

SPARKS

The Paper of the Public Transport Workers
Association

10.8 JUNE - JULY '87

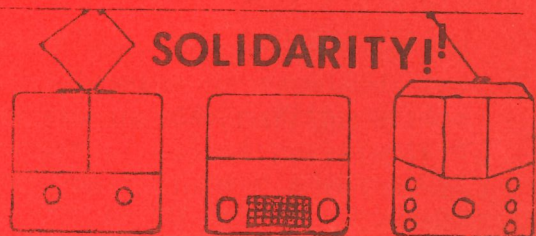


* Preston Humps

* ARU Stopwork

* Light Rail

& HEAPS MORE



SPARKS



its a knockout!!

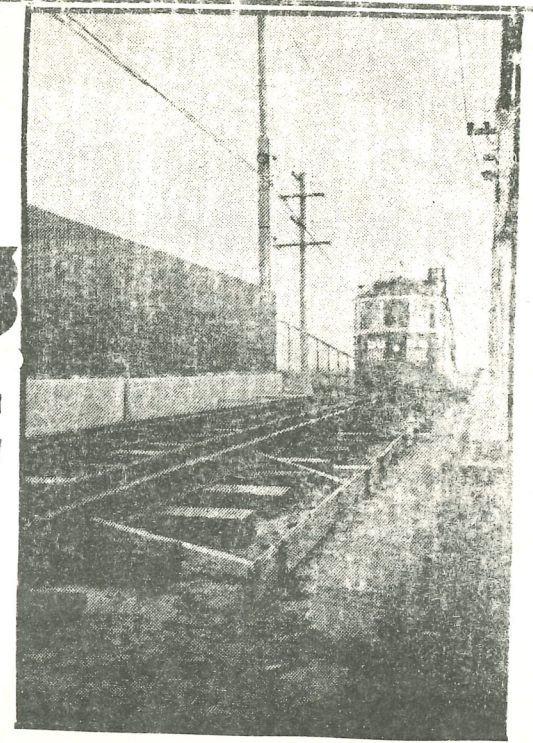
SPARKS is produced by:
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Preston

humping it

(THE HARD WAY!)



The Preston Hump is a single track tramway bridge over the Epping railway line which accomodates two way tram traffic.

There are traffic signals on either side of the hump which give the all clear to go over. The lights are often defective, and sometimes drivers go over through a red light and rely on their own estimation of whether or not there's a tram on the other side, as well as a bit of luck.

The lights have been known to show green on both sides, and there's no way you can see a tram on the other side. One driver has been permanently disabled as a result of an accident on the hump - a head on collision in which his lower body was completely crushed. That was several years ago and still the Preston trammies are travelling daily over the same dangerous and potentially deadly hump.

The hump has been the subject of many union meetings and discussions with management. Management promised two tracks which would easily solve the problem (if the bridge is strong enough to take two trams??). This was promised at least a year ago and since then they have backtracked and made excuses for this work not being done. The union bureaucracy seems to have colluded in stalling the project and in endangering workers and passengers lives.

humps cont'

In March, Preston trammies heard in a depot meeting that management were going to break an agreement that work would start on laying the second track by a set date. Management was crying poor; hard to stomach when at least 39 million dollars is being spent ripping up train lines in Port Melbourne and St Kilda to make way for the new Light Rail Vehicle.

The date on which work was to commence came and went. Management thought the issue would just go away, and were too busy patting themselves on the back for the opening of the Bundoora extension.

In a depot meeting on how to best fight for safe work conditions on the hump, a number of suggestions were made before a tactic was agreed to. Work-to-rules, bans on the hump, and a ban on the Bundoora extension opening were suggested. Banning the opening of the Bundoora extension was a popular suggestion, as the political mileage that the Government and the Met management were to get could have been thwarted with an embarrassing action to highlight the issue of job safety.



What was finally agreed on by the workers at Preston was a method of self-management and pressure. It was decided that we would have two members working D.O.C.'s with two way radios stationed on either side of the hump to direct the safe flow of traffic, until such time as the management made the hump safe by installing the second track. This was to be from 1st car out to last car in.

This decision was passed on to our union bureaucracy and once it was in their hands nothing happened.

A meeting to discuss managements response and how we would implement our decision was postponed by the union delegate and to all appearances this was a concession to the management. It was rumored that management had rejected our proposal and so the heat was on the opening of the Bundoora extension. The meeting that was postponed was to occur two days before the "Grand Opening" of the Bundoora line; the Premier was coming, all the tellies crews were to be there, and the delegate probably didn't want to miss out on his pat on the back for ensuring a trouble-free occasion.

It was a couple of weeks before the postponed meeting took place. This meeting was unannounced to ensure that the least possible democracy would prevail. At this meeting workers were informed that the union had placed a ban on the hump. The union bosses showed their complete contempt for the Preston workers by placing the ban without giving us the chance to decide if this was the tactic which we wanted to adopt. It was a simple direction; the hump was banned, no cars were to go to go over through a red light and no conductors were to walk over the hump when the light stayed red to direct their car over.

