

SPARKS

NO.18
Winter '89

the FIGHTING transport workers paper

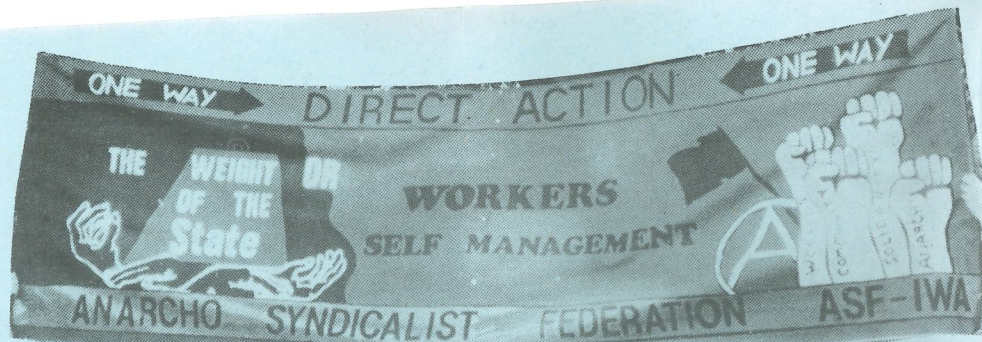


INSIDE:

Upfield Lie Trail;

Gang Warfare; Flinders St. Control Room;

Spencer St. Spending Spree; & MORE!



WHERE WE STAND:

1. Our aim is to create and defend 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 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.

Welcome to SPARKS No.18. With this issue SPARKS enters it's fourth year. Regular readers may have noticed the change to the banner on the front. SPARKS is no longer 'the paper of the Public Transport Workers Association'. In December the PTWA disbanded as members felt there was no longer a need to remain a separate group within the wider organisation to which the PTWA was part of: the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. Members of the PTWA have joined their ASF locals - Melb.Nth or Melb.Sth - and will continue to produce SPARKS on a regular basis.

Not all workers involved in putting SPARKS out are members of the ASF. Most are of course, but provided you want to work with others in a group actively practising solidarity and mutual aid, then your contributions are welcome. Poems, graphics, articles, hate-mail can be sent to SPARKS, P.O.BOX 1066 Nth.Richmond, 3121.

*** SPARKS No.17 had an article in it entitled 'Dead Cops are No Tragedy'. We received two highly critical letters over the article and unfortunately have lost both. To Zelda & John, our apologies. If you care to re-write, we'll print them next issue.

*** Subscriptions: five issues for \$10. Contact above address.....

the Spencer Street



SPEND-a-T'HON

There appears to be a competition going on at SPENCER STREET STATION between V/Line and Metrail over which empire can waste money in the quickest and silliest way.....

V/Line Camp Commandant Lawrence Norton has a slight lead over his Metrail rivals-but only just. Readers may recall SPARKS named Lawrence as one of the plotters in the conspiracy to rename SPENCER ST. 'V/Line MELBOURNE'. Just on \$ 20,000 was wasted on new signage that had to be junked when Kennan canned the project after an embarrassing phone call from the AGE transport reporter. Lawrence learn't the hard way that when wasting public money you must get government approval first. He was ordered on leave and the experience was such a lesson for him that he now looks like becoming a regular fixture of SPARKS. He lived another day by blowing the whistle on his co-conspirator Len Harper now FORMER manager of Passenger Services.

Never one to be discouraged, Lawrence's next project is the installation of airport style destination boards. These are costing '000's of \$\$\$ V/Line workers couldn't help laughing when the boards and tele screens were put up: they are so close to the ground that any drunk or angry yobbo can kick them to bits.

The MET side of the station is now having \$250,000 squandered on a MET Station Masters office. This is despite an SM's office already existing at the station—that one however is on the V/Line side of the station and the MET boys just find that intolerable!

A rail correspondence room within this new SM complex was built but it's since been declared 'redundant' because V/Line has one on it's side of the station! Sounds like Lawrence must have had a hand in drawing up the plans...

Unfortunately for the workers at Spencer Street they're not getting much help from the ARU. At a meeting in December staff condemned the squandering going on. ARU organiser John Boles told them he'd written a letter to the minister outlining their concerns. This turned out to be a bald-faced lie to bullshit staff into thinking something was being done. Rumour has it that this arch-careerist is becoming an embarrassment even to Joe Sibberas for his laziness and general con-man tactics.

Spencer Street Station has had close to a million dollars pitifully wasted on it—if it benefits anyone other than the bureaucrats it'll be by accident rather than design. It demonstrates once again the real needs of transport workers and users can only be determined by them alone and not by the army of self-serving bureaucrats. They couldn't run a Thomas the Tank Engine train set.

the QUICK ORANGE FOX.



Exclusive!!!

**LAWRENCE
ANSWERS**

**HIS
CRITICS!!!**

We received this letter from Lawrence Norton after the article in SPARKS No.17 concerning the conspiracy to change the name of Spencer Street Station to 'V/Line Melbourne'. Oh well Lawrence, we'll let the cartoon below speak for us.....

2858



State Transport Authority

Date: 28th November, 1988

File No: LGGN:SH 14999 SG-32

Inter Office Memorandum

To: MR. ADAM HUYT

P.T.W.A.

C/- ELECTRIC RUNNING DEPOT

JOLIMONT

From: Manager, Melbourne
Passenger Terminal

Subject: P.T.W.A. PAGES 26 & 27
OCT. ISSUE

Your connections encyclical on the alleged facts relating to the signage at Spencer St. was refreshing to say the least. I enjoyed it enormously.

I would however, in the interests of "FAIRPLAY" seek your indulgence to put the record straight.

The proposal to rename Spencer St. V/LINE MELBOURNE was put up some 2½ years ago at which time I was a faithful servant of the "MET" and noticed in passing, as you can check, that a new, now old, sign was placed on the exterior of NO. 1 SIGNAL BOX showing just that i.e. V/LINE MELBOURNE NO. 1 SIGNAL BOX.

The old platform end wall signs, should you wish I can show them to you, were damaged, rusted, very tatty and well overdue for replacement.

I would however suggest the QUICK ORANGE FOX slow down enough to spell correctly or proof read his or her "copy" (SEPERATE pr. 26 is spelt SEPERATE).

Kind regards,

LAWRENCE G.G. NORTON

P.S. Maybe two middle initials is pretentious. Luckily I can blame my parents.



