

Transit police chief superintendent, Mr Bob Davis, said staff shortages were causing delays with police response.

"We mainly use our teams to deal with problem spots on train lines. Our response time calls is not the optimum," he said.

He said the present staff of 55 would increase to 93 in the next six weeks.

The Brunswick
SENTINEL

7.6.'88.

BRUNSWICK Depot tram conductors are confused and angry over Metropolitan Transit Authority plans to scrap 1400 jobs.

The conductors stationed in Sydney Rd say they have been left in the dark about government proposals to cut staff from 11,800 to 10,400 over the next 15 years.

Mr Sam Branciforte, a conductor and former union delegate for six years, said: "We were not told

of the plans. We read about it in the newspapers."

Conductors who spoke to the *Sentinel* feared for themselves and travellers if the plan was implemented.

"I wouldn't work on a one-man bus or tram system," said tram conductor Mr Barry Neilson.

"Women and children won't use the trains at night. They use the trams. If there is no security there, how will they travel?"

.....cont'

"A young girl was being harassed by a group of men on a tram. It wasn't until I told them to shut up or get off that they left her alone."

"If conductors go, who would help? A driver couldn't.

"We're going backwards. The Government should be raising the level of funding, not lowering it. They are letting us and the public down," he said.

"Take away conductors and you take away security and place the public at risk," said another conductor.

OPINION

Brunswick "Sentinel"

June 1988.

Page 6.

Safety has to come first

THE State Government's plan to phase out conductors to save costs and allow tickets to be sold anywhere could have disastrous effects for Brunswick commuters.

While the convenience of buying tram tickets at a post office or the like sounds attractive, travellers would be forfeiting the security of having a conductor on board.

Not only do conductors help protect their travellers, they come to the aid of mothers with prams, elderly people trying to clamber aboard and the odd traveller bewildered by the numbers and destinations.

Train travel has already become a hazardous venture, with little security provided for travellers.

Vandalism is soaring to uncontrollable levels and the only form of security we have is the understaffed Transit Police Unit.

The unit has allocated a five-member team to protect the state's tram and bus line system.

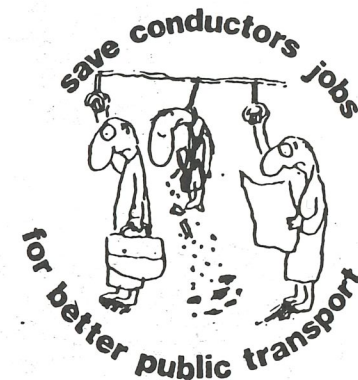
What sort of security does that afford Brunswick commuters?

Tram conductors already face increasing violence at work. Most are thankful that there is a driver to back them up.

The mess rooms of the Brunswick depots show the grim reality of the situation.

Talk of stabbings and assaults, coupled with the fear on conductors' faces as they contemplate who could be next, reveal the underlying stress members face at work. Add to that the fear of losing one's job.

Whatever the end result — or the cost — convenience should not replace the safety of commuters on public transport.



Above: One badge design produced by workers at Preston depot.

COMPUTERS FOR FUN & SABOTAGE

Here's one for the computers wizzes.....computer sabotage. Once upon a time workers use to throw a 'spanner in the works' in order to halt or slow down production. Now that we live in the space age why not take a byte at the hands that feed us.

Several years ago a group of hackers short changed social security by entering a programme that issued extra cheques to recipients on a random basis. It was chrisie time for pensioners, the sick, single mums and many others for a full 6 months every fortnight. Now that transport workers have gone over to computerised pay why not enter us a payrise to make up for all we've lost these last few years?

In this age of belt tightening and high unemployment perhaps the computer can compliment the mass walk-out. In During the past 10 years hundreds of signal staff have been short shunted to the dole-que being replaced by computers. Those computers can be shut down with the right taps on the keyboards. The right taps on the keyboard could save others the expense of a strike. While the bosses are pulling their hair out workers could FAX through their demands!



Information is power and today the boss stores it in computers. Non-operational workers now have immense power in their hands. Our phones get tapped, our letters get opened—why not get our own back by raiding their floppy discs? Once something incriminating or useful is found why not photo copy the printout and leave a bundle in the mealroom at work? (Don't forget copies to SPARKS).