The ban in itself is a fairly straightforward industrial tactic. What is disgusting however is the complete lack of democracy in arriving at such a method. The hump affects the tram drivers, conductors and passengers lives and it should be up to us to decide what to do. Fair enough, the union can suggest a method or strategy, but it should be up to us to make the decision.

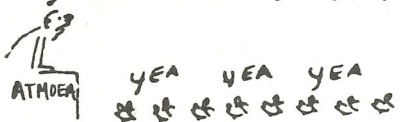
For those who weren't at that April meeting, it was almost a week before the ban was properly advertised by a notice on the board. As there was no proper notification of that meeting and its results, many workers travelled over the hump daily without knowledge of the ban.

The last depot meeting was in the last week of May. A union bureaucrat apparently bought along all the plans for the hump. Again, no notification of the meeting was given, so most Preston workers are in the dark as to what is happening - the way the union seems to wish us to be.

hump cont'

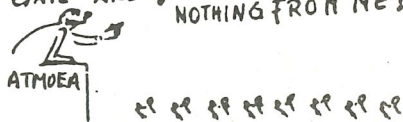
THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE to this all too common story of inaction, delays, stalling, lack of respect for workplace decision making and disputes handling on the part of the union bosses, and an alternative has got to be found because its just not bloody fair. We are lucky that none of us have been killed on the hump, and **only?** one of us has been permanently disabled. Here is a suggestion. We need a depot committee. We need to ensure democracy by **electing** members to this committee and we must ensure the **accountability** of the elected members by giving clear instructions that any decision must come back to the membership for agreement before it is acted upon. The committee must keep us informed, perhaps through a fortnightly bulletin, and must ensure that translations are provided for those of us not fluent in English. **This way we could handle disputes without handing them over to the union bureaucrats who always stall, who ignore our decisions when they don't like them, etcetera.** In fact, bureaucrats arn't even necessary once democratic depot committees are in place, and we can kiss those bastards goodbye.

COMRADES, IT SEEMS THAT YOU HAVE STOPPED WORK.

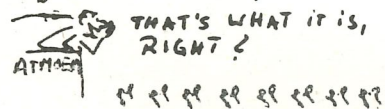


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IF YOU'VE GONE ON STRIKE IT MEANS THAT YOU WANT TO MAKE SOME DEMANDS. I'M YOUR DELEGATE AND YOU SHOULD HIDE NOTHING FROM ME!

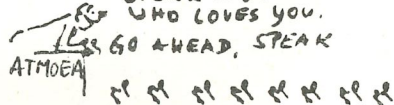


ITS YOUR WAGES RIGHT COMRADES? YOU WANT A RAISE, RIGHT?

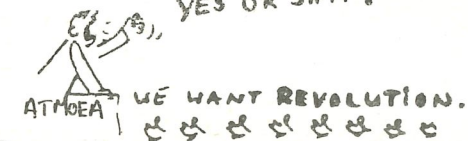


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OR ELSE ITS JOB SECURITY! OR VACATIONS? I'LL HAVE TO GET THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OWNERS TO FACE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES! SPEAK TO YOUR DELEGATE, WHO LOVES YOU.

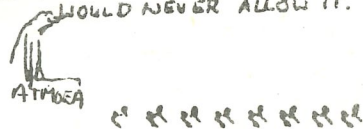


YOU DUMB BASTARDS! ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHY YOU ARE ON STRIKE? YES OR SHIT!



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REVOLUTION! YOU'RE CRAZY! THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OWNERS SHOULD NEVER ALLOW IT.

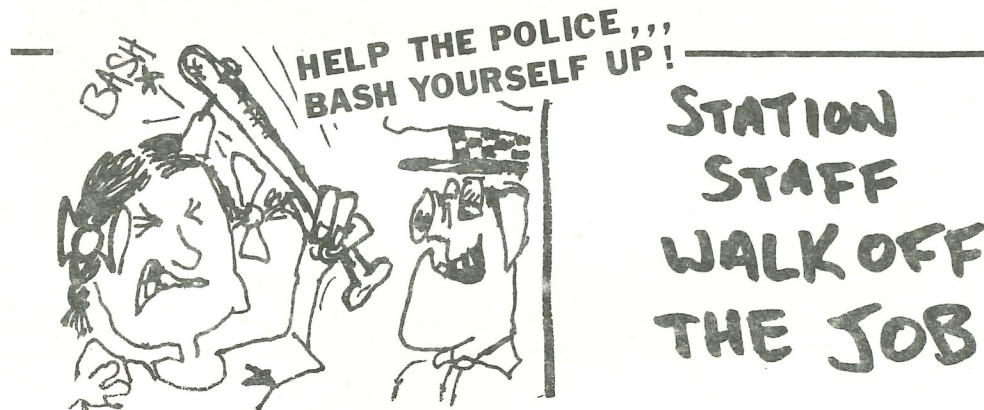


Would You Buy a Used Microwave off This Man?



In the 'Sun' on Saturday 23rd May, an article appeared on pg. 5 about a 'suprise visit' to a railway depot by Roper while he was on his way to work. According to the article, while he was on a tour of the facilities, Roper noticed the supervisors office contained a microwave oven while the workers canteen only had a pie warmer. The supervisors were ordered to move the oven to the canteen. This act of benevolence on the part of Tom has led to the ARU placing an application for 2000 microwaves to be installed across the industry at work sites. And why not?

