

SPARKS

December - No. 5.

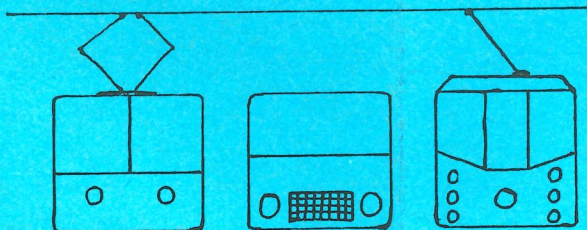
Essential Action

As we go to print, almost all of Victoria's public hospital nurses are on strike. It's an essential service that the nurses provide and when it's obvious that their working conditions and wages are lousy, there is little problem supporting their actions. Afterall, we are all potential patients and should be concerned about the quality of healthcare. Strong public support for the justice of the nurses fight must be feeding their determination to stay out until they get what they've demanded.

The government is carving up public transport, and still our union leaders choke at the mention of industrial action.

We reckon our industry is an essential public service worth fighting for. Afterall, without public transport how many more cars would there be choking the roads, how many more deaths and disabilities caused through accidents and pollution, how much more profit going into the hands of the trucking and bussing firms, the car manufacturers, the oil companies?

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST TRANSPORT WORKERS PAPER



WE'RE ALL PATIENTS

Patient or potential patient, we all fall into one of these two categories. As such we are all affected by the quality of health care. Nurses, like workers in all government departments, have felt the pinch of "cost-cutting". So much so that many nurses have left the industry to find better paid employment.

Without going into the details of the dispute, which can be found hidden between the lines in the daily papers, we wish to register our support for those 7000 nurses who are currently on strike.

It's taken 100 years for nurses to get angry and take action, and these last five weeks have demonstrated that they have learned a lot from the failures of their fellow workers in other industries like our own.

Nurses on the picket lines are adamant that they're not going to be sold out by their leaders and that Irene Bolger is doing what they want. This is borne out by the attendance of some 6000 nurses at each of the mass meetings held so far. The RANF(Vic Branch) officials have asked for direction and the nurses have clearly expressed which way they want to go. How many rail workers turned up for our last strike meeting? And how many stood on the picket line? And how many feel nothing but cynicism for the integrity of the ARU?

The day to day organisation of the striking nurses and their control of the strike shows the concern of nurses for the state of their industry. Picket lines exist at all major hospitals, a daily strike bulletin is produced by delegates from each of the picket lines. For people who have never been on strike before their morale and participation is high.

We should ask ourselves how long the strike

would have lasted if public transport workers, teachers and all the rest of us had taken immediate action in support of the nurses? It's still not too late.

