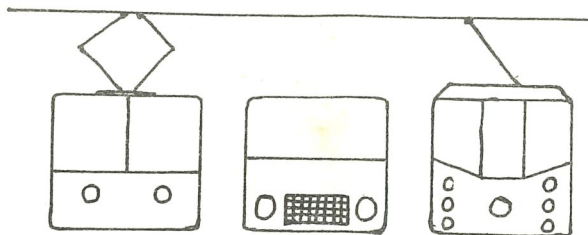


# SPARKS

No. 3 - AUGUST

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST TRANSPORT WORKERS PAPER



## It won't stop at 2000

What is our response to 2000 redundancy notices? Already someone(s) have circulated a paper suggesting September 19 as railworkers stress day- that everyone go off sick.

As well there is a need to communicate and discuss among ourselves- guards, shunters, gangs, station staff, workshops and clerical workers, what action we can and want to take.

It's no good having a mass meeting where 5 or 6 people make speeches at us and tell us why we have to vote for their proposal. Who's to say that after a few hours of face to face discussion we can't come up with something more imaginative. They say two heads are better than one. What about 5000? A 24 hour stop-work. Hire somewhere like Festival Hall for the day and spend 3 or 4 hours in smaller groups throwing around ideas, exchanging information, before we discuss any "proposals".

Enough of mass meetings where we're treated and act like sheep. If we are to ACT we have to know the facts.

# it's time: we run the industry

So, the state government's wiping out 2000 jobs in V/Line as part of the 'cost cutting' measures leading up to September's budget. This comes on top of the announcement in July of new rosters for suburban stations that effectively mean 200 jobs are chopped. More cuts have been promised come budget night and Roper's proud to announce that since August last year, over 1200 jobs have been 'attritioned' in the railways alone.

When's this illusion that the ALP is the workers' friend finally going to evaporate? The Labor Party has done such an effective job of straightjacketing the working class precisely because of the tentacles firmly binding the union movement to it. The ALP has no intention of challenging the groundrules of this capitalist economic and political system - it justifies itself with the spreading around of a few extra crumbs from an already stale loaf. Union hierarchies hold firm in the belief that no matter how bad a Labor government is, it's still somehow better than a Liberal one (I can't tell the difference). Loyalty to the Party has come before responsibility to the rank and file. Fearful of losing their government, the union leadership have relied on backroom dealing. The 'success' of this strategy is now being felt across the country.

The Accord's been in place for three years now. Before the Accord we had a wages freeze. Wages have risen in four years by 15%, while prices have risen by close to 30%. I'm supposed to be benefiting from this?? Local and overseas business interests have been laughing all the way to the - offshore - banks. They've manipulated the subdued industrial climate created by the ALP-ACTU history.

The Broken Hill lockout; the Mudginberri farce; the Qld. power workers dispute; Robe River; the BLF de-registration - isolated groups of workers can't win much. The bosses have seen how the Labor Party responds to militancy. Now their talk's come rapidly around to work for the dole schemes, the reduction of penalty rates, the dropping of leave loadings, an increase in hours worked per week. Last week the oil industry distributors announced they were seeking, through the Arbitration Court, the total abolition of holiday loadings and an increase in working hours, from 35 to 38, of all TWU members employed in that industry.

An injury to one is an injury to all of us. We simply can't afford to believe that what is happening to our industry is somehow separate from what is occurring to other workers across the country. Capitalism's smelling blood, and if we don't start organising now, our jobs are history. Public transport cuts, cloaked as they are under the catch all term of economic restraint, have been planned well before this talk of banana diets appeared. V/Line's restructuring under the Corporate Plan is explicit - a bulk commodity freight service geared directly to satisfying the demands of BHP, TNT, CSR, Comalco, etc. The intention is to get rid of all 'unprofitable' labour and services and use our taxes to provide the transport infrastructure these businesses want - new, heavier rolling stock, more powerful loco's, new terminal handling equipment, etc.