The works depot Tom 'unexpectedly' visited was Jewell Depot. We wonder whether his 'concern' for the workers conditions was motivated somewhat by the fact the Jewell Depot blokes are the ones doing the dirty work down along the Port Melbourne and St. Kilda lines. Bit of the Boss psychology??



We at SPARKS applaud the action of the station staff down along the St Kilda line who walked off the job on 7th May in protest at the arrest of a picketer down at the light rail worksite at St Kilda station.

This sort of solidarity with the picketers is vital if we're to have any chance of preserving our jobs and our industry. Residents, users, (some of them disabled) and a number of rank and file tram and rail workers, are risking the wrath of the police thugs virtually everyday, attempting to save the trains. They are doing what the union bureaucrats refuse to do-DARING TO STRUGGLE.

fares up

Fares are being raised again and over the next few weeks connies and railway ticket sellers face the prospect of passengers understandably angry at the rises complaining to us. We bear the brunt of such a decision and it makes our jobs miserable, despite the fact that none of us have a say in the price of fares. Many workers who travel daily on the met system to go to and from work will have their entire pissy pay increase under this new two tier system forked out on the new increased fares. Here are some suggested responses to the most common complaint by passengers -

"What? Up again?"

Try;

"Yes, unlike our wages."

"Do they ever go down?"

"Yes,...bad luck for pensioners"

"Yes, terrible isn't? Apparently the Met bureaucrats decided the rise was necessary because golf course fees have gone up and you wouldn't believe the price of parts for BMWs!"

"Yes, I'm afraid so, but when the workers take control of the industry our first cost-cutting measure will be to sack the Met bureaucracy and pass the savings on to the travelling public in the form of lower fares."

One more suggestion. The unemployed, students and pensioners don't get any kind of pay rise. They are least able to afford increased fares 'cause their measly cheques don't even cover food and accomodation in most cases. We can't charge them the old price for their concession cards, because that will make us short and our pay will be docked. However, we can allow them to travel free if they so desire without hassle. Any concession card could be seen as a free pass. If the ticket checkers get on



zed seats

'Z' CLASS CONDUCTORS ARE HAVING THEIR SEATS STOLEN FROM UNDER THEM. First notice we heard of this was in a "Herald" report on Friday the 29th of May. It was reported that the conductors seats are to removed and that Z class conductors will become roving conductors like "A" & "W" class connies. This is despite the fact that the layout of the Z class slimline cars are totally unsuitable for roving conductors. Some connies on the Z class trams are there because they have been assigned light duties, often due to work related injuries.

Z class trams are designed for maximum fare collection- you can't get past the Z connie without paying!? While the management on one hand mouths off about how increased revenue is the name of the aim, on the other hand it removes facilities that make this a possibility. That's management for you.

Management's reported reason for this move is that when the trams go through the city, they can't move until the doors are shut, and with large numbers crowding on waiting to get a ticket and past the connie, the Z tram is delayed. Now that the Light Rail Vehicle is coming along Bourke St, they want the tracks clear so it can flash through. (so the passengers trip from St Kilda is only 25 minutes longer than by train, rather than 30 minutes longer!) -another hidden implication of the LRV.

It was reported that as a trial measure, connies seats in two Preston Z trams have already been removed. "Z" class connies need to decide if they are prepared to work on these trams without seats, as clearly the trams are not designed for roving conductors, so a safe working environment may be impossible. It's no use waiting for management to ask us if we accept these changes, they just go ahead anyway.

.....fares up cont'

WE can stand by our passengers and refuse to allow them to be kicked off. Passengers can give any name and address to the checkers and the matter should rest there. Don't be a suck and call the cops if people refuse to pay. We can take direct action with our passengers against price rises, and then they may support us when we go for wage increases.

CONNIE.

THE TEN

DOLLAR LEVY

on the level?

Last year when the government announced 2,000 jobs would go in V/Line, the ARU executive made a decision to 'fight' the cuts through a publicity campaign. The campaign was supposed to make the public aware of the plight of the railworker, highlight the plus' of rail services, and point out the misappropriation of funds by showing that it'd cost more to retrench staff than to keep them employed. The \$100,000 campaign had little or no effect on the public or the government. After all what's the point of an add on page 15 saying "Rail's great" if on page 1, an article appears saying "Rail's fucked".

The exec. then imposed a \$10 levy on all members to finance this weak, soft-sell campaign. Under union rules they can do this. However, the fact remains the executive took on this decision to 'fight' in such a way without once calling a mass meeting to let the rank and file decide on what sort of campaign was required. To me they obviously feared a militant response, one that would have more impact than an advertising campaign.

It is my belief that the \$10 levy should not be paid. Why? In the April edition of the suburban guards newsletter 'On Guard', it's stated that a list of guards who have not paid the levy will be distributed to guards committee men and these members of the ARU will not be represented at any interview, inquiry, etc. It is not known how many other sections have gone to such extreme lengths to extract \$10 from workers. If the union is going to put money before it's members welfare then is it any wonder support for the exec. officers and section reps has fallen dramatically in the past few years.

