

Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**Feral Fat Cat & Carr ALP Govt. Mis-
management Escalates Public
Transport into Chaos - Only Under
Workers' Control can it be Improved!**



Escalator at Central Station "Building Site"

S.T.A. BUSSIE NEWS

OLYMPICS EBA

SYDNEY TERMINAL NEWS

JOB REDESIGN BOGUS O.P.

CABBIES' NEWS

BUSSIE LETTER

AIRPORT LINK SCAM

GLENBROOK ENQUIRY
SKULDUGGERY

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

An important sinister development is the Rail and R.T.B.U. (Rail Tram & Bus Union) bosses renewed effort to introduce a camouflaged version of C.S.M. (Customer Service Management) to assist privatisation of the railways after the Olympics. CSM is particularly vital for creating the re-structuring of stations via "Multi Station Control" for the selling of franchises (consisting of groupings of stations) to the Govt's business mates. CSM will also weaken the industrial and safeworking role of the train guard. With the guard and station staff taking on revenue trawling duties on board trains. Associated with these moves would be the introduction of D.O.O. (Driver Only Operation) of trains and the elimination of platform jobs, with the further erosion of station safety. This renewed CSM push will be associated with the upcoming Olympics EBA, (see article on page 3). It's vital the EBA is rejected.

MILLENNIUM TRAINS MEAN DRIVER ONLY OPERATION!

In the recent media publicity concerning the deplorable state of State Rail operations and infrastructure, new information has come to light regarding the introduction of the new Millennium trains. In the Daily Telegraph, Thursday 23rd March in the article, "Who has got the Worst Rail System?", it was admitted that the new Millenniums would be introduced around May next year. The introduction of these trains means DOO as they lack guard's compartments. To preserve the guard job and also platform jobs and maintain safety, a vital demand is the installation of guard's compartments on these trains, guard crewing and an associated caste iron agreement on the subject.

Again we must ask that intriguing question. How many Simon Lane/ Ben Nimerawi forked tongues can be curled into the Guard's Compartment of a Millennium Train?

In place of the give back of conditions, and a more ferocious speedup which the Olympics EBA will imply, and create the preconditions for privatisation after the Olympics and a massive attack on job security, a campaign based on direct action at around the time of the Olympics is vital. It's the only course that will secure conditions improvements and preserve job security and the employment of more permanent staff which even the Bosses' Media recognises as urgent. Such a campaign based on hard hitting wildcat action needs more networking between the like minded amongst train crews, signals and station staff. Signals staff have been showing the way forward in recent weeks on this wildcat path. (See article on page 3)

N.S.W. RAIL NEWS

Sparks: What's happening with the Olympics?

Station Assistant: We are soon to be hit by an "Olympics EBA" (Enterprise Bargain Agreement). To provide a carrot to facilitate acceptance of the EBA, we will be bribed with a one off \$100 per day during the Olympics period bonus. The EBA is likely to take the form of a core EBA affecting all sections of the SRA with additional clauses affecting specific sections. The EBA will be presented as just being related to special conditions during the Olympics. However, the conditions and rosters changed by the EBA will remain a permanent fixture afterwards.

The RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) and the Rail bosses are likely to use the EBA to push through CSM (Customer Service Management) in another form, which was overwhelmingly opposed by City Rail station staff last year. This CSM in another form would be an attachment to the EBA clauses relating to operations staff. It's vital that we oppose this EBA sell out.

Train guards and drivers have demanded a 10% rise for their EBA. However, the rail bosses are only offering a 5% rise. The guards are likely to take industrial action over this issue. In the interests of the Royal Olympic family, Homebush station will be closed during the Olympics despite inconveniencing local residents who will have to catch the sparse and chaotic bus services.

As part of the bosses plan to abolish SM's and ASM's, their safeworking qualifications haven't been reaccredited. A recent circular from the bosses has approved in the case of emergencies for workers without safe working qualifications to go on the tracks to perform work such as clipping points.

Sparks: In the press recently, there have been reports of wildcat strikes by signals workers affecting the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. What's happening?

SA: Signals workers have also carried out wildcat strikes affecting the East Hills Line. This action has been covered up by the RTBU and Rail bosses and the media. An issue which has particularly inspired this militancy has been management's cutbacks to staffing. At the Sydney Signal Box near Central, the bosses have reduced staffing from one yard controller and his deputies to one area controller and his deputies.

Sparks: What's happening generally with staffing in the SRA?