GUARDS PICKET

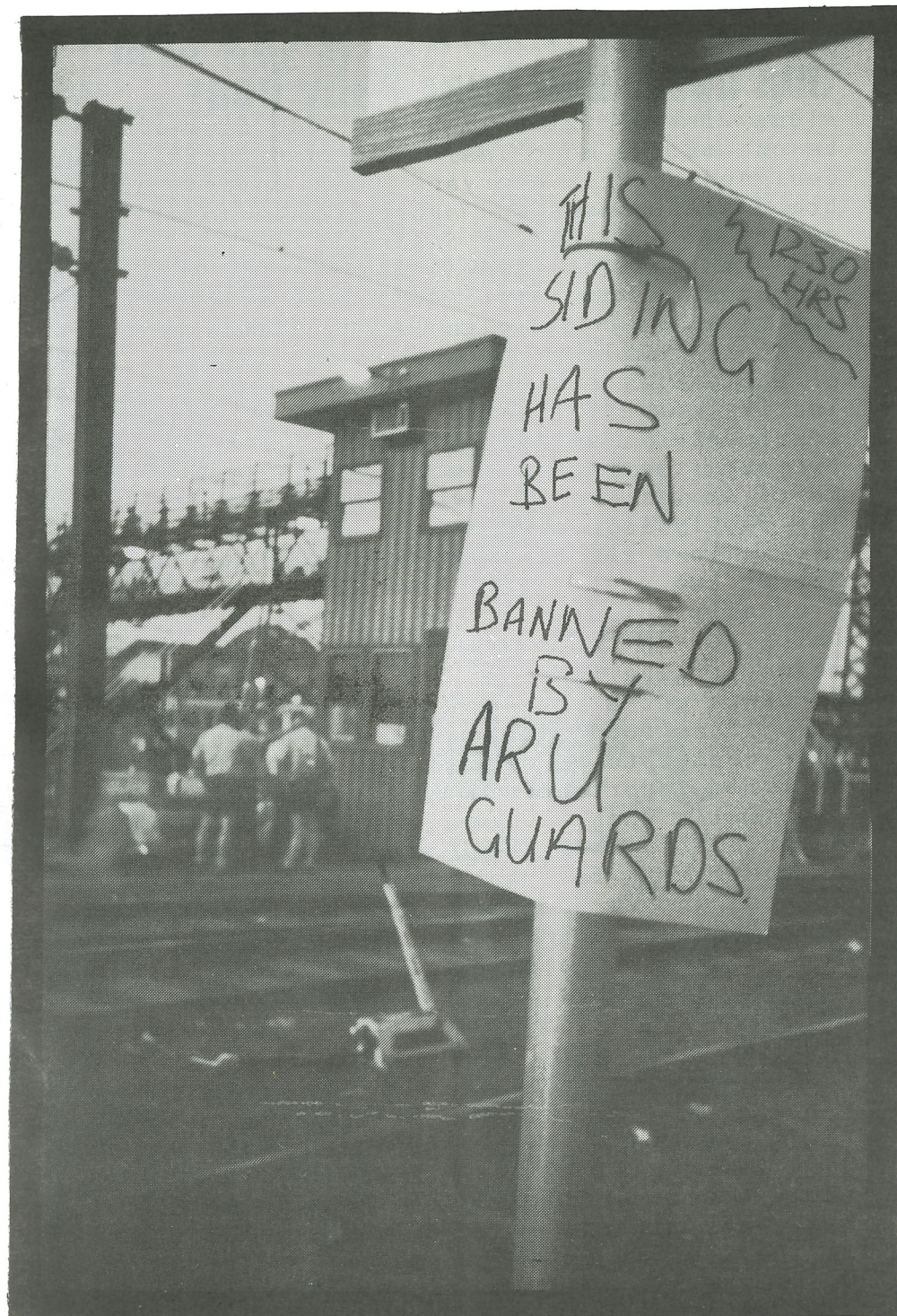
Guards have a narrow career path within their grade. There has been a long standing agreement that any instructor guards positions were filled by the "most senior, suitable applicants with a minimum of five years current, continuous service as a guard." Late last year management threw this criteria out the window when it appointed new instructor guards purely on the basis of 'suitability', thereby opening the way for promotion by suck-tion.

Guards responded on Friday afternoon, March 3rd by blackbanning a major siding in the Flinders Street Yard. When it looked like drivers and shunters were going to be stood-down for refusing to move trains from the blocked siding, guards set up a picketline across the roads into and out-of the siding. This action ensured no train could move from the siding.

The power of industrial muscle certainly gets the bosses moving. After 'losing' 12 trains for 24 hours a meeting between guards and Patsy Kennan took place. There Kennan abandoned his bureaucrats by agreeing their appointment procedures were invalid. All instructor positions were to be made under the old selection agreement.

Once again, direct action gets results!!

AM



ma bear, dad bear, baby bear.....

Along with religion, the nuclear family must be one of the most insidious institutions around designed to keep everyone under control and breed selfishness and short-sightedness. The government and the big business must be laughing with glee at the way the average Australian embraces the concept of the nuclear family. Thereby they are creating their own chains of oppression, smiling all the while. If the idea of the family can be broken down into a more collective concept and the old idea of community resurrected, we may have a better chance at bringing the bosses tumbling down from their lofty heights.

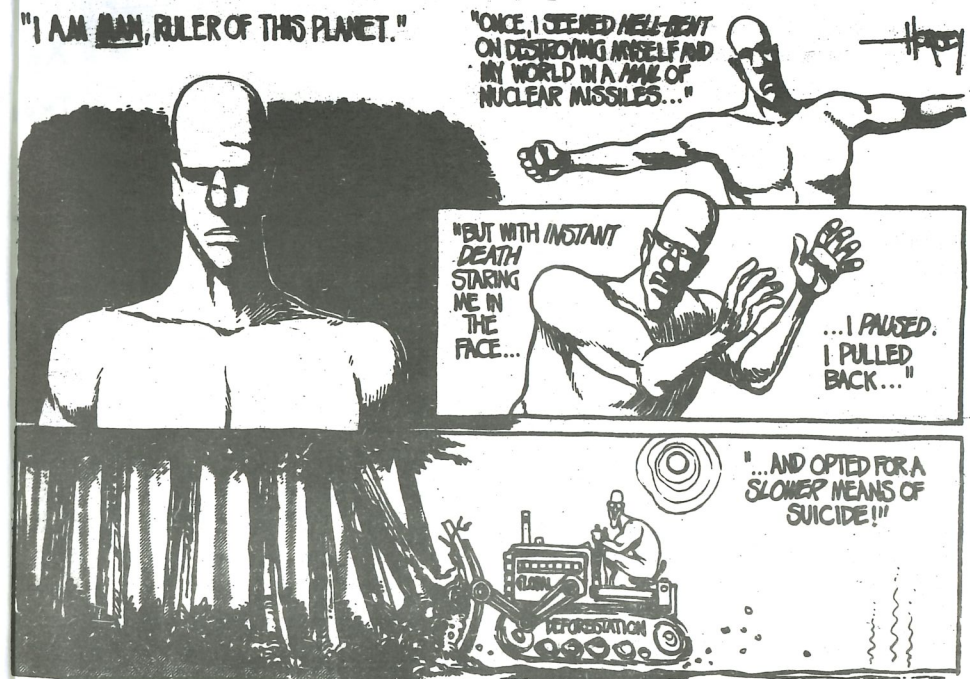
The family is essentially a unit of people united in a relationship of dependence where one or two people work hard to keep the others (usually children), in a state of well being. Given the current rate of wages this means working flat out for most of your life so as to get a roof over everyone's heads, as well as food, education and everything else deemed to be necessary. Money becomes of prime importance in this sort of situation especially when a fifty year bank loan has to be paid off. Thus the bosses have achieved one of their most favourable objectives, they've created an overwhelming dependence on money. Given that millions of families across the land are all scrambling towards owning their own home and working weekends on top of that to achieve this, the word strike sends shivers down their spines. They are all so far in debt and losing money over a strike, especially if it may be a protracted one, may leave them juggling their finances for months just to keep their heads above water. The whole concept becomes even less favorable when they may not even win the strike, and if they do the union bosses may sell them short. Of course the logical and more advantageous action is occupation, that way we still make