Don't stop at just unearthing the bosses secrets.....some of them need to be buried. Years of work go into useless projects like Driver-Only-Operations or automatic ticket machines. I'd love to be a fly on the wall the day those job cutting-yuppie wizkids discovered their years of (wasted) effort were to go up in smoke with just one power surge.

Look out Connies! Here comes...

Mrs. Brady

EEN! I THINK IT'S A DISGRACE! I'VE BEEN STOOD HERE WAITING FOR A BUS FOR HALF AN HOUR!

IT COST TUPPENCE HA'PENNY, AND THAT WAS RETURN. NOT LIKE THE PRICES THESE DAYS.

IT'S NOT LIKE THE OLD DAYS. THERE USED TO BE A TRAM ALONG HERE THREE TIMES A MINUTE!

I MEAN... TOILET ROLLS- \$1.20 FOR TWO! THAT'S ALMOST A ROUND EACH IN OLD MONEY!



Old Lady



With Robots
There Will Be
No Strikes!
And
No Jobs!

Yes to
Technology
No to
Redundancies

Last year all it took was an electrical failure to save thousands of fare-evaders a government revenue boosting fine when the RIO computer went blank. As the industry becomes more computer dependant the possibilities for hackers grows. Bad work records can be altered, sick leave can be increased, fines can be erased. I'm sure you operators can nut out a few ideas of your own.

New technology is wonderful, replacing boring jobs and simplifying work. If we controlled this technology we'd use it to give ourselves more free-time. As the bosses use it, we get thrown on the scrap heap. Video cameras, computers, buttons and buzzes, ticket machines are replacing people. If you don't want enforced leisure on little money, fight back. If you want transport with a human face, think of this: video cameras can be 'distorted', ticket machines can be glued up, computers can be hacked. Go for it!!

Keyboard Karen



Hurling down the track, full steam ahead, Melbourne's demolition train continues to leave a trail of destruction. Now a joint ARU/MET 'Rail Operations Staffing Project' is set to impliment a new round of cuts. Unity Hall have put ARU policy on first to last station staffing in the rubbish bin by climbing into bed once again with management and co-writing the cuts. 210 jobs disappear and overtimes getting chopped.

The difference between union officials, management and the politicians is no so minute as to be irrelevant. For 3 weeks so called representatives from the ARU and AFULE held hands with management and prepared a station hit list. This love-fest had more to do with penny pinching than staff or passenger security and safety. Their joint statement lists the number one priority as "Identifying ways and means of meeting the governments budget imperative of cost savings in the order of \$6 million per annum".

The cuts will take the form of station closures. Below is the breakdown of these closures:

13 Stations-closed completely.

53 Stations -one shift only, Mon. to Friday.

42 Stations-closed on Saturday.

63 Stations -one shift only Saturday.

83 Stations closed on Sunday.

56 Stations one shift only Sunday.

JOB LOSSES: Closed stations-6; One shift stations-78; Reductions at open stations-126; TOTAL- 210.

And according to the forecasts in METPLAN 600 hundred jobs will go following the introduction of ticket machines.

The complete document outlining the cuts is available from Unity Hall. If you have difficulty getting it from there, write to the PTWA and we'll send out a copy.

Station staff have to get moving quickly and require the support of the entire industry. Passenger numbers are bound to drop off with less staff leading inevitably to less service and safety. And with less users 9pm. closing would be on the cards. Not much use in turning to Unity Hall for assistance so how do station staff fight back? Turning to the local community who use the station is one way. Advertise the bosses plans with posters and leaflets. Any station workers wanting assistance can contact the PTWA for cheap printing. 500 leaflets cost \$23.40 (double sided) 14.40 (SINGLE)

Speak to those transport workers who use your station, exchange info. and seek invites to speak at section meetings. Station staff could also learn a lesson from the 'Hip-Hop' crowd and take to station walls or trains with their message. Be careful and spray in a different style to your usual handwriting.