I believe the union is wasting money on other 'expenses' which could quite easily cover the cost of that advertising campaign. The ARU pays thousands of dollars to the same party that's running the industry down. This hypocritical position, which is one that needs to be addressed right away, has been strongly argued against by the leadership. While most of them are members of the ALP, it is not possible to fight a hard campaign. They don't want to damage their political 'beliefs' or ruin their political ambitions.

cont'over

Also, if the unions short of money, why does it persist in posting out the ARU Gazette? Surely there would be someone prepared (or paid) to spend a few hours distributing the paper at the different sections. The amount of money saved would be in the thousands and would benefit the entire ARU. Another cost saver would be to cut out the printing of single sheet bulletins that tell us buggar all. In place of these nothing sheets we need real information bulletins. We need a militant and well thought out campaign to save our jobs - information is essential.

TONY R

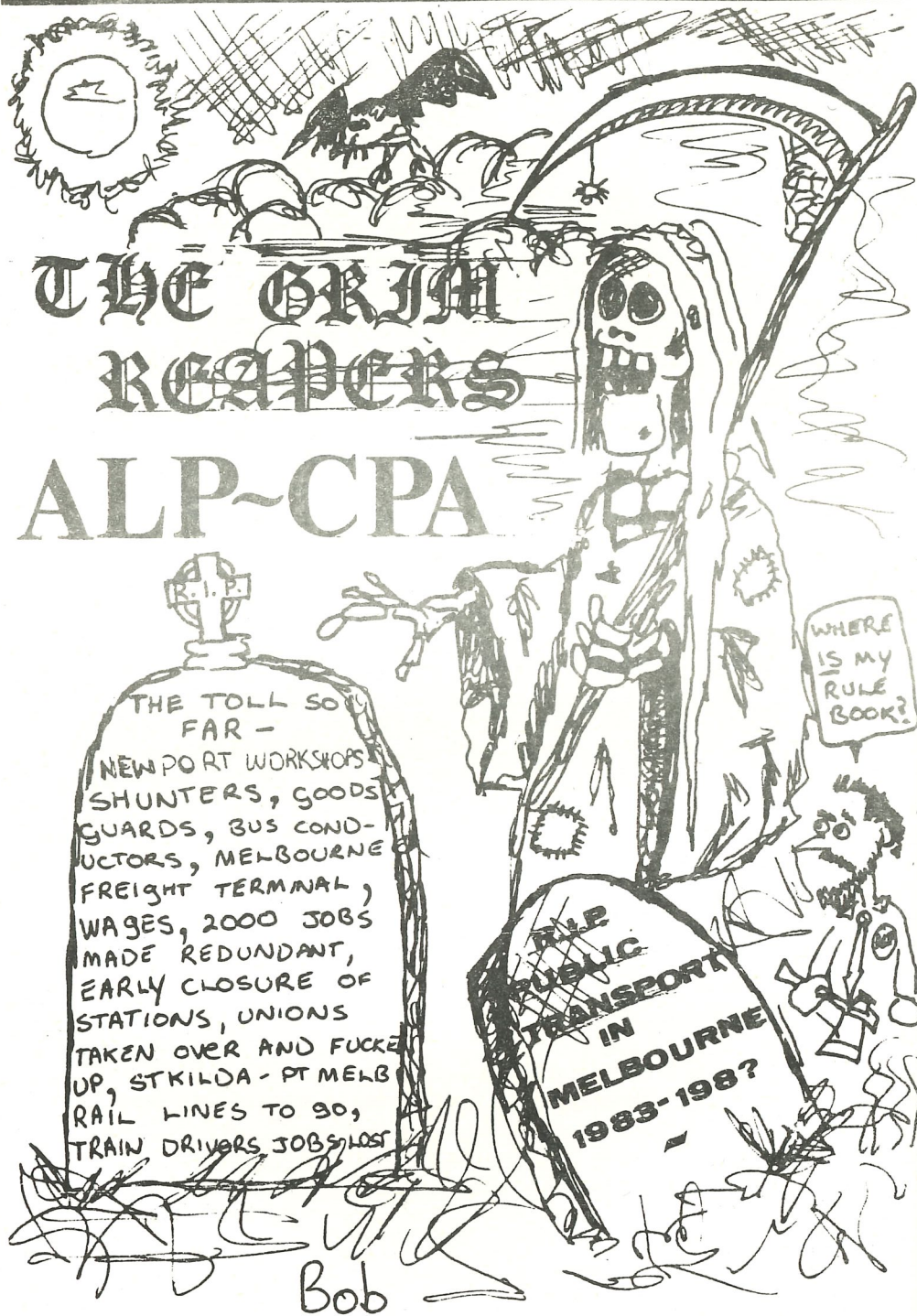
Shunting Cuts

AGAIN

In May V/Line management presented shunters delegates with the next phase of their Corporate Plan. This part of it focus' mainly on the future of the Melbourne Yard. By the early '90's, they intend to cut shunters numbers down to 30. (At present there's about 150). Train examiner, bogie exchange and administrative numbers are also heavily reduced.