BEAR TIME STORY

money, show the bosses what we think of their idea of profits and have a direct relationship with whatever work is being done.

The family is also a very incestuous institution, The family unit is sacred and comes before anything else and must always match or better the neighbours. This means that everyone in the community owns their own motor mower, buys their own food, has their own washing machine etc. This results in a massive expenditure on bullshit goods that could be bought collectively and shared around. This would save everybody money and foster communication between communities, something which fell by the wayside as progress roared forth. This idea of collectivisation could be further expanded.

HANS OFF



NO LIE TRAIL for UPFIELD!

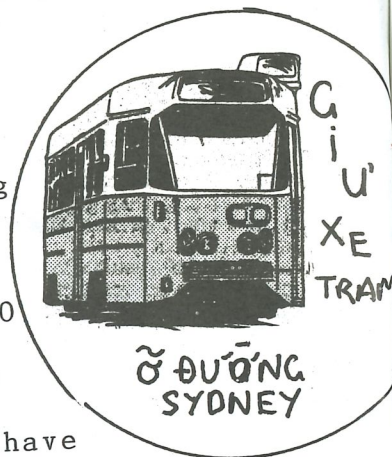
On March 21 500 people gathered at Brunswick Town Hall and unanimously rejected the MET's light rail push the Upfield 'Corridor'. This meeting demanded the train line be upgraded to bring it into the 20th century. It was also decided to form an open action committee to co-ordinate the fight to retain the areas public transport.

At Coburg the following night 150 people similarly rejected the LIE TRAIL while demanding an improvement to train and tram services.

At Fawkner on April 13 90 residents turned up to a MET-organised meeting and while no motions were put either pro or anti LIE TRAIL, the mood of the gathering was overwhelmingly against losing the trains. The MET bureaucrats pushing LIE TRAIL are definitely on the defensive. More on their manoeuvring a little later...

Brunswick & Coburg are plastered with some 6,000 stickers opposing LIE TRAIL; walls in the area are covered with anti-LIE TRAIL graffiti; posters are in shops and at rail stations; some 20,000 leaflets have been handed out highlighting the MET lies; '000's have put their names to an anti LIE TRAIL petition; local papers have been forced to regularly run articles and letters opposing the MET plans.

Transport workers are also making it plain they'll not accept another cut in service. In September Brunswick Depot trammies voted overwhelmingly "not to involve ourselves in any project that takes jobs away from railworkers". And on the 22nd March, train guards condemned the LIE TRAIL while calling for the upgrading of the Upfield line so the service "can be at least equal to other suburban train services". They threatened to "undertake the strongest possible industrial campaign" if LIE TRAIL goes ahead.




People aren't stupid....residents, users, workers know that LIE TRAIL will cost them dearly:

- ** train users will lose the direct connection with Nth. Melb. Spencer Street Station, the City Loop.
- ** people, in wheelchairs or with bikes or pushers will lose access to another part of the city.
- ** Zoo traffic using the trains is large. Groups will be forced to use overcrowded LIE TRAIL'S or take to hiring buses.
- ** Travel times will escalate-LIE TRAIL'S are slower and stop more frequently.
- ** LIE TRAIL vehicles do not have the capacity to move large numbers of users. Overcrowding is guaranteed as the users of 2 services try to fit onto 1.
- ** Tram access to Sydney Road will disappear. The MET admits 16% of Sydney Road tram journeys are local 'shopping trips'.
- ** Brunswick will have 13 transport stops reduced to 4 and Coburg will have 18 stops cut to 6.
- ** Motor vehicle traffic will increase down Sydney Road. The trams regulate traffic but with them gone the road will become an extension of the Hume Hwy.
- ** Between 100 and 200 workers would disappear-station staff, guards, drivers, trammies, gate keepers.


The
MELB. NORTH
ANARCHO
SYNDICALIST
FEDERATION
LOCAL
HAS PRINTED
'000s of
ANTI-LIGHT
RAIL STICKERS.

available from
P.O. BOX 1066
NORTH
RICHMOND
3121



DON'T STAND FOR LIGHT RAIL

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF-IWA), P.O. Box 199, East Brunswick, 3057



Light Rail: What you've been waiting for

AND WAITING... AND WAITING...

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF-IWA), P.O. Box 199, East Brunswick, 3057

So what are the MET desperados on \$60,000 a year doing to overcome the opposition to their LIE TRAIL wet dream fantasies??? They've certainly learn't a lesson from the last fight (Port Melb/ St.Kilda). This time they 'reviewed' transport options BEFORE work started. Problem was that

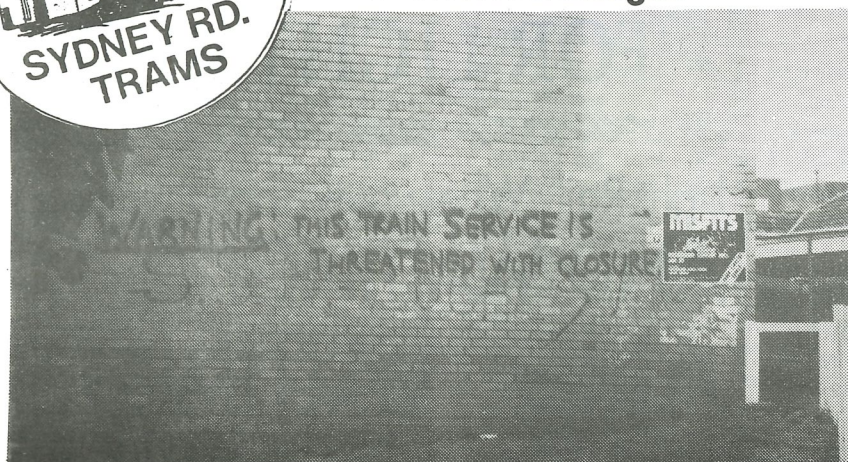
A/ the 'review' was so heavily slanted towards LIE TRAIL that people saw through it. 30 pages were given over to LIE TRAIL while the upgraded train line 'option' got just a couple.