The Corporate Plan for V/Line envisages 7000 less workers than are currently employed. So the 2000 jobs are the 'tip of the iceberg'; and with every job that is wiped out, the possibilities of defending our already miserable existences' decrease.

RAILWAY ANNIE

SPARKS is a regular newsheet produced by a group of Public Transport workers. Most of us are members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. Contributions : articles, poems, graphics, and comments can be sent to P.O. Box 1066 North Richmond & P.O. Box 92 Broadway, Sydney 2007.



# Nation's welfare is now the issue

## Caucus approves cut of 2000 jobs with

COMMENT

seekers far exceeds the number of jobs available.

However, a nation sinking deep into debt and stagnation cannot

that eventually the biggest savings can be made, not just by reducing "double dipping" into the welfare pool but by extending portable and fully vested occupational superannuation from 40 per cent to 100 of the workforce.

that there were "one or two" caucus members who did not recognise the Government's need to make significant spending cuts. But he said there was strong general support from caucus for the transport cost-cutting package. The Treasurer remarked that no essential in the Government's future reduction "quite satisfied"

by the Socialist plans did not attend meet- the pack-

But the Transport made a concession agreed to postpone dancy notices until 2 more talks on the co rail unions.

Asked about the Union's \$200,000 media the cuts, Mr Roper suggested that suburban be affected by the cut made it quite clear. The uni-

## Budget to axe 1000 teachers

TEACHER numbers will be cut 1000 next year as part of the Government's bid to slash its spending.

By IAN MUNRO and JOHN HINE

The Government will try to pre-

## Peko sacks 1100 in defiance

By JAN MAYMAN in Perth and ROY ECCLESTON in Canberra  
The mining giant Peko-Wallend yesterday dramatically escalated challenge to the industrial relations system by sacking 1100 workers in defiance of orders by the Western Australia Industrial Relations Commission.

Robe River mining operation and switched off its big Cape Lambert power station supplying electricity to the Pilbara iron ore region under a contract with the State Electricity Commission. This forced the SEC to bring an emergency station into action to avoid blackouts.

tion where industrial relations are conducted in a bull ring. This is not Chile or South Africa.

"This is not an attack on the unions, it is an attack on the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission."

Mr Dowling said he had made it clear to company executives how strongly his Government dis-

with interests in iron ore, gold, copper, tungsten, mineral sands and coal. It is valued by the share market at more than \$720 million.

In January, Peko increased its interest in Robe River to 50.9 per cent, giving it management control of the project, the world's fifth-largest producer of iron ore.

The rest of the operation is owned by the Japanese concerns, Mitsui, Nippon and Sumitomo.

## WHAT NATION ? WHOSE WELFARE ?

It seems that there is the nation of those with the power to hire and fire, and the nation of those who used to get hired but these days it's more often fired.

What is good for one is not good for the other. "Our dollar" and "our economy" are on the skids, but the profits are rolling in for the big Australians.

Nothing in our time is so dangerous and disheartening as the tyranny of custom in this field of victory, the field of battle on which our fathers won the right for each man to think freely according to conscience. No despot, no pope, no conqueror, now bids us think in one way ; but society as a whole frowns on original thinking, and we all tend more and more to think what our newspapers tell us to think, and to do exactly as our neighbours do. We make ourselves traitors to our valiant forefathers in thus surrendering our right to free thought. We enfeeble our inward life and impoverish the national life by this slavish sameness of ideas. Our need is for variety, for richness and freedom. It is our duty to fling off the restraints of fashion and convention, to exercise our minds in hard thinking, to examine all the modes of thought which now rule us like a fashion in dress, and to rouse our souls to the work of forming judgments of our own. Liberty is essential to the mind.

We are slaves without knowing it. Our minds are locked fast in a prison-house. The ideas we think our own have been fastened on us like chains by the tyranny of custom. And because we do not think for ourselves our minds fall into a lethargy ; for lack of exercise our brains become feeble. Liberty is essential to the mind's existence. It must for ever be exercising that liberty to be strong and vigorous ; and if it is not seeking truth with all its strength and all its passion there is no doubt that it is sinking back into the darkness of ignorance and the bog of superstition.