All LCL freight would go and the only freight through the Yard would be the Block Train and mini-Block Train services, run by the likes of TNT/Contrans, etc. The yards and goods sheds from Dudley Street down to the World Trade Centre would get closed down except for the roads down to Webb Dock. The area would be partly converted to a South Dynon type terminal, geared solely to the multi-modal type of freight. This means the Hump, running currently only on night shift, would be closed for good - redundant like us.

Management reckon that while Melb. Yard numbers would be slashed, Totty Yard numbers would increase. That's out and out crap. Obviously the more block trains that run, the less shunters are needed - anywhere.



STOP WORK SELLOUT!

A week after the heavily slanted government review in favour of Light Rail came out, ARU officials called a mass meeting (6th May), in order to get all bans preventing the LRV project from proceeding, lifted. Knowing of the strong rank and file opposition to any backdown, the leadership resorted to just about every dirty trick from their extensive catalogue to ensure their backdown position was carried. Among the tactics used were:

- *Selective bussing-in of sections favourable to the officials. Buses promised to workers inclined to fight never showed up (Melb. Yard & Pt. Melb. shunters).
- *Selective use of translators who presented only the backdown position.
- *Use of a megaphone-at a mass meeting! This meant half the meeting had trouble hearing what was being debated.
- *Numerous breaches of National and State Branch rules governing meeting procedures. (**SO WHAT'S NEW???**) These included refusal to count a vote when it was demanded by members, refusal of the chair to stand down when dissent in the chair was called, and the calling of more speakers for the executive officers' motion than against it.

Despite the efforts of the leadership, when their backdown motion was put, a clear majority voted to continue to fight the line closures. It took the officials another two counts before they finally got the figures they desired and having got them, they were off the podium and running within seconds.

The ARU hierarchy had argued that as other unions within the industry, most notably the AFULE, had refused to fight, the ARU would be isolated and therefore unable to successfully take on the government. They even raised the red-herring of deregistration. The fact is the ARU is the largest union in the industry (11,000 members) and even if we didn't have the support of those other, much smaller unions, we still had the strong and vitally important support of the local community and user groups. Throughout the LRV campaign, the officials have consistently relied on these people to do the actual pressuring on site while they've sort influence/relevance at the talkfests within the ALPe, Trades Hall and the Ministry of Transport. Because the Labor government is intent on pursuing it's development plans at SouthBank and Station Pier, the officials have backed down. Yet again they have put their political loyalties before the interests of the membership. This can only further weaken the resistance to other cuts planned for the near future.

PORT & ST.KILDA

Once a rail union stayed in a big city,
The presidents name was Frank Lacey,
And he screamed and he yelled at every stop-work meeting,
"Who's gonna save the Port and St.Kilda lines with me???"

Port Melbourne and St.Kilda,Port Melbourne and St.Kilda,
"Who's gonna save these lines with me?"
And he screamed and he yelled at every stop-work meeting,
"Who's gonna save the Port and St.Kilda lines with me???"

Along came a government to rule that big cit-y,
Up jumped Roper with the idea of L-R-V,
And he sang as he cried "Deregister that Union-
You'll have light rail,just you wait and see".

Stuff Port and St.Kilda,Stuff Port and St.Kilda,
"You'll have light rail just you wait and see"
And he sang as he cried "Deregister that Union-
light rails the way to make big,big,mon-ey".

Up jumped Frank and Joe speaking to the rank and file,
OFF came the bans **ONE-TWO-THREE**,
"We'd better give our government the light rail they want-
or we might lose our affiliation to the A.L.Pee".

SUNG TO THE TUNE OF WALTZING MATILDA

Stuff Port and St.Kilda,Stuff Port and St.Kilda,
"Light rail is the way to go-we do agree,
This way they won't deregister the Union,
And we can still remain members of the A.L.Pee".

Up jumped Frank and sprang back to Unity Hall,
Feeling guilty he jumped in front of an L-R-V,
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by Parliament-
"I only did it for the good of the Labor Part-y".

Port Melbourne and St.Kilda,Port Melbourne and St.Kilda,
We did our best but you got your L-R-V,
And Frank's ghost may be heard as you pass by Parliament-
"We didn't want to lose Cain and Compan-y".



SOUTH AFRICA: On April 23rd 16,000 black railway workers were sacked by the Sth.African government run railways after being on strike for six weeks. The strike was sparked off after the dismissal of a worker who handed over \$25 revenue money on a monday instead of the previous friday. The strike soon escalated into a fight over recognition for the black Sth.African Railway and Harbour Workers Union. The government considers the railways a 'strategic industry' so all unions and strikes are banned.

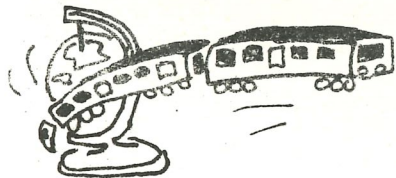
Six railway workers were killed when security forces opened fire on two seperate gatherings of strikers. Two days later, the workforce was sacked. Now unemployed whites have replaced them.

LONDON: London's first bus strike in thirty years took place on May 11th after London Regional Transport, who oversee the bus services, began putting out bus routes to private tenders. Tendered routes in the past have led to savage pay cuts and longer working hours, so 20,000 'busmen' struck. At the striking Sheperds Bush bus depot a \$200,000 bus was gutted by fire and another 20 bus' damaged. On the 15th May, the unions announced they'd fight the tendering through the High Court.