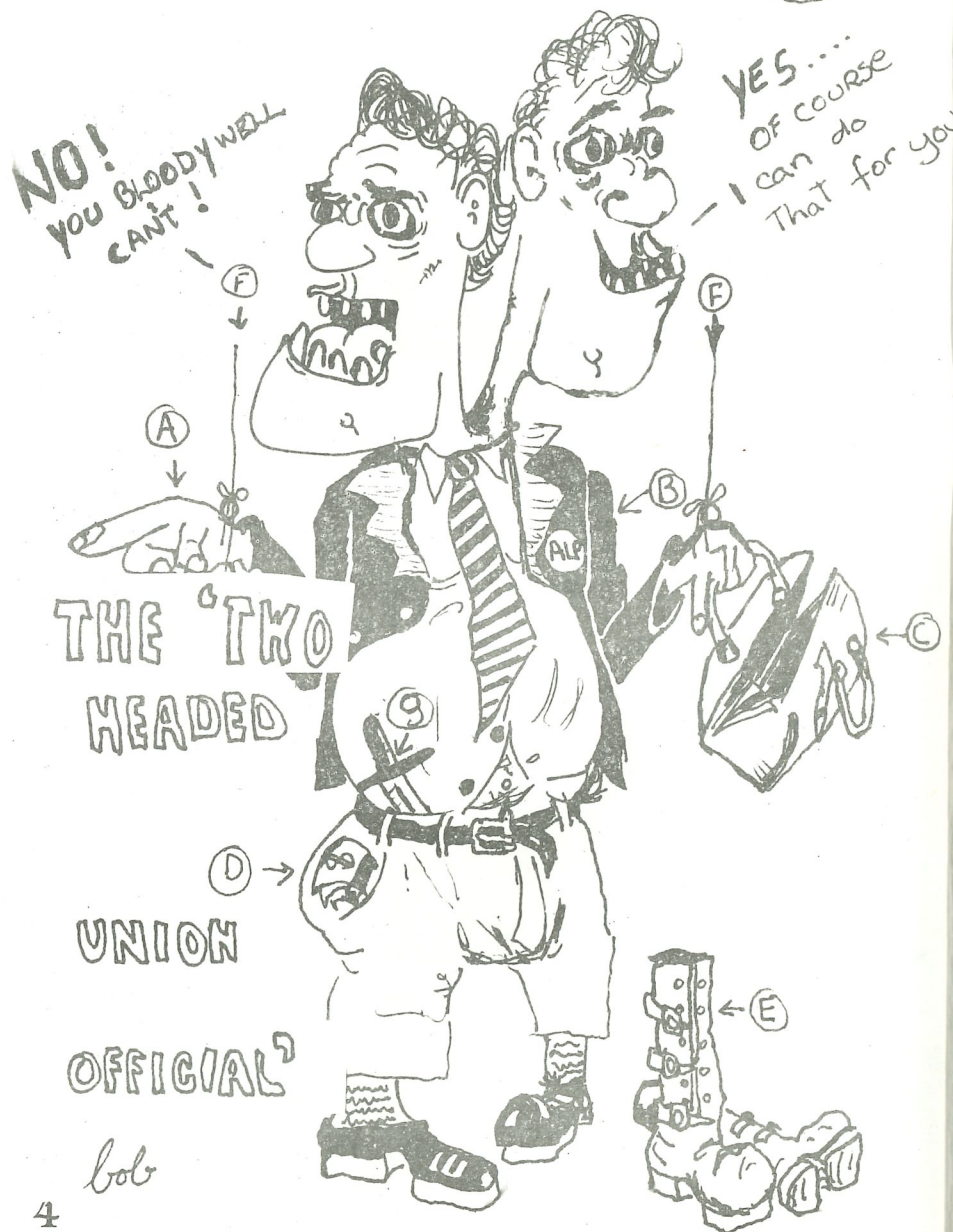
I reckon the three musketeers were on to something with their catchcry of "All for one and one for all".



IMPATIENT PATIENTS
WANT BETTER
HEALTH CARE.

ANIMALS IN THE ZOO

PART ①



ANIMALS IN THE ZOO, PART 1

At first thought to be extremely rare, zoologists have found the "Two-headed Union Official" in increasing numbers since the election of the HAWK government. Characterized by a lack of backbone, this specimen (seen addressing a union meeting with its left head, and the BOSSES with its right) is a good example. Of interest is the pointed finger (A); scientists have noted that it is generally used for telling people what to do. The strange badge (B) with the letters ALP printed on it seems to be used to get the attention of workers in much the same way as a snake uses its rattle. The bag of tricks (C) appear to be of particular use to the Two-headed Union Official and is never far from sight. The bag contains "factional numbers", "rule books" that have baffled everyone who has tried to understand them, and a book called "How to act responsible and fool people". The bag of tricks seem so important to this creature that some observers have speculated on whether it forms part of its life support system. Item (D) is familiar to some of us. It is a great wad of money. You may not be paid well but the Two-headed Union Official makes sure it is. Beside this particular specimen is item (E) "hob nail boots". These are used for kicking heads. Item (F) mystified nature lovers for many years until it was discovered that the strings attached to the hands of the Two-headed Union Official were being pulled by someone on top, in much the same way as a puppet. Controversy abounds among observers as to who actually pulls the strings. Theories have ranged from BIG BUSINESS, the GOVERNMENT, the USA, to Peter Abels. Some older theories such as the strings being pulled by union members, have since been proven to be scientific nonsense. Finally we come to item (G), perhaps one of the animals favourite possessions. The stabbing knife. When challenged, The Two-headed Union Official usually looks for a safe rock to hide under. However, if there is no safe place of retreat, the Two-headed Union Official will skulk about in shadows and wait until the challengers back is turned and then insert the stabbing knife in the back.