*Childrens Encyclopaedia*

c.1930

According to the latest list of the country's 200 wealthiest individuals, compiled by the Business Review Weekly, there were 74 Victorians with fortunes of more than \$20 million.

New South Wales was next with 70, followed by Western Australia with 23, Queensland 19, South Australia six and Tasmania three. Five of the 200 richest Australians live overseas.

The 200 individual fortunes published totalled \$14.8 billion, up \$4 billion from last year.

There were 30 new names on this year's list, despite the magazine raising the "threshold" for entry from \$15 million to \$20 million.

Mr Holmes a Court has added \$500 million to his net worth in the space of three years — a rate estimated by the BRW for an average working week of



# BROKEN SHIFTS

WORKWORK  
O NO N  
R WORK O  
KNOTKNOT  
WORKWORK  
O KNOT N  
R OR O  
KNOTKNOT

-II.O.-  
from : 925 no. 15

I am a tram driver and frequently have to work "broken shifts", also known amongst tram crews as "split shifts" or "spreads".

A broken shift is effectively a 12 hour day. The basic shift is 4 hours on, a break of 4 hours, then another 4 hours on. There are a number of variations, sometimes a 3 or 3½ hour break, but the effect is still the same : at the end of a shift I am buggered, at the end of a week I am practically broken; they don't call them broken for nothing.

The number of broken shifts in the tramways is very high, despite efforts in the past to have them abolished. Some sections of the roster at my depot have as many as 4 or 5 weeks in a row of broken shifts.

The implications for the health of workers and safety of passengers is quite serious. Broken shifts are very stressful : you get 2 heavy peak periods. I become irritable, sometimes aggressive, and often suffer from depressions. At best, I am simply very tired at the end of a shift. The effect on safe driving procedures is also serious. Many accidents can be directly attributed to drivers suffering from excessive stress.

The experience of other workers is similar. There have been nervous breakdowns; many drivers simply give up driving and "go back on the bag" (return to conducting) for a rest. Some rest! Connies suffer the effects of broken shifts too. Collecting fares for 2 peak s in 1 day is very debilitating : I speak from experience.

The point of all this is to make other transport workers aware of the inhuman working conditions that still prevail in the tramways, and also to ask WHY we continue to put up with it. Why do I have to work a 12 hour day when my grandfather fought for and won the right to a 8 hour day?

Martin M.  
Rank and File tram driver.



# GUARDS,

At the July section meeting of the suburban guards a stop work motion to discuss station staffing was defeated by only 2 votes. This is unfortunate because the deal the ARU and ATOF seem set to sign with the government will have major implications for not just station assistants but guards and drivers also.

According to the AGE newspaper, over 120 stations will be closed after 9pm on weekdays. This figure doesn't include those stations that will only be staffed on the "Up", which is ridiculous in the afternoon in terms of passenger safety when most of them get off on the "down" side! The crews have good reason to be concerned about their own safety too. In the 2 years 1984-5 there were over 246 reported assaults on staff and passengers. This represents more than a 500% increase on the previous 2 years. It stands to reason that if the stations continue to close at the present rate there can only be a further increase in attacks on staff and passengers. There are of course other problems that need to be talked. Who will close the platform gate, give the tip on curved platforms, take ill or injured passengers off trains, look after wheelchairs, or pass messages on to control when your train has no radio. This is something most people don't know, about half the trains don't have radios! So if there is a problem on the train, the crew can do nothing about it until they reach a staffed station which can be up to 6 stops or 15 minutes away.

What are the unions doing about this? Well they're talking, but that's not what we need. We need action, and soon. While they have been talking 1200 jobs have disappeared in the transport department: the trams are understaffed; the ARU initiated shunters review cost 280 jobs. All through the metro rail system the major cause of train cancellations is staff shortages.

# GET GOING!

I said before that the unions are talking, but what exactly are they talking about? The "Corporate Plan" for the railways sees as one of its objectives turning guards into ticket sellers.