SA: There have been huge reductions in permanent jobs. A common tactic of management in City Rail is to regress workers' grades. At Central Station CSA2's and team

leaders are being regressed to carriage cleaners. This regression onslaught has savagely attacked workers' wages and saved the rail bosses a fortune. However, the feral fat cats are rolling in luscious cream. Our local feral, Station Fuehrer Tsiros has been promoted to a SS07 position despite his gross incompetence which he has exhibited at Sydney Terminal.

In the case of Country Link, there has been a major reduction in on board staffing. Whilst permanent jobs are being massacred, Simon Lane SRA CEO is wanting to recruit a 1,000 new temps for the Olympics and is encouraging staff to recruit temps from their families - we are supposedly one big happy family. Recently we have received a letter from the bosses requesting that we dragoon our families into becoming "volunteers" to help overcome the savage staff cuts they have imposed on the railways for the Olympics period!

Sparks: What's happening with Freight Rail?

SA: Such depots as Port Botany and Enfield are losing positions. Whilst the bosses are wanting to put staff on AWA's (Australian Workplace Agreements) which involve regular performance reviews and such indignities as searches of workers' bags and lockers.

Sparks: What's happening at Sydney Terminal Station?

SA: Several duty managers are leaving as they are unable to cope with the brutal crushing jack boot heels of Station Fuehrer Tsiros. They had the impression that they had joined the railways, not a dungeon of the Hell Fire Club!

In the case of the OH&S (Occupational Health & Safety) Committee, the bosses flagrantly broke the law and ensured there were no elections to the committee and that their stooges were appointed. The state of OH&S with the renovations at Central station remains appalling. Several people recently were injured. In one case a flight of stairs ended in a ramp which could lead to injuries amongst passengers and staff. A mystery surrounds the purpose of some of the renovations. The construction work seems to be much more extensive than for the installation of a lift. Shops are likely also to be built.

There has been a doubling in the number of assaults on staff at Central Station, particularly on the back shift and the afternoon shift in quiet corners where staff are working alone. We have presented the demand to management that workers on these shifts in these quiet corners work in pairs to improve safety.



With the moving of the Country services booking office, more chaos is occurring. The long queues from the booking office are extending across the exit for passengers coming from returned country train services. The long queues from the booking office are contributed by short staffing and the bosses "performance management" involving they're gaining fat bonuses for staff cuts and corner cutting which they impose.

Sparks: What's happening with rostering?

SA: The bosses are demanding that station staff perform work as directed and ignore the master roster regarding their duties. As a result of this practice which is causing squabbles amongst the low level bosses, the feral fat cats can cut out positions on the master roster, intensify the speedup and de-skill workers. With this practice over time for workers to earn their current wages which currently takes 40 hours per week, they will have to work 50-60 hours per week. Whilst in the case of train crews, due to their industrial muscle, the integrity of their rosters isn't under threat.

Sparks: What's happening at Town Hall?

SA: Seats are being removed from the platforms for the Olympics. As a result more people are cramming the platforms affecting safety and the circulation of security guards.

Sparks: What are your thoughts on the Glenbrook Crash Inquiry?

SA: The rail bosses have all the bases covered in the Inquiry and will ensure a favourable outcome for themselves. Apart from the fees of the prosecution lawyers being paid by them, they have thoughtfully decided to pay the fees of the 5 teams of lawyers which the RTBU has for the defence! It looks like an ICAC Inquiry will be required to look into certain irregularities of this Inquiry! In the Glenbrook area signal failures remain a continuing hazard.

Sparks: What's happening with the security guards?

SA: They are inflating the number of security incidences in their reports to management. They are presenting as such incidents, their hassling vagrants and skate board riders. An alarming new trick of the security guards is their forcing commuters, despite having tickets, to leave stations after the last train at 1pm and catch the night ride bus services. It seems another measure to pretty up for the Olympics.

Sparks: What are your thoughts on the new privately owned Airport Link rail line?

SA: It will be used as a model for the Govt's hidden agenda of privatised railways. Despite the stations on the link being curved there will be no platform staff, just CCTV's. There will also be no barrier staff. There will only be an administrative person at each station. Train guards are threatening industrial action unless they given right away with the white flag on the platforms at these stations.

If passengers exit at any of these stations, they will be charged an additional \$5 on top of the price of their ticket. If someone comes from Campbelltown and has already paid \$8 for a return ticket, their total fare pay out will be \$13!