In the past transport workers have tended to go on the defensive, often relying on union officials for protection. Surely we've learn't the lessons of that approach. We can fight without the officials 'endorsing' action. And if we don't fight we definitely lose. **ST.**



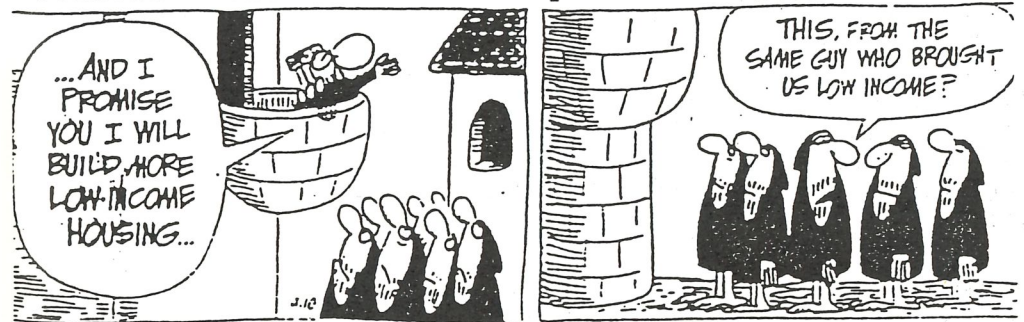
" LOOKS LIKE BEN DOESN'T WANT HIS STATION TO CLOSE "

ANOTHER WAY FOR A WAGERISE (a letter)

Workers agree today that there has been a decline in the real value of wages in the past 15 years. Much energy in the form of meetings are held to attempt to rectify the anomaly - but always the decisions are still being made by the ACTU and trade union leaderships, with the real decision finally made by the Arbitration Court on behalf of its bosses.

Another way. But there is another way which was successful by the rank and file taking the class struggle into their own hands. This happened in 1971-5 in the metal factories in the Ringwood area on the question of wages. It was achieved by the holding of rank and file local meetings with publicity in the 'Link' newsletter of the local metal union branch supplied by the 'Link' collective of students, influenced by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and the trade union organiser. An area wage standard was publicised and where a factory dropped behind, a campaign was waged by the shop committee in that factory. The result - the highest level of wages in that area in the metal industry in Melbourne. In other words the workers snubbed their noses at the Metal Trades Award - it was no longer a sacred cow.

Because of the success of the wages campaign in those years, the bosses and government with the agreement of its trade union bureaucrats began to work out a method to take the initiative from the workers - the Accord was implemented. **DICK**



Solidarity is the Key

The privileged few who benefit from the capitalist system may be parasites but they're clever parasites. They know that us workers can never get rid of them while we are weak and divided. That is why they use every means at their disposal to bullshit to us, confuse us and divide us. Politicians, the media and schools are used to encourage racism, sexism, greed and bigotry.

In the work place this is reinforced by transport bosses, union bosses and instructors to protect their selfish interests. Unfortunately a minority of workers accept their lies and go round calling people poofta's, wogs, sluts and so on. A different form of division is created by the system that sets apart workers of different trades.

For example tram workers are encouraged not to relate to rail or bus workers. Within the railways antagonism exists between labourers and tradesmen, guards and drivers, white and blue collar workers.

What needs to be considered is who benefits from these artificial divisions. Are workers at each others' throats any better off than those who co-operate? Has a wage increase ever been obtained by picking on work mates over unimportant things like skin color or sexual preference?

The truth is it is only the bosses who do well out of a divided industry. Having 16 unions operating in Victoria's public transport allows management to isolate workers and pick them off one by one. The unions don't help either. During the Guards Strike and Light Rail dispute, delegates of railway workers couldn't help smiling during meeting held by tramway workers to discuss these matters. No matter where they went, sure as clockwork just before a motion of support was to be put, some old geezer would get up and rabbit on. "I remember back in 1938 when the trams were on strike and The Railways didn't support us!"

The reason why railways workers had to grin was because at their meetings every time a motion of support for trammies is put some old bugger gets up and raves, "I remember back