The AGE 17/7/86 talks about the options being discussed to cope with early station closures. One of them is on train ticket sales.

The union bosses don't want a fight. Most of the Executive, both in the guards and Unity Hall, are either members, or supporters, of the ALP. They want to keep their party in power and know a major fight with rail unions is the last thing the government needs.

So while in their hearts they might not like what is going on, in practice they are prepared to allow our wages, conditions, health and safety and job security to continue to be eroded. To fight back would remove a few of their mates from parliament.

There is an alternative to the weak and conservative approach of the ALP. In the good old days before the Accord, economic summits, Tri-partisan Committees and high level committees; when unions were under attack or wanted something they took direct action and won. The tools of the trade were strikes, black bans, pickets, solidarity with other workers, publicity campaigns for the public, marches on the employers offices, etc.

If our union leaders have forgotten how to defend our industry, then the rank and file workers on the job must teach them how. To do this we need to meet and discuss the problems in the transport industry in a reasonable and free way. I intend to continue to campaign for safety and other issues that affect the guards and I ask for your support.

BOB



I can't face work.

I'll turn my back on it.

I turn my back on it.

I've turned my back on it.

-ieltje-  
from : 925 no. 16

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#### ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST FILM & DISCUSSION NIGHT.

Organized labour is under attack all over the world.  
The British miners, the BLF, and in Spain - the  
'socialist' government is trying to destroy the CNT...

At Warr Park Community Centre  
43 De Carle St. Brunswick  
September 1 7:30 pm

FREE

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#### RALLY IN SUPPORT OF THE BLF

And the right of Union members to belong to the  
union of their choice.

Sunday August 31 at 12 noon  
Outside the Meat Market, corner of  
Victoria & Elizabeth St.s City.

## THE TRACKS OF TROUBLE

Tonight- late shift at the railway station- I heard a loud  
crash : VANDALS.

From experience I know my choices are : -to ignore it (the noise);  
call the cops or railways investigation officers; or go out-  
side and...

I go outside.

I am greeted by five people, all young, about 16.

ME : "What's going on?"

CHORUS : "It's too long between trains, we're bored."

One says, "I like smashing things up and mugging people."

"Are you a cop?"

You look like a cop."

I look into his eyes : they're dead. I see no recognition,  
no nothing. Just an empty blur.

ME : "Can't you entertain yourselves more creatively?"

DEADEYES : "Are you a Social worker or something?"

We're going into the city to fight some wogs.

I hate wogs, 'cos they stabbed me. Yeah, and  
slants. I hate bloody slants, y'know, Chinese.

I'd like to kill 'em all. If there was a war  
on and I could kill slants I'd be right in  
there. I hate wogs 'cos they stabbed me."

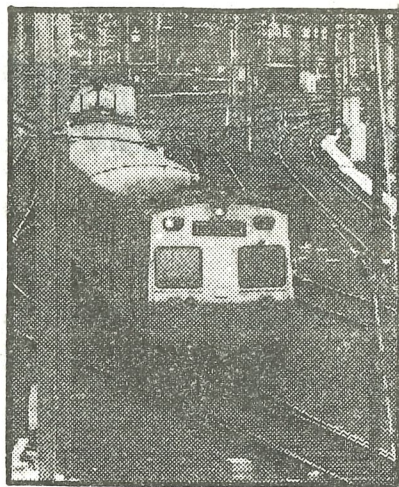
He lifts his shirt and shows me a neat round scar on his  
stomach.

ANOTHER : "I'd like to kill someone."

DEADEYES : "Australia for the Ozzies. I hate wogs. Aust-  
ralia for the Ozzies. They can come for two  
weeks holiday and that's it. Then they have  
to go."

The train came.

Sure they're bored. Nobody talks anymore. I thought about  
my responsibility for their boredom. My part in a society  
where everyone "minds their own business" and behind  
closed doors we all get sick - sick in the head. Intol-  
erant of differences. Intolerant of what we don't under-  
stand. Our eyes die and our brains become dull.



**GOING  
GOING  
GOING...**

**GONE**