B/ The MET's consultation procedure consisted of 'consulting' only groups-no individuals - who it CHOSE to consult with. Ed Dodson, chief kid with the light rail set stated "you don't get genuine public views at public meetings". This arrogance totally discredited the MET in the eyes of locals.

The bureaucrats were trully stunned by the range of opposition. They figured a bit of P.R. was required. They showed their "responsiveness to community concerns by extending the 'review' period to April 30. (it originally ended March 1st).



**two of the ways
locals are spreading
the anti-lie trail message:
Graffiti & Badges**



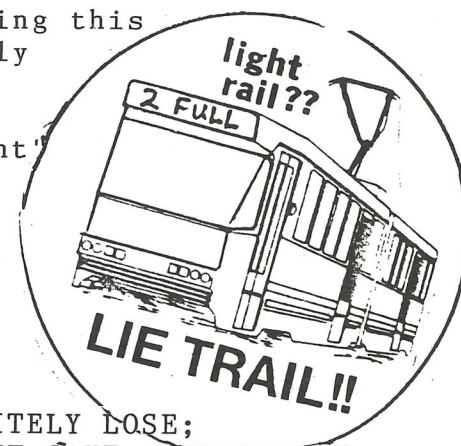
With April 30 almost on us, the MET has changed tact. They're hoping to buy time and hence see opposition disintegrate into apathy. A NEW IMPROVED REVIEW has just been announced yes it washes lies whiter than white!! An independant team is to carry it out. Just how 'independant' this body really isn't is highlighted by the fact it's working guidelines specify it is not to have anything to do with anti-LIE TRAIL groups.

We have no idea how much of our money is going into this 'review'. WE DO KNOW THAT A LIASON PERSON BETWEEN THE REVIEW TEAM AND THE MET IS GETTING PAID \$250 A DAY FOR THE 12 WEEK LIFE OF THE REVIEW!!!! (just why the MET has appointed a liason officer is beyond us. Maybe he's the the brother of the wife of some high-up bureaucrat in the Ministry? Perhaps he's one of those funny handshakers, the ones who like to dress up in tails and aprons and who carry little briefcases with them when they visit the local lodge. Life certainly can be strange).

There are many workers who when you talk to them about winning this campaign, respond despondently with "Oh yer. What about the last Light Rail fight? You can't stop the government"

That attitude doesn't get us far-sure, the MET may win out; it's also quite likely that if enough pressure is applied, the government'll pull back the boys in the MET.

IF WE DON'T FIGHT WE DEFINITELY LOSE;
IF WE DO FIGHT WE JUST MIGHT SAVE A TRAINLINE...



The circumstances shaping this campaign are vastly different to the Port/St.Kilda battle. The reason those trainlines were closed down was the redevelopment push by the ALP government of two areas: Port Melbourne's STATION PIER-BAYSIDE PROJECT and the SOUTHBANK development on the southern bank of the Yarra. The trainlines tied up prime real estate and because trains require their own 'right of way', they blocked new road plans. (LRV's and trams can of course share roads with cars, trucks and buses).

The MET was given the task of flogging Lie Trail to users and residents. It's arguments centred on

- A/ the 'overserviced' nature of bayside public transport.
- B/ the 'unprofitability' of the train services.
- C/ the 'delights' of the Lie Trail.

Those 'arguments' sound remarkably similar to the ones being put forward for the Upfield Corridor. The difference is, this time the push for Lie Trail is coming almost exclusively from the MET bureaucrats. They really believe they've invented a new mode of mass transport and want to see their baby grow. They also wrongly believe transport resources across the city need redistributing from 'over serviced' older areas to under serviced newer areas. While the bureaucrats are desperately trying to win over the government (Kennan came out in favour of Lie Trail last October), if enough noise is made against the MET's plans, the government has nothing to lose this time by abandoning Lie Trail.

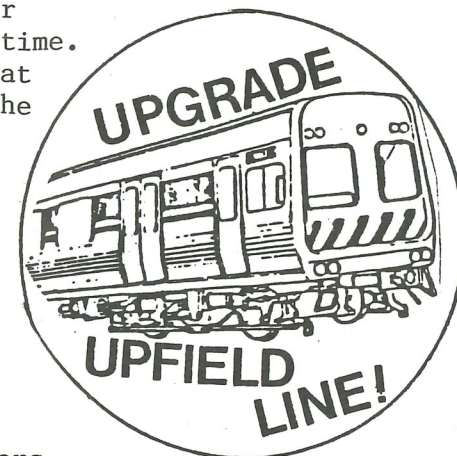
**PROTEST
AGAINST
LIGHT RAIL,
Nov.'87**



This anti-LIE TRAIL campaign is better organised with greater unity present than the last time. The divisions that marred that fight aren't present while the suburbs affected are pretty different-working class, militant communities. The **SAVE THE UPFIELD LINE CAMPAIGN (SULC)** has a large body of committed activists involved in it, drawing support from user groups, resident action groups, different political bodies, rank and file transport workers.

And since their ALP pals aren't pursuing the 'redevelopment' dollar this time round, even the various union bosses are opposing Lie Trail. They're able to provide information and some resources but there simply cannot be a reliance on them to 'fight' if it comes to the crunch. Experience shows they're adept at compromise and/or sellouts. It's better for us ordinary workers to get involved in the campaign to see for ourselves what we're capable of doing.

While it's months, even years before any work would start on ripping the train line up, it is essential workers show **NOW** they'll not accept Lie Trail being used once again to cut back transport services. Already Brunswick trammies and rail guards have stated their intentions. It really does give strength to those fighting to hear another group say **"NO LIE TRAIL"**.



SUE/MICK/ADAM



the KULCHA PAGES.

EMMA GOLDMAN WAS A RUSSIAN BORN ANARCHIST labour agitator from the turn of the century. She once said " If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution". She rightly saw a danger in any revolutionary movement that focused solely on economic/political change. A transformation of society that forgets the very human needs for laughter, song, passion and creativity is bound to end up sooner or later in a rigid culture-grey, sombre, boring.