The airport tunnel has very serious safety hazards. Unlike the Chunnel (between Britain and France) which in the case of a fire, passengers could exit by an adjacent service tunnel, there is no such provision for the airport tunnel. In the case of a fire in the tunnel, both passengers and train crew would be unable to escape and would suffocate. There are also radio communications difficulties in the tunnel between train crews and the signal box.

Due to the general carriage shortage in the SRA, the number of carriages in suburb service sets will be reduced to supply carriages for the corporate Airport Link.

The rail bosses have made a monumental blunder with the Wollie Creek station development. The loop to the airport should have been around Sydenham given its short distance to the city.

Sparks: What's happening with the Work & Job ReDesign arrears?

SA: The bosses recently agreed that we should have been paid additional arrears for leave loadings. We have received this back pay. However it has been taxed 48c in the dollar instead of 21% as was the bulk of the arrears. Again the bosses have stuffed up our back pay! We are still owed back pay for penalties. Latest alarming news is that the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) bosses have approved without consulting us, for the Rail bosses to impose withholdings on our wages to recover the bogus Work & Job

Redesign arrears overpayments. This money which is being stolen from us is being taxed approx. 90c in the dollar.

Sparks: How is the campaign proceeding to resist payment of the bogus Job ReDesign overpayment?

SA: Militants are continuing to receive donations from stations for the campaign. Solicitors have been hired to pursue a Court Case over the matter. The Solicitors are quite confident of winning the case.

Militants have passed onto the solicitors a Human Resources letter dated Aug.1998 which states that we will be backpaid - base pay, leave loadings and penalties. Whilst there was no ballot held regarding an agreement for how the back pay would be calculated. Clearly the rail bosses have acted illegally by failing to pay all the components of the arrears.

Most workers at the stations are resisting the bosses demands for repayment of the bogus overpayments. Only a minority of workers - some with poor english, some elderly and some who are just foolish have caved in to the bosses' demands. We must all stand together and resist this bosses' scam and refuse to pay the bogus overpayment.

Sparks: What's happening with the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union)?

SA: The RTBU bosses see no alternative to a privatised transport system which is the hidden agenda of all Governments in Australia. However the RTBU fat cats are alarmed by the loss of union dues to finance their expensive lifestyles and bureaucracy which the massive job losses associated with privatisation will imply. To overcome this problem they are embarking on a union merger strategy. The first stage is a 3 year working relationship with the TWU bureaucracy to iron out any demarcation problems, followed by the formal merger of the two bureaucracies. The next stage will be a merger with the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) to form a Transport "Union" Federation. Associated with this merger is a likely move to transfer our awards to private sector awards which have much worse conditions. This new bureaucratic octopus will naturally further strangle any remnants of grass roots participation in these "unions".

STOP THE TRADE OFF'S MEETING

A meeting for all transport workers from the State Rail Authority, State Transit, Taxis, Trucking, RAC, RSA, etc, is being organised shortly to consider a range of burning issues and questions. Some items on the agenda include: What alternative is there to the RTBU, ASU & TWU style of "bosses' unions". A Log of Claims for the Olympics? Where do we go from here. If you are interested in coming write to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

S.T.A. BUSSIE NEWS

LETTER

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you in regards to the loyalty shown to employees of the S.T.A.

I'm a former employee of the STA, who has just been retired from employment with the STA, as a bus driver. Due to being assaulted twice on duty I am suffering from severe anxiety, stress and depression as a result of these two incidents.

The department only showed me support whilst there was a chance of me returning to full driving duties. When notified by my doctor and the department's own doctors that I was not fit for driving duties, my doctor recommended that I be retrained for another job by the department.

The department's answer was to medically retire me after nine and a half years of service and send me to a occupational rehabilitation provider to help me find other employment, but in the meantime I have to suffer the indignity of applying for social security benefits due to the department's penny pinching and lack of loyalty to its employees.

The department is only interested in profits and is not interested in the welfare of its employees or showing any sort of loyalty to any employee who has served them loyally and been a good and reliable employee to them for any amount of time whether it be forty days or forty years reliable service.

I have also found to my disgust that the union and management do their utmost to hide the number of assaults committed by members of the public upon bus drivers and that there is never any mention of the said incidents in the media which is controlled by members of other countries' political Mafia. In this week alone there have been two assaults on drivers that I know of.

The first incident involved a driver called Gonzo being assaulted by a motorist with a milk crate in an act of road rage because Gonzo asked the motorist to move out of a bus stop.

The second incident involved a passenger assaulting the driver because the passenger dropped a carton of beer and broke some of the beer bottles, so he blamed the driver

for the bottles breaking and assaulted the driver seriously injuring the driver who is new to the job.