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In general the Two-headed Union Official is a nasty, slimy untrustworthy animal capable of being extremely vicious. If you encounter one, APPROACH WITH EXTREME CAUTION.

MOST COMMON HABITAT : On the road to Parliament.

EATING HABITS : The favourite eating place is the BACK ROOM where they can be seen in large numbers gorging themselves in the company of bosses.

COLOURING : Usually seen in various shades of pink, but other colours have been noted. Some zoologists believe it is related to the chameleon because of its ability to change colour to suit the political climate.

AMBITIONS : To be P.M. , get an O.B.E. , meet the Queen, own a house in Sandringham, own a Rolls Royce.

LIKES : Power, mud, getting picture in newspaper, kicking heads, nods and winks.

DISLIKES : Work, criticism, common people, communists, anarchists.



BROTHER! "PRICES UP, UNEMPLOYMENT UP, WAGES DOWN!" IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D THINK WE'D ALL DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN.

WAGES STRAIGHTJACKET

ACTU WANTS TO CUT WAGES AGAIN

In 1983 the ACTU imposed the Prices and Incomes Accord upon workers without consultation. Taken with the Fraser wage freeze of 1981 this has meant a real wage cut of 15-17% in five years. Now the ACTU and the ALP government want to impose a system which will cut workers' living standards even further. The leaders of the union movement agree with Hawke and the bosses that we are being paid too much! The new system will work like this: all workers will be given a flat pay rise. Then there will be a second tier where unions can bargain with employers for further increases. But the total pay rise must be less than the rise in prices. Even the militant unions who get the full rise will lose \$4.00 per week. For low paid government workers like us, the loss will be \$15.00 per week! The ALP wants to kick us to prove to the bosses what a good capitalist government it is.

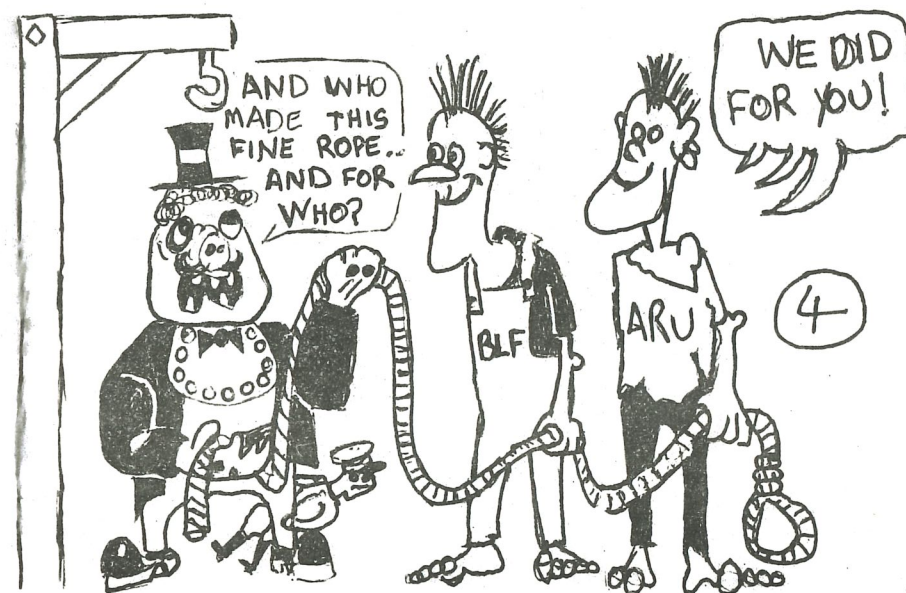
RAIL UNION LEADERS VOTE 'YES'!

"Tribune" (12/11/86) reports on the two tier vote: "The public sector unions... the teachers, clerks and railways... declared their willingness to abide by the decision... and make it succeed." Knowing that the new system will cut wages, knowing that we in this industry face job cuts of more than 9000 by 1990, the leaders of public transport unions have sold us out. The reason for this is that they put their union position and the interests of the ALP ahead of those of the rank and file. The sellout must be opposed.