BRAZIL: An update on our report in **SPARKS** no.7 on the Brazilian rail strikes that occured in late '86. The strikes, over pay and conditions, were called by the League of Railworkers, a rank and file union set up by the COB-Workers Confederation of Brazil, the local section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association. The strikes had been declared illegal by the government and charges of sabotage and illegally organising laid against members, who faced a year in jail as a result.

We're pleased to announce that the Brazilian government has been forced to drop all charges after international pressure was applied on the government. Hundreds of letters of protest were sent to the president. Along with the charges being dropped, the transport syndicates (unions) established by the League of Railworkers have now been officially recognised and the COB has since gone on to form revolutionary syndicates in the textile, education and construction industries. These events prove that **SOLIDARITY** is the most important resource the international working class has at it's disposal. (Source on Brazil-"Direct Action" from England).

INTERNATIONAL



NEWS

ONE BIG UNION? OURS OR THEIRS?

Three events have drawn my attention to the question of industrial unionism. As all public transport workers know, it is a stupid situation when we all work for the same firm, 'the Government' but are represented by around ten different unions.

The three events I referred to were a visit to Sth. Melb. tram depot where Union Delegate Denice Stevens spoke openly to me as a rail worker about a proposed amalgamation of the ARU and the ATMOEA. As an ARU member I was shocked by this because there has been no word of it in the ARU.

The second is Bill Kelty's talk in the paper about forming twenty odd 'super unions' in the public transport industry. This would involve the Transport Workers Union amalgamating with all other transport unions.

The third is a petition circulating around the suburban Guards requesting the right to join the drivers' union the AFULE. The organizers have collected 80 signatures. PTWA members have refused to sign although we understand the frustration of members pissed off with the ARU leadership.

The Public Transport Workers Association (PTWA) supports the idea of industrial unionism but not the terms under which it is being proposed. When the ALP/ACTU bosses



smashed the BLF one of their pathetic justifications was that there were too many building unions and that the BWIU should cover the sites exclusively. This was clearly a load of bullshit being used to confuse those opposed to the smashing of a so called 'rebel union'.

It is obvious to all workers that we need to be in 'one big public transport union' to defeat the bosses. After all, if rail workers call a strike its effect is reduced if trams and buses still run. We are interested in the structure of that one big union. We don't want one run by more union bosses than you can poke a stick at. We want a public transport union run by and for its members.

A big union that was run for the benefit of the ALP or any other political party would be as useless to us as little unions run for the politicians. The terms under which we would support an industrial union also involve the principle of instant recallability and limited tenure of all elected positions and the ratification of decisions by the membership.

I think we are all familiar with delegates who promise the world at election time and deliver shit in office. The problem we face then is we can't get rid of them for several years under the present structure. Instant recallability and limited tenure of office would put an end to that.

People are also attracted to union jobs by greed. High wages, free cars, soft living are the fruits of higher office and compare favourably with shift work and obnoxious passengers. We don't want that either. We want all delegates paid the same as ourselves and be required to spend time on the job with us.

This would make them accountable and ensure their motivation was to improve the job for us and not just their personal position in life.

The PTWA want to see one big public transport union but with a new structure. For too long public transport workers have been beaten by divisions between us caused by **trade** unionism. However, the structure must be for the benefit of workers in order to control their own lives. We reject any attempt by union bosses to amalgamate unions if it means more power to union bosses and less to us.

Censorship at Sth Melb



The subject of Light Rail has been a reccuring topic at Sth. Melb. Depot meetings in recent times. A number of speakers from outside the depot have come to speak but not all without hindrance.

Gail Moody, a Met engineer, came at the invitation of Sth. Melb. Union Delegate Denice Stevens and spoke in favour of Light Rail.

Anne Fahey, a Sth. Melb. Councillor, was invited **by the Depot** but was twice prevented from speaking at depot meetigs before finally being allowed to speak as a result of rank and file pressure. In one instance, the Depot Manager refused her entry without explanation and the Union Delegate refused to seek one. Anne Fahey spoke in opposition to Light Rail.

Chris Jacobsen, former Sth. Melb. Delegate and presently advising the Met on the Light Rail project, was invited by the delegate to speak in favour of Light Rail.

Three rail workers came to speak at a depot meeting on their own initiative. One of them was granted permission to speak by the Union Delegate and Depot Manager and the Depot voted to hear him speak. He had spoken for no more than two minutes when the President of the self-appointed Sth. Melb. Depot Committee, Alf de Bakker, attempted to gag him. The meeting protested and he was allowed to speak (in opposition to Light Rail).

These incidents clearly show that the ATMOEA executives' attempts to censor opposing views on issues they are in favour of. This censorship and the withholding of concrete information about Light Rail makes a mockery of democratic processes.

If we are to make decisions democratically we must have all the information relevant to that decision. The Depot, not the Executive, must decide who speaks at depot meetings and any interference or hindrance by the Executive must not be tolerated - next they'll be telling us what we can watch on TV.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOM



SHUT UP! YOU BRAT!