Sincerely Yours

"PERKY"

Saturday, February 19, 2000

Sparks: What's happening with the Bondi Junction claytons interchange debacle?

Waverley Bussie: Following the imposing of a ban on buses going through Grafton Street by the decision of a union meeting at Waverley Depot, Woollahra Council finally took some action on the interchange problem. After initially installing concrete blocks to divide Grafton Street, the Council had a two meter high fence built. Why did the Council stall on the construction of the fence? It would only have cost \$8,000. How much does a life cost? Was the concrete blocks measure a way of allowing free access to the huge Meritons construction site for supply trucks? Did the owner of Meritons, Harry "finger on the trigger" Trigeboff, the 4th wealthiest man in Australia, contribute to the cost of the fencing so as to gain leeway with Woollahra Council in other wheeling and dealing? I've heard a very soft whisper that even the STA may have contributed to the fencing cost.

Why has it taken so long and the imposing of a grass roots union ban for Woollahra Council to take some action? Particularly given the large budgets of Waverley and Woollahra Councils. Waverley Council has a \$40 mill. Budget. Woollahra has a budget of between \$50-\$60 mill. A likely explanation of this sluggishness is the greed of the councillors and particularly Woollahra Council's huge expenditure on its new Red Leaf Council Building.

Apart from the owner of Meritons who will make big profits, Woollahra Council will get the most benefit in the shape of rates from the apartment complex.

There is still a void in regard to a police presence in the interchange area, despite continuing illegal parking. Drivers need to write in to the Police Union at Parramatta to protest this police inaction. Recently I saw an elderly pedestrian bloodied, who had tripped over at the Eastern end of Grafton Street on the safety zone.

Sparks: What has been the role of the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) executive in regard to the interchange problem?

WB: They have been very inactive on the issue. They should have been involved straight away. Rather than giving 5-6 chances for Woollahra Council to take some

action. They should have been given the Council only the one chance and if nothing happened, taken serious action. If a small delegation of all parties including Woollahra Council which has shown an Olympian attitude toward the severe safety problems associated with the Claytons Interchange, had been established to observe the traffic and pedestrian mayhem at 5pm for two hours, for just one day, decisive action would have been taken rapidly. Again the RTBU executive has shown how out of touch it is with regard to the concerns of the grass roots and it's bureaucratic attitude.

Sparks: What's been the attitude of the bosses to the grass roots safety campaign regarding the Claytons Interchange?

WB: Watch out! Management is likely to gore someone down the line over the safety campaign.

Sparks: What do you think of the construction of the Bondi Beach Olympics Volley Ball Stadium?

WB: Its certainly going to increase the amount of traffic and people in the area. To butter us up to accept the increased work load, we have been told by the PR section of the IOC, that we will be able to "meet different visitors from overseas". We are already "meeting" tourists from the 4 corners of the world. The only "visitor" we haven't met is an alien from outer space!

"BUS DRIVER WANTED!"

Sparks: What have you heard about a certain "bus operator" during the Maritime Dispute?

WB: During the Dispute, the Patricks Bosses were particularly alarmed as they were unable to find a driver for the bus to transport scabs through the picket lines to the wharves. However, luckily for them, one fine day, they saw in the waves, near the wharves, the pair of horns and blood red eyes of a bullock, which had just escaped from a cattle ship. They lassoed the beast and on observing his potential as a bus driver, trained up the bullock for a special, nefarious mission - the driver of a bus of scabs!

Later on, after bursting out of the Patricks corral, this rampaging bull gained greater freedom to become a star of the Waverley Rodeo!

"Managerial Elephantiasis Outbreak!"

Sparks: What's happening at the depot?

WB: The bosses have had the "iron maiden" wave her magic wand and without any warning to us, much of our space at the depot - foyer, institute, union office, credit union office has faced a tight squeeze from ballooning offices. Most of our space is being

reduced to a corridor. Apart from a managerial corral are the bosses also installing a franchise of "Touch of Class" management consultants, and a sauna for themselves? The Bosses are clearly breaching industrial democracy procedures by failing to consult with us over this encroachment on our space and provide us with timely advice of their plans and timetable. Years ago when I first came to the depot, there were 900 staff consisting of drivers and conductors. Now that number has been reduced by at least 50%. Surely similar cutbacks have affected the number of managerial and administrative personnel, particularly with the introduction of new technology such a computers. Their numbers should also have been reduced and not require all this space. Are similar developments occurring at other depots? Drivers should write into Sparks about any information on this subject.