ROARING JACK are a Sydney based band. They have been together a couple of years and recently put out their first album 'CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS'. If you like your music Furious, this album is worth hearing. I enjoy music that simultaneously offers choices: dancing till the feet ache or sitting back and concentrating on lyrics that confront, challenge, give me a laugh. 'CAT.....' is that sort of record.

The Cat Among the Pigeons ★



Lyrically the band covers a number of subjects mixing politics with a sharp look at history and modern Australian culture: the pain of unemployment; the banality of yuppie love; growing old, lonely and forgotten; getting drunk and having a vomiting-good time. The spirit of resistance runs strongly through the album- songs about YellowCake, Bob and 'his traitor crew'; the smashing of the BLF; the blood that stains the history of this land; the possibilities for change.

Musically the band owe much to Oz/Irish folk, usually thrown out at 100 miles an hour. When it's slower, the feel is often beautiful.

Life can be painful- it can also be wonderful. While Roaring Jack demand you do some thinking, they make it quite clear there's more to life than confronting the Boss:

» The Lass Behind
the Beertaps <

*The wise man trims his wisdom and the fool pursues his folly
Give me an hour inside the bower with my sweet charming Polly
For love is pleasing, love is teasing, love is wealth and treasure
With a glass of wine I will entwine and with me lass take pleasure*

ADAM

ROARING
JACK

Playing For The Traffic (Alistair Hulett)

*You could have seen him any day up the back of Martin Place
In a battered Sunday suit that's seen far better days
Blowing on a mouth harp with the kind of wit and grace
That would bring a smile to the face of a broken clock
And there was not a verse or chorus the old bugger didn't know
From Mother Kelly's Doorstep to The Banks Of The Ohio
The typists and the tellers didn't want to bloody know
Dealing with their dose of future shock*

*He was playing for the traffic and the nine to fivers
Tooraloo you're bound for Botany Bay
And he gave more to this world than all the penny pinching bastards
That turned around and looked the other way*

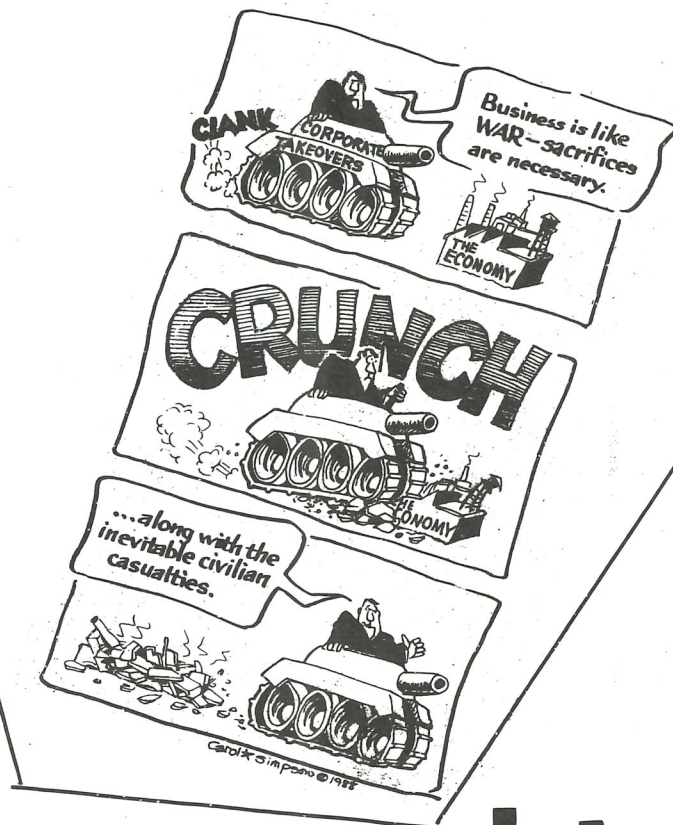
*Well, I stood a while to listen and he played the thing with ease
But the crowd that day was tighter than a Pom at a wine and cheese
Maybe they were hard up or just plain hard to please
But no one put a single cent his way
So I reached into my pocket to even up the score
And dropped a pile of change into the tin plate on the floor
When you work the streets they treat you like a whore
And no one ought to ever feel that way*

*He was playing when I left him, with a new crowd to convince
I often look out for him but he's not been back there since
Did anybody notice, does anybody wince
At some old digger picking through the trash
In this land of milk and honey where there's more than enough for all
Why did he spend his whole life with his back against the wall
Did he fight in two world wars to wind up with sweet fuck all
Working on the street for a bit of stash*

Alistair, Vocal and Acoustic Guitar · Davey, Bass Guitar · Steph, Vocal and Accordion
Rab, Electric Bouzouki · Steve, Drums



The Cat Among the Pigeons ★

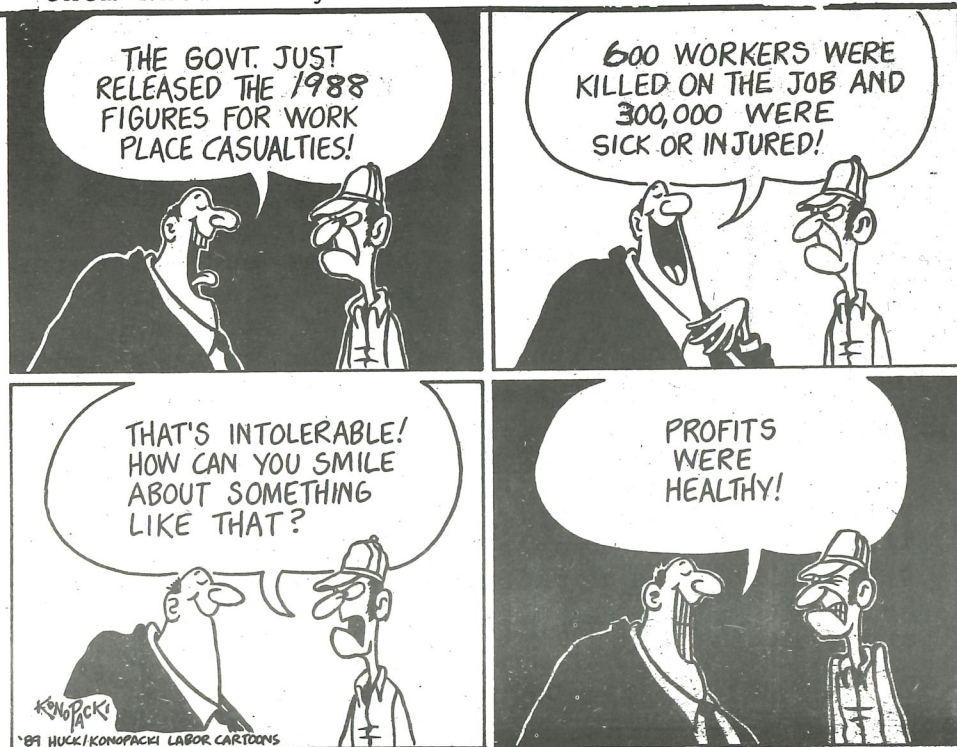


an appeal to cleaners

You ca'nt but help notice the graffitti on trains,while working in the yards I've noticed the cleaners cleaning it all off,indiscriminatly.I've got nothing against cleaners but would like it if they made a consciouss choice as to what they scrub off.Sure Jodie loves Paul "iron maiden " and tagging looks shithouse and should be wiped out but political graffitti should stay there.(If you agree with it.)