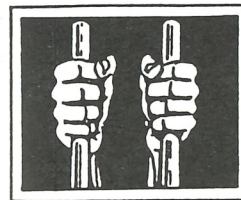
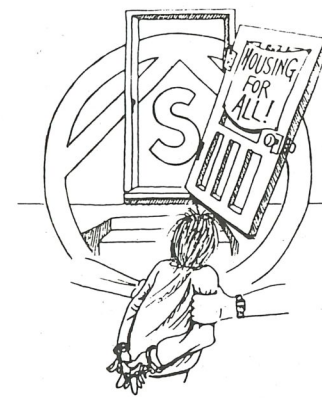
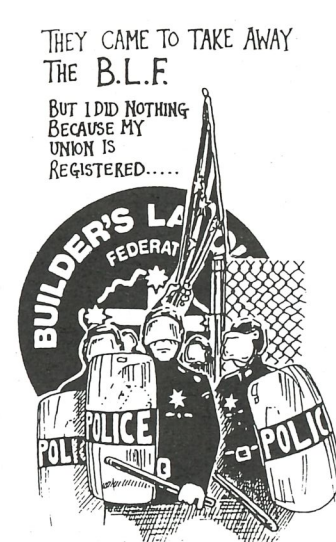
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Solidarity is the Key cont'.....

in 1956 when the trammies didn't support us." Things have changed since then. Now we all work under one boss, "The State Transport Authority." Who cares what workers did back in the days of dinosaurs, what matters is now!

The SPARKS mob reckon we need one union for the industry. We don't want one like the ACTU is proposal with more union bosses than you can poke a stick at. We want one that is voluntary, based on the anarchist principle of no bosses, and one where, if delegates are needed you can piss them off any time.

To us solidarity means people working for themselves for



THEN THEY CAME TO TAKE ME AWAY....
AND THERE WAS NO-ONE TO HELP

the common good in free association with each other. To us it makes no difference what your color is, or what your sexuality is. What matters is your commitment to improve your working environment and general community.

cont' over.....

Solidarity is the Key cont'.

The PTWA believe bosses divide society in order to satisfy their own selfish interests. Anarcho-Syndicalists aim to unite people in solidarity to piss off the bludging bosses through direct action.



Our anarcho-syndicalist ideas are based on the fact that co-operation works better for us than competition. We can see example of this everywhere in our daily lives. Two three, or four people can get boring housework done quicker and easier than they can leaving it to one slave to the household.

War is a more extreme example. While war is not a daily experience of public transport workers in Australia, our workmates in other countries are fighting each other. States send their armies of working people into mass slaughter. Workers should refuse to go to war and kill other workers, and then there'd be more of us to fight the real enemies, the bosses and governments. Workers can organise productive co-operation, internationally.

How about medical research that is carried out in secret as pharmaceutical companies strive for the almighty dollar? If the so-called experts co-operated with each other instead of working for their multi-national bosses, that shared knowledge could solve half our problems overnight.

If we workers are to take control of our industries and lives, we need a new attitude. We need to show solidarity with other workers in struggle. Also it is important to consider what we have in common with our fellow workers. We need to focus on the real divisions in society, that between rich and poor.

if the boss gets up your nose then,



PICKET!

2~4~6~8, AMALGAMATE!

(but on our terms)

On May 5 an 'historic first meeting' between Victorian AFULE and ARU top knobs took place to exchange ideas, problems, etc. that confront the two bodies and come between them. We can read this move as the first step in the ACTU endorsed 'Long March' towards amalgamation.

The Public Transport Workers Association is skeptical of the worth of amalgamation when the union movement is weighed down by the dead hand of bureaucrats and their undemocratic structures and rule books. Certainly 'craftism'-trade unionism-is ultimately detrimental to all workers in this industry (indeed, the workers of the world). Identifying with one's union rather than with all workers in the industry is nonsensical when cutbacks affect all of us, eg. guards (ARU) getting axed leaving drivers (AFULE) to cope with all safety and security. It makes sense for everyone of us, no matter what our union affiliation is, to support whatever section of the industry is involved in struggle.

The leadership talkfests may bring unions together. So what, if one of the major factors of such 'marriages' are more union bosses operating under just as corrupt structures as before. After all, if you've got use to power and are scared of independant (uncontrolled) action, why alter the rules?

A more useful first step to breaking down the divisions lies with the creation of shop committees. Locations like Dynon/Melbourne Yard, Flinders St/Jolimont and all tram depots are crying out for rank and file controlled bodies. Shop Committees can't be controlled by any one union and have the ability to maintain action in the face of backdowns by union leaderships. The exchange of information is essential in fighting back and shop committees are good local forums for doing this. But for them to work properly, their structures must be trully 'democratic': limited terms of office; specific tasks for delegates; instant recallability for delegates who don't follow the directives of members; absolutely no perks for delegates.

RAILWAY ANNIE