Will those intrepid heroes of old - Waverley's "four musketeers" rescue us from the cold clutches of the "iron maiden"?



Mr Gummy attends "such a lovely lunch" provided by the union bosses for their assorted stooges, to celebrate the "approval" of the last EBA.

Sparks: What were your impressions of the "Reclaim The Streets" demonstration on Sat. 18th March?

WB: I participated in the demonstration which focused on the issue of the need to curb increasing traffic congestion on the roads. The protest particularly emphasised the need for more rational car usage via car pools, push bikes and increased public transport usage. It's a fact of life that the city is congested with traffic, causing enormous smog and noise pollution undermining people's health. We need a quieter and more restful city. This traffic congestion has been turbo charged by the oil and car lobbies and the overpowered RTA with the blessings of the Carr ALP Govt. Such measures as the tunnel under Oxford St. and Taylor Square have only moved traffic congestion to another part of the city. The M2 should have been replaced with an O-Bahn (a rail system which buses operate along on dolly wheels at high speed to different connections) which would have been a more effective traffic reduction measure.

At the demonstration, I approached a seasoned driver from Murray's Coach Company. He looked quite frustrated by the traffic chaos caused by the demonstration. He abruptly said to me, "You are one of them!" This is a silly attitude. He failed to realise that every day, he has to face similar traffic congestion in the city. The object of the protest being to get cars off the roads is of benefit to all bus drivers. We, as bus drivers have an important role to play in getting people to use public transport in place of cars.

At the end of the protest, police attacked the demonstrators. There is video evidence of police removing their badges before assaulting the protestors. Were the police showing how tough they will get during the Olympics? This excess energy would be more wholesomely deployed in booking illegally parked cars at the Bondi Junction Claytons Interchange!

Sparks: What's happening with the Paddington Ghost?

WB: He's having his hair removed to change into a Kojak in a remake of "Mission Impossible".

Sparks: What do you think of the Govt's purchase of North Western and the other private bus company?

Leichhardt Bussie: I think it fits into the Govt's privatisation strategy for State Transit. With the purchase of these private bus companies, Sydney Buses will have a link to the West and make a more interesting purchase for the Govt's "Business Mates" after the Olympics. Given this privatisation hidden agenda, the bosses' talk about concreting over the fenced off land they bought off the railways for a token fee near Balmain Road for the parking of buses is bullshit!

Sparks: What are your thoughts on the issue of Jeanette who had been sacked for sickies and was reinstated following a successful appeal?

LB: As she won her appeal, she should have been immediately reinstated without any suspension for 5 months. During the suspension, the bosses played the dirty trick of saying she had no entitlement to her travel pass, when she was in fact entitled as she had been reinstated to her job.

"Mr Gummy" at Your Service!

Sparks: The combined transport workers meeting we have advertised in the paper is in its initial organisational phase. What issues do you consider should be raised at the gathering?

LB: To have any chance of fighting off privatisation and the speedup and improving our conditions we need to establish a new union - one controlled by the grass roots. There would be no place for "executive decisions". All decisions would be made collectively by all members. There would be no place for "Fat Executives" - management's fat cronies with no teeth. At our depot we have such a specimen known as "Mr Gummy". He lacks teeth and sucks up to management in the office.

"Depot Officer Material"

Sparks: What's happening with the "tortoise"?

LB: The state of cleanliness of the depot remains appalling. It's a disgrace! Whilst the tortoise cleaner seems to spend much of her time conferring with depot officers and drivers and is unfortunately unavailable for her cleaning duties. Given this on the job training in administrative/office work, the STA bosses ever keen to assist staff career development, should consider promoting her to a depot officer job. Her apparent "connections" could also assist her career prospects in the STA. Her next port of call could even be John Stott's job!

Sparks: What's happening with the Green Machines and Pay-In Machines?

Leichhardt Bussie: As a result of the bosses' ruthless corner cutting for profits and the privatisation hidden agenda, the standard of maintenance of these machines is appalling. In the case of the pay-in machines, they are in a state of constant malfunctioning. Consequently, whilst we are allowed only 10 minutes to pay-in, we often have to spend up to 25 minutes. Receipts are often chewed up so we have no record of pay-ins. In the past, a CSC (Customer Service Co-ordinator) and then another guy regularly cleaned the machines. Now, no one performs this vital maintenance work.

In the case of the malfunctioning Green Machines, we are constantly obliged to provide passengers with free trips.

Sparks: What's happening with the operations room staff ?