REJECT THE WAGE CUT PROPOSAL.

Currently, ARU members are being asked to endorse the leaderships support for the wage cut. This is despite a direction from Branch Council to consult members before accepting any new wage system. ARU members must realize that a yes vote is another step on the road to the soup kitchen. Vote NO to the leadership's sellout.

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FIGHT FOR DECENT WAGES!

Unless there is an organized resistance to the plans of the government and the ACTU, coupled with a positive campaign to increase wages and improve conditions, unless there is a real fight against the sackings, workers in this country face certain ruin. We must be prepared to use our industrial strength to attack the government for a change. There are a number of proposals for action:

1. Withdrawal from the wage fixing system and direct bargaining with the employer.
2. A campaign for full indexation of wages.
3. A campaign to regain lost wages and conditions.
4. A campaign to abolish overtime with no loss of pay.
5. A campaign for increases in real wages in addition to all of the above.

Public transport workers must begin to think about which direction we want to go on the wages question. We must consider what we want and what action we'll take to get it. There is money to be had, but it's in the bosses pockets. If union leaders won't fight, then we must - we have the strength, now we must find the will and means to use it.

ORGANIZE AND FIGHT NOW!

Paul Moore
ARU militant.

Every way, you lose . . .

HERE is wages game-plan for someone on average weekly earnings (\$374 a week, according to the Bureau of Statistics):

TO CATCH PRICES YOU NEED	6.6 per cent (\$25 a week)
THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO GIVE	2.6 per cent (\$10 a week)
LEAVING YOU BEHIND BY	4.0 per cent (\$15 a week)
WITH A SECOND-TIER CHANCE OF UP TO	3.0 per cent (\$11 a week)
BUT EVEN THEN, YOU LOSE	1.0 per cent (\$4 a week)

If you earn MORE than \$374 a week, you will do proportionately worse out of the first round because the \$10 is a flat increase. But unless you are employed by the Government, you stand to get the full 3 per cent second-tier rise.

If you earn LESS than \$374 a week, you will be proportionately better off from the first round. But the second-tier rise may be a mirage for lower-paid workers.

MUSCLE FLEXING

Sticking up for your mates has been a principle of workers for a long time, and it was good to see it in action. A friend of mine was suspended and threatened with the sack for attending a depot meeting at South Melbourne a couple of weeks ago. The depot met on the day she went to head office to face the disciplinary panel, and resolved to stop work and consider further action if she was sacked.

One driver drove his tram in off the road in solidarity and others went into head office with her to offer moral support.

She wasn't sacked and the suspension was lifted immediately: a hint of what we're capable of if we stand up and flex a bit of muscle?

ANNA SINDICATO





what's 'Action', mum??

It's now four months since the Sinister of Transport announced that 2000 jobs were to go from V/line by the end of '87. Over 500 redundancy notices have now been sent out and still no mass meeting of ARU members has been called. Unity Hall is convinced that the only hope the workforce has got is through internal pressure within the ALP. They're now trying to sell the Industry Development Initiative to us as the cure to all our ills. To me it seems the IDI is a way of holding out a future to the workers but that that future depends on keeping the ALP in government.

Without a doubt, public transport issues helped elect the Cain government in '82. The industry was supported for a couple of years but eventually the government threw off its commitments and used its record to justify the "necessity" of cutbacks.

Who'd want to support the ALP or any government for that matter when we know agreements with them aren't worth the paper they're printed on.

Our only hope is direct militant action across the public transport industries: we could bring the state to its knees.

TICKING BOXES

Well, now that all the excitement is over, it's back to the daily grind. We've had our union elections (the industrial version of the parliamentary elections) and of course nothing has changed. It's more of the same. The same bureaucracy that signed away the assistant connies, the North Fitzroy bus connies, and numerous depot rosters behind our backs. The same bureaucrats who seem more concerned about their own jobs than ours.

Mind you, there didn't seem to me to be much of a choice: the old union bosses versus the new union union bosses. Bosses are bosses... In the end, union bosses will always take the easy way out and make a deal with the management bosses and then tell us that it's in our best interests, that it's the best deal possible "at the present time".