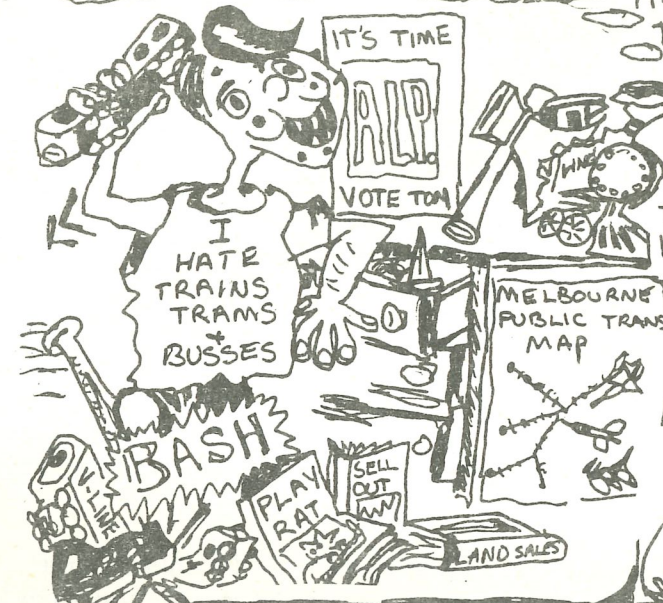
STAGE ONE: BRAT

WHILE DESTROYING HIS NURSES and doctors TOYS YOUNG THOMAS FOUND WHAT HIS FUTURE HELD. Young Tom decided he would join the A.L.P and wreck the Public Hospital System. Speaking to the Media, young Thomas remarked, "That should get 'em back for raising me on CAT Food." Then he soiled his nappy.

STAGE TWO

ADOLESCENT BRAT

By Now Young Tom has Tired of stuffing up Hospitals and Taken To RAIL Vandalism. First he slashed his train set and Took to The busses and Trams with an axe. LAND SALES ARE HIS LATEST SCAM.



ON TOP OF THE SHIT HEAP



STAGE 3

FUCK THE ELECTION!

ORGANISE AND FIGHT

The rain was pouring and the wind was howling. As the sun dawned on a new day the figure of my friend Beth materialised out of the smog as she strode toward me. The closer Beth stepped forward the longer her face appeared and her agitation became obvious to me as she rubbed her hands together in a futile effort to warm them on this cold and miserable winter morning.

"Bastards!" she bellowed, "Those arse licking bastards." "All my life I've trusted them, all my life I've voted for them and now....now this." Beth lowered her proud head, threw an ALP How to Vote card on the platform and spat an enormous goolie on to it. "Fucking shit sheet", she cursed in her broad country accent.

Whatever could be wrong, I thought? I asked and Beth struggled to contain her tears as she told me of the previous days events. Beth had been sacked, given her pink slip. She went to the union and asked them to fight but they wouldn't. They said something about the election and not wanting to cause trouble for the ALP. Beth saw her local politician who raved and ranted about balance of payments figures and business confidence.

The politician smiled and stuffed a how to vote card into Beth's hand, as he threw her out of the office. Sacked workers can wait at election time, there are babies to be kissed.

I lit a cigarette and drew a deep drag, muttered curses about the railways and looked to the sky for help for there seems little on earth. "Remember the lies, the bullshit the union bosses told us in '83. Vote Labor, Save our jobs; Vote Labor, Stop the Lonie Report," Beth spat out. The turds are liars, from Bob Hawke down.

I knew what she was talking about and remembered my other friends, the goods guards, the shunters, the station assistants and workers from the Melbourne freight terminal. They, like Beth, were sacked by the bosses on order of the

ALP. My friends in the community: builders laborers, nurses, the homeless, the poor. They have been the innocent victims of Keating's "J" curve.

Beth walked off and as the trains pulled in and out of the platform I watched the passengers trundling off to the shops and factories to work for their bosses. "This is what the election is all about," I thought to myself, "Wage-slavery, p profits for the rich, and kicks for the poor. If voting could change the system it would be illegal."

I lit another cigarette and vowed to fight on even harder against the bastards of this world. "The judges, cops, landlords, bankers; I never voted you lot in. Bosses, generals, big business, they all do well under this system and I want to fight you all."

The 07.33 Dandenong pulled in and I picked up my kit and walked towards the van. I hopped in, checked the periscope, and stood at the door. A smiling face waltzed up to me,

"Vote for Government," he beamed
"Get fucked!" I says. Ding Ding.





IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM AND NEED ADVICE,
WRITE TO "JUST ASK KEVIN",

C/O SPARKS,
P.O. BOX 1066
NORTH RICHMOND 3121.

Dear Kevin,

Is it true that **SUBURBAN GUARD** Ian McPherson is an ARU official as reported in the HERALD on May 8th?

Terry.