OUR eyes and ears are assaulted by the multi-nationals and government every day through the radio,t.v.,newspaper and bill boards,don't forget that gross airship which peers voyeristically into our backyards.All these mediums have a similar message, buy this,but that, vote for me and I'll make you free. It's always crap,is often offensive and starts to get boring after awhile.. It's always the rich speaking through these mediums inflicting their arrogant view of reality upon us,telling us to support the status quo by buying a new car,look cool by smoking ciggarettes have sex appeal by drinking Big M and vote labor to give the working class some power.We all know they're dribbling shit from their wolf like mouths but a daily diet of this crap and its possible to go mad and start believing it.You can turn the t.v. off or shoot Bonds blimp down but you really can't get away from this mental assult and no ones going to tell them to stop because there's no one to tell them to. It takes lots of money to get into these mediums so the working class are effectively censored from expressing their opinions. This is where posterong,graffitti and stickers come into their own,they are a medium which we can afford and can effectively express ourselves with.Political sentiments expressed on trains reach alot of people,infact it would be one of the best ways of getting thoughts accross because so many people use public trasport.This is the only way the poor can express their sentiments,of course its illegal but people take the risks because there's nothing worse than living in silance,unable to get your thoughts and feelings out.

Cleaners by rubbing political graffiti off, tearing down posters and stickers are protecting the bosses and other power hungry scum, they are serving the bosses interests and contributing to the censorship and oppression of the poor, who are their fellow workers and in turn themselves. The cleaners are making sure we hear and see the bullshit the rich feed us but won't let us see our own expressions of hatred and contempt for this sick system which oppresses us. All I'm asking is that the cleaners look at what they are cleaning off, if it makes sense or seems all right leave it on or contribute something of your own. Lets express our feelings and let people see them, don't be a bosses dog and contribute to our oppression, make a decision choose your side and let them know how you feel.



Trees Die For Management Drivel

In case you're one of the seven workers who take 'METLINES' and 'MET NEWS' seriously, we'd like to point out two recent half-truth articles printed in these rags:

1/ Aprils METNEWS has on its front page a glowing review of the recent Healthy Foods Promotion which took place at the Electric Running Depot canteen. The promotion was an outstanding success but the 'reporter' failed to acknowledge that the event was initiated by the workers in the area. In September management was about to drastically curtail hours at the Canteen as a costcutting measure. Only strong action by guards -bans on sidings- led management to backdown. They agreed to hold off their cuts for a month pending a review of canteen operations. In that month a joint position was worked out by drivers, guards, yard staff and electricians: more workers would use the canteen if food and service was improved. Management Ummmed and Arghed but finally agreed to experiment with this approach, and they've been astounded by the turn around in trade ever since.

2/ METLINES last edition for '88 had a detailed article on the history and recent upgrading of the Preston Hump. Just one detail was missing: numerous accidents on the single track Hump had resulted in endless promises by management to fix it. It was not until Preston Depot trammies banned the hump that management finally acted. The Hump was expanded to double tracks because of worker action not because the bureaucrats at the MET are greatly concerned for worker/user safety.

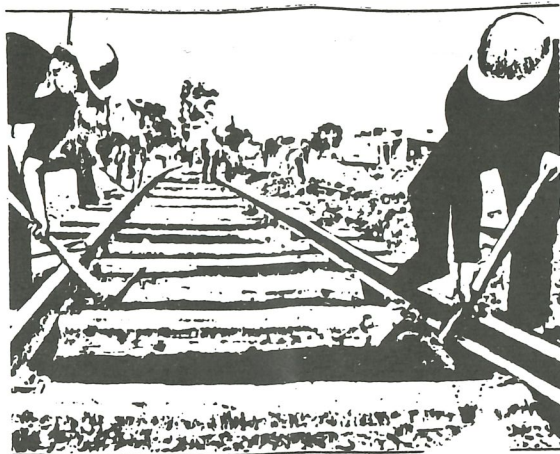
SAVE TREES, BAN METLINES AND METNEWS!!

(Mike with Sue)

PRESTON HUMP getting widened--no thanks to management.....



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politics of apathy

More trials and tribulations from the **TIE RENEWAL GANG** where everything gets said in monosyllables and apathy saturates the air like tropical rainstorms.

Having achieved the position of gang delegate, I was soon dismissed from this position due to a conspiracy between various bosses who didn't consider I should hold the job. The next delegate soon resigned out of sheer boredom. A new vote was taken and I was voted back in unopposed. 5 people voted out of 30—no one else seemed to care what happened. A situation I don't like as there is a distinct lack of support, even antagonism at times. It boils down to the fact that I'm delegate through apathy, nothing else; no one cares who does the job so I'm the one with the job. Not a good position to be in given that I'm meant to try and get some solidarity and unity here.

We have a new ganger whose an absolute beast. The sight of his festering face and pus-bloated carcass lurching down the track like some sort of demented psychopath, fills the whole gang with fear. He's a meglomaniac who uses and abuses his power at every opportunity. He loves nothing better than a confrontation where he can spit abuse at someone for 10 minutes, showing us his power. Arguments are often won by threatening to take away our few privileges if we beg to disagree—this means admitting we're scum and he's our saviour. He adds weight to his massive ego with stories of being in the KLu-Klux-Klan and with his friendship with some tough types who crucify babies then suck their insides out for a hobby!! These types may come round to your house if you give **their messiah** any trouble.

GANG APATHY.....

As you can imagine, work is intolerable with this fat hunk of shit grunting away in caveman language. Rumour has it he's trying to become a road foreman or other such slimy thing and so is working us to the ground to make a good impression on his bosses. It's the usual story of a bastard climbing to the top using the blood and sweat of workers. I can think of nothing more obscene than Keith Mackay—Dirty Harry (it's the sunglasses Keith) sitting at a desk looking like some gross caricature of a bush pig, interviewing prospective employees!