It's been said before in SPARKS, but maybe it needs saying again: it's about time we took things into our own hands. It's about time we relied on ourselves. We need to stop giving others a mandate to decide the future of our livelihoods, the conditions under which we work, the blood and sweat money we get for it.

South Melbourne depot has taken a step in the right direction: a unanimous resolution to elect the depot committee. I think it vitally important that this resolution be followed up and acted upon as quickly as possible in all the depots.

It is important that we choose people we know and trust from amongst our workmates in our places of work, who can get together to talk about the problems that affect us on the job. People who know what it's like to try and pay the bills on a basic connies wage, who know what 12 days straight on a broken shift means for your health. We need decisions made by people who spend more time talking with their workmates than with management bureaucrats and their fancy talk about "being realistic" and "rationalization".

Responsible elected depot committees will give us a chance to keep a tighter rein on union executive.

As I said before, elected depot committee's is a step in the right direction. They are the only elections I'm likely to see where I feel as if I'm doing more than just going through the motions.

MARTIN M.

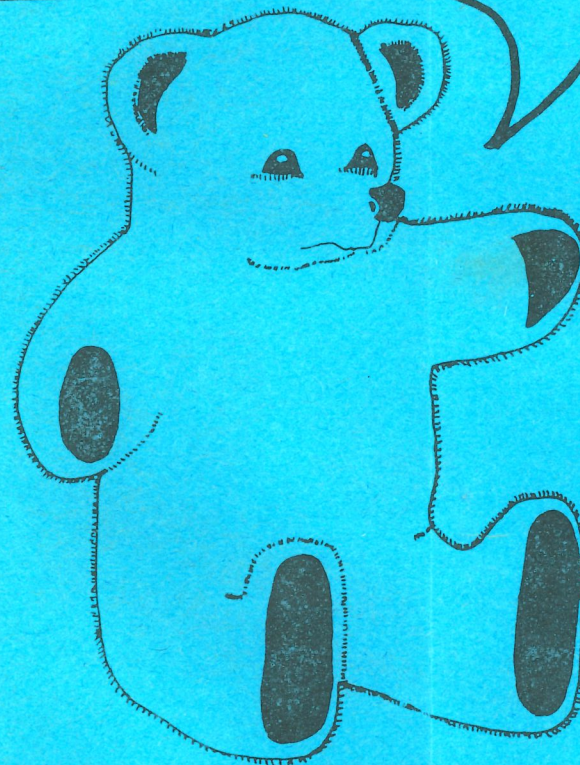
The Johnston Street

The Johnston St. bus, whenever I, a common or garden variety member of the public (i.e. poor), have caught it in the past, has always been CROWDED. It didn't matter whether it was noon or 3pm or 7pm, it was chockers. But the connie being on meant getting on quick and the bus moving off instead of holding up passengers & traffic whilst fares were paid. Now, all has changed, & I'm not the only one pissed off. I caught the bus without a connie on the other day. It was 1pm. Friday. The driver was going crazy trying to get everyone on, get fares, & move everyone to the back. He didn't try very hard on the latter because he (WE) were already late. Everyone was pissed off. I reckon that one way to speed up the run & piss off nobody except the Govt. (& maybe a few Union bosses?), is for the drivers not to collect fares, & to tell the passengers why, or have a leaflet to give them. Such an action might even get the public & the drivers talking to each other, & supporting each other.

Ron.

crawl|||||||.

PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT REVOLUTION AND CLASS STRUGGLE WITHOUT REFERRING EXPLICITLY TO EVERYDAY LIFE, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS SUBVERSIVE ABOUT LOVE AND WHAT IS POSITIVE IN THE REFUSAL OF CONSTRAINTS, SUCH PEOPLE HAVE A CORPSE IN THEIR MOUTH



SPARKS is a regular newsheet
put out by transport workers.

Most of us are anarchists.

We're after control over our lives.

We want your contributions - poems,
graphics, articles, comments, etc.

Go on, contact us: P.O. Box 1066,

Nth Richmond, 3121.

IF YOU LIKED SCHOOL....



...YOU'LL LOVE WORK

WORK: A PRISON OF MEASURED TIME

(Ciao Susi, we'll miss your spirit)