Dear Terry,

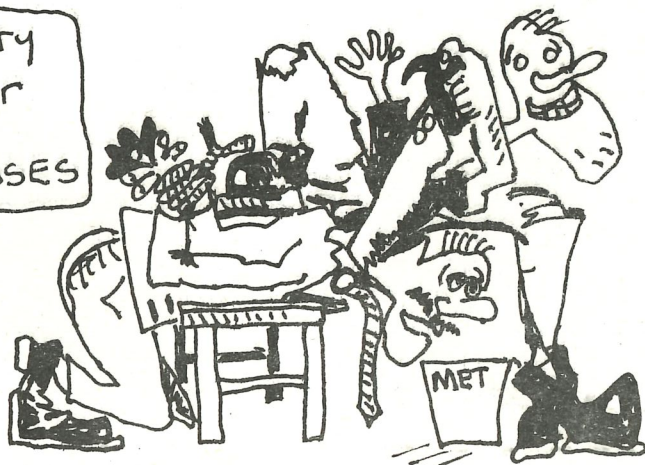
Ian is most certainly **NOT** a member of the ARU officialdom. "I was misquoted" he said, "I never even spoke two words to MICHEAL YATES who signed the article." In fact Terry, Ian was asked by a reporter if he was an ARU official and he firmly replied NO he wasn't.

Ian comments-"Any journalist stupid enough to put their name to an incorrect article containing incorrect quotes from someone he did not interview, must be a DICKHEAD".

Cheers,

Your pal Kevin.

Bobs Beauty
SALON for
MET bosses



LIGHT RAIL: it ain't over yet

Some of the tactics adopted by the picketers at the light rail worksites have been very successful at disrupting and preventing work from proceeding. Heavy equipment has been immobilised, certain work has had to be restarted and plenty of time has been lost while picketers have gone onto the sites. At the same time, some of the tactics adopted by the police have been very successful at disrupting and preventing picketing from proceeding. The State has gone for massive overkill in its determination to push through light rail. On occasion there have been up to 30 cops to control 10 picketers. There have been some particularly ugly, violent scenes, especially when the media aren't around. At St Kilda station on the 14th May, a virtual riot broke out as state and railway cops vented their frustrations on anyone getting in their way. A woman in her 60s was punched in the ribs, had a couple broken and suffered a heart attack. Disabled people were singled out for some extra special police 'justice'. A passenger off a train, merely observing the violence, was punched out and then arrested. His companion, on voicing her disapproval, was slapped in the face. A couple of days earlier, on the 12th, the picketers had built a barricade out of car wrecks. The police moved in with the same sort of enthusiasm and arrested six.

The acceptance of the permanent presence of police on site by the workers is really disturbing. Initially they'd agreed to respect community pickets and **NOT** to work while police (including RIOs) were on or near the site. Obviously this position suited the picketers, suggesting to them that work would be prevented from proceeding if they continued to fight. Nevertheless, within a couple of days of work recommencing (8th May), the workers had backed down from their position, encouraged by Unity Hall's reluctance to upset their precious Labor government. Now a long standing basic trade union position that police presence on worksites would lead to workers downing tools, is under serious threat.

You may think, "So what, aren't the cops just doing their job, ensuring that work can get done?" The police are not impartial: they are all instruments used to carry out the ruling class' orders. If working people accept so readily cops overseeing worksites now, it could only set a dangerous precedent for the future. The way this country's going, we need to preserve rights wherever they are threatened.

Metro shunters walked off the job for 2 hours on the 22nd May over this issue, while the ETU and the Plumbers and Gasfitters continue to blackban work while cops remain. More action from other workers is **URGENTLY** needed.



From The PTWA Book Service

THE IWA TODAY - A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION AND ITS SECTIONS

STRIKE ACTION - ESSENTIAL READING FOR ANY ONE IN DISPUTE. EXPLAINS THE BASICS OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN SIMPLE TO READ ENGLISH

IWA - PRINCIPLES, AIMS & STATUTES - A DETAILED INTERPRETATION OF OUR IDEAS & ORGANISATION

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YES

YES

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SPARKS can be sent TO YOUR HOME OR WORK

What is

Anarcho-Syndicalism?

Anarcho-syndicalism is the theory and practice of reorganising traditional unions, the workplace and society at large. The aim of this is to achieve a self managed society, which is based not on the exploitation of one by the other (whether by boss over worker, man over woman, old over young etc. . .) It will be rather, a society based on the active involvement of all the members in the decision making process and the implementation of these decisions. Importantly, it also means acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of these decisions.

This is unlike all present societies where the decision making and responsibility is handed over to the minority in positions of authority.

We advocate a society based on the voluntary, active participatory democracy of each for the welfare of all.

We advocate unions based on limited tenure of office, recallability of all delegates, delegates to be given a limited co-ordination to cover areas of certain activity.

That is, we do not want the election of union bosses who have full executive decision making powers over union affairs. We advocate that all decisions be made by the membership that affect the membership, in fact all decisions.

In this form of organisation we see the germ of a liberated society where the people are not dominated by any form of hierarchy: whether it be of a political party, of a religious nature, by a bureaucracy, or one of the 'technical experts'.

We want a society where the community is in control of the decision making. We base this firmly on the belief that this must be achieved throughout active participation within an international framework.

As anarcho-syndicalists we stand opposed to all who would rule on our behalf or in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no room within our movement for the authoritarian ideas of Marxism or the collaborationist ideas of the social democrats.

For each according to their ability: to each according to their needs.