As well as this crap, I keep hearing the union boss hates my guts and wants me out, claiming he wants someone "he can talk to". He's never even tried talking to me and does his best to ignore me whenever he sees me!! Whether he's just full of prejudice or is acting out the wishes of the bosses—quite possible these days given the state of unions—I'm not sure but whatever, there's no support coming from the union.

I don't wish people to think all gangs are politically impotent. Some have quite a strong political motivation like the **THERMAL WELDING GANG**, as seen when they recently banned Lester Wallan. They're more than ready to stick it up the boss but this seems to be an exception rather than the rule. Hopefully one day all gangs will have their level of awareness. All it takes is for the workers to see themselves as powerful individuals, especially when united and not existing in fear. Together we can topple anything put before us.....

H-OFF



CHAIN GANG LETTER.....

This story is from someone who came to work for the railways six months ago; this is what he encountered.

The railway work force is divided into numerous gangs, my gang consists of twenty people, some workers, some bludgers.

The one common thing is bullshit, 80 % of what you hear is bullshit. What prompted me to write this letter is the totally undemocratic and dictatorial way a union delegate election was held the other week 7.12.88.

A member of our gang was elected union delegate unanimously but because he was aggressive in the defence of one of our members against a road foreman (Terry Lions) he was sacked and replaced as our union delegate by our special ganger. No one was nominated and only a partial vote was taken for the union delegate unfortunately no one told the new union delegate he was the union delegate until the next day.

Interestingly the new union delegate is the person who the old union delegate stuck up for so aggressively; in my opinion the election of the new union delegate was illegal, degrading, disreputable and stank of conspiracy between special ganger, road foreman and smart arsed pen pushers who have pretensions to eminence.

pl.



FLINDERS STREET:

THE PRESSING NEED TO ORGANISE.



In the November 88 issue of SPARKS we reported on the threatened de-staffing of Flinders Street Station platforms. Management want to install a central control room to run all platforms.

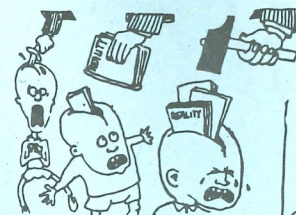
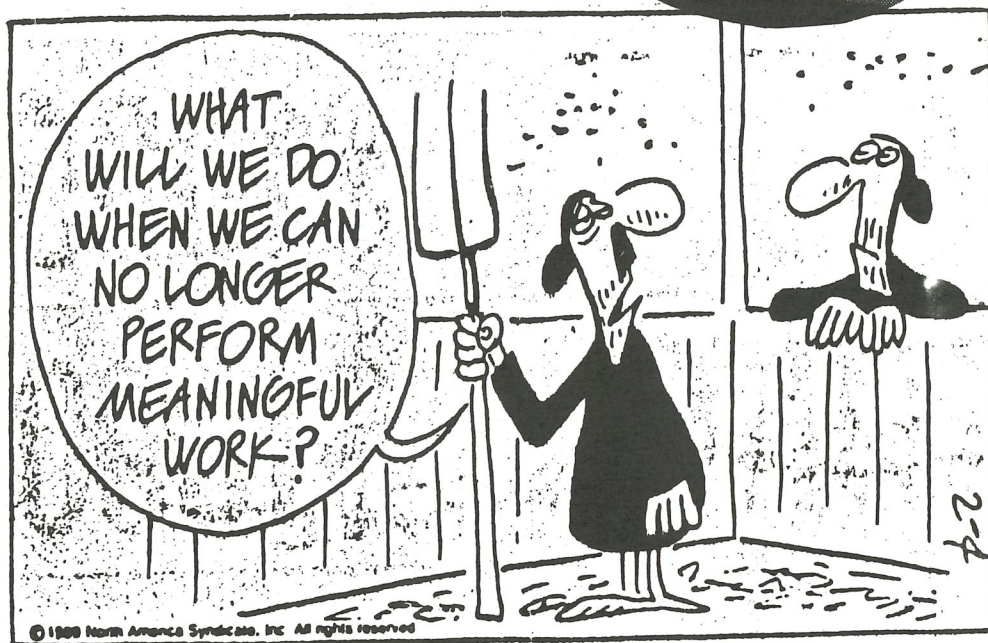
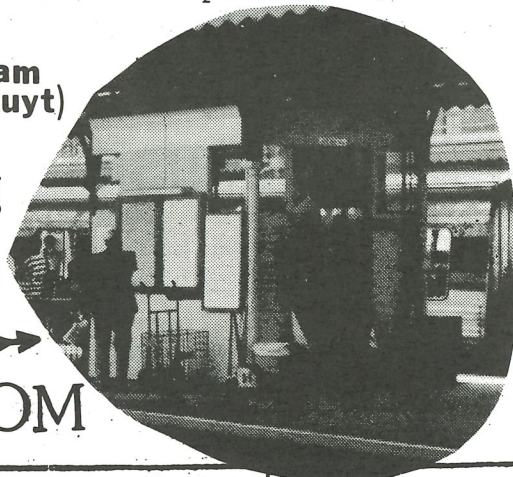
The MET went through the farce of consultation, setting up a working party to look at the control room plans. Reps from the guards, drivers, station staff and clerical areas poured scorn on the concept. They pushed for the retention of platform staff and the modernisation of all platform cabins. After three months of arguing for the control and getting nowhere within the working party framework, management got the shits and wound the circus up. (Seems working parties are only valid in managements eyes when they are getting their way). The bureaucrats now intend to 'resolve' the matter through negotiations with the various union executives.

Its essential for workers affected by the de-staffing of platforms to begin organising a programme of resistance. The Control Room is tied into the \$200 million re-development plans for Flinders Street Station. Cain and Kennan have a great deal of prestige riding on this redevelopment and will be expecting the project to go off smoothly. Because of the political connections between the union bosses and the ALP it would come as no surprise to have union bosses selling out on the Control Room. (Remember the St. Kilda/Pt. Melbourne light rail fight).

What needs to occur very rapidly is a joint meeting between workers threatened with losing their jobs—station staff—and those whose conditions will be drastically altered by deserted platforms—guards, drivers, signal staff. At this meeting a campaign of industrial action needs to be planned out thoroughly. At Flinders Street Station little information on the consequences of the Control Room has come out, so the meeting must address this need. Also a public information campaign should be looked at—posters on platforms, leaflets, stickers, etc...

(Adam Muyt)

this cabin
needs replacing
though not
by a
CONTROL ROOM



THEY TURN YOU INTO CONSUMER DURABLES

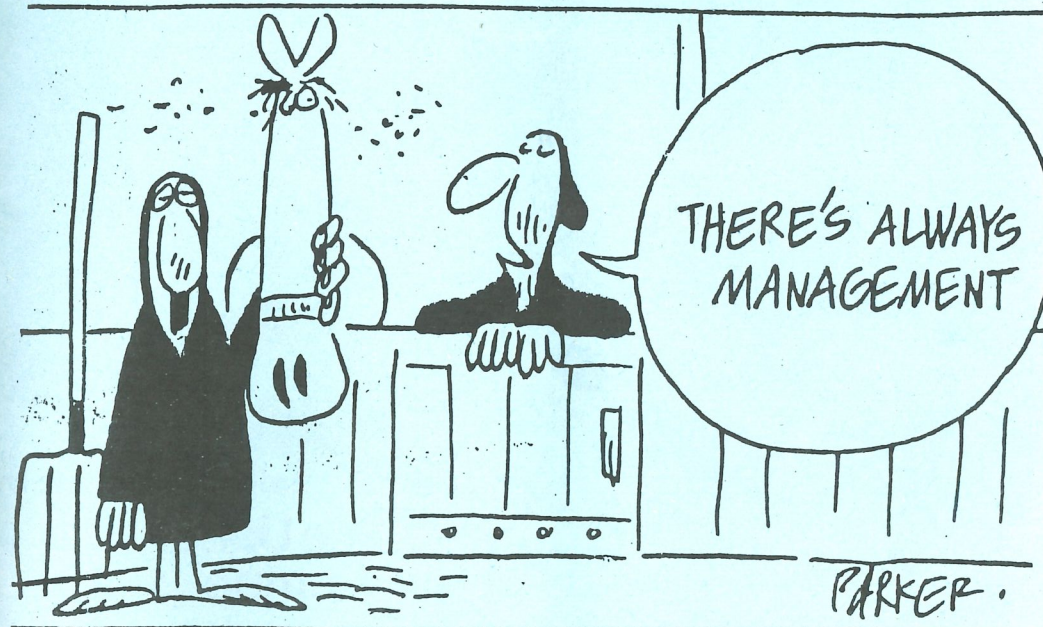
AT LAST THEY LOOK HUMAN!

Educate - Agitate

"What is said by great employers of labour against agitators is unquestionably true. Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people, who come down to some perfectly contented class of the community and sow seeds of discontent among them. That is the reason why agitators are so absolutely necessary. Without them, in our incomplete state, there would be no advance towards civilization."

Oscar Wilde

★★★★★★

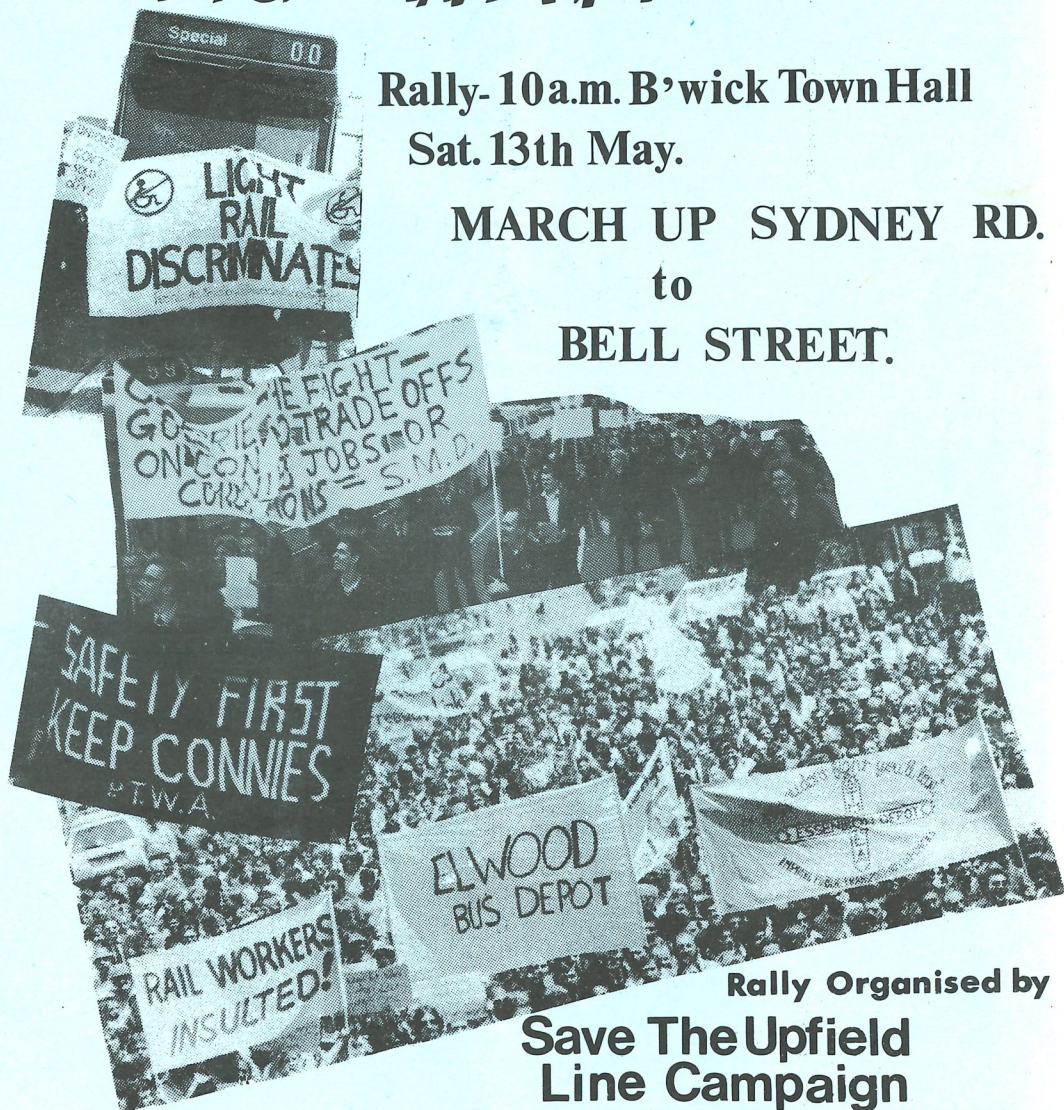


Upfield Light Rail??

NO WAY!

Rally- 10a.m. B'wick Town Hall
Sat. 13th May.

**MARCH UP SYDNEY RD.
to
BELL STREET.**



Rally Organised by

**Save The Upfield
Line Campaign**