LB: Many drivers feel intimidated from approaching them regarding more suitable shifts. They have a very callous attitude on this issue. In the case of Jeannette, who has returned to the job, the usual practice is that those drivers who return to the depot after an absence are given their old shifts. However, Jeannette was put on late pm shifts.

Sparks: What's happening with the depot "fleet"?

Leichhardt Bussie: On certain days there is an extreme shortage of buses. Drivers coming on to shifts have to wait until buses come back to the depot before they can commence their runs.

Sparks: What are your ideas for improving the situation on the buses?

LB: Signs need to be installed near the driver's cabin to advise passengers to present their pensioner concession cards. Videos could also be installed to show educational videos to passengers.

Sparks: What are your thoughts regarding the notice for different rates of pay for Sydney Buses staff.

LB: Since the last EBA, the STA bosses have been able to divide us further with the fiction of two grades of driver. Although both do the same work. One, whom is regarded as a trainee get's less than a permanent driver.

Sparks: What's happening with the bus services?

Leichhardt Bussie: A row has erupted over the 440's. As 440's don't terminate at the depot due to someone getting hit by a bus many years ago, several drivers have got quite wet when returning back to the depot from the 440 termination during the recent rainy period. Despite management's promises, the 370's still don't operate on weekends. Management's talk of buses every 8 minutes on routes is totally unrealistic, due to traffic congestion and associated delays, runs have to be continually cut. Whilst the unrealistic timetable and running times eat into our meal breaks

Sparks: What's happening with bosses?

LB: The new manager Rousen like previous managers has remained fortified in his office, engrossed with computer games and unapproachable. The bosses are again targetting a driver over sickies, despite all his paperwork being in order.

Sparks: What's happening at Kingsgrove Depot?

Kingsgrove Depot: A serious problem, we've had in recent weeks has been a severe short staffing of refuelers causing buses to bank up around the depot at 7-8pm causing delays to runs. The state of bus maintenance remains appalling. I recently booked in a bus in to have some repairs done on faulty internal lighting. A few days later I got the same bus and no repairs had been done! As part of the bosses' ruthless corner cutting only major repairs are being done on the buses. This penny pinching extends to the bosses' failure to provide BBQ's as functions for retiring drivers as occurred in the past. The bosses are continually keeping us in the dark on events. Recently a driver committed suicide over family matters, we only heard about it on the grape vine. Our union rep remains hopeless. Despite the expectations of many.

BROOKVALE DEPOT UPDATE & OPINION

Sparks - How is Occupational Health and Safety going at Brookie?

Amigo - The STA Management have made some important improvements in installing cameras in many buses. It's not so much the camera which helps Drivers but mostly the label outside the bus (Camera may be in operation) which acts as a deterrent to would be trouble makers. When they see the sign most of them back off and behave better. If there is no sign they don't care because they don't know there is a camera operating to capture their criminal acts. Full marks to the STA for their safety improvement initiative. However, more has to be done e.g.:

- a) More Policing where its needed at bus stops - Some responsible Drivers are doing the right thing and informing the Radio where the troublesome bus stops are, but instead of Radio contacting security and/or Police to secure the problem area, all the radio does it seems is put out a broadcast to other Drivers to be aware of the problem areas/bus stops and appear to leave it to Bus Drivers alone to make their own defensive arrangements, but what can Drivers do? we don't carry batons and we are not police and we still have to pick up and drop good people down at these troubled areas. The STA, in line with their legal safety obligations should be in a position to act quickly to secure reported problem areas to save other buses stopping at those bus stops.
- b) More test messages need to be transmitted by Radio, say every 2 hours, so that Drivers can have an indication as to whether their radios are working. Sometimes I work for 5 hours and never hear the radio once! Does this mean it's defective or what? I think radio doesn't want to broadcast testers because they know that lots of radios are infact defective and testers may expose this and create a problem with changeovers. However, this mentality does not help Drivers who are in dire need of communication when they come to rely on their radio then, too late, find out its not working!

c) Its very frustrating trying to drive a Bus safely over harbour bridge when the windscreen fogs up and the Driver's visibility is reduced to about 20% or zero. The STA must be aware of this problem, i.e. that demist systems are inadequate for Sydney storm and humid conditions (especially when there are not enough buses and we have to have all those standees all breathing hot air on the windscreen), but the STA seems not to want to address this safety problem by upgrading the demist system of the Bus fleet.

d) Loose and old toggle switches operating rear doors are still being tripped accidentally causing the brakes to lock on. Long, old toggle switches are in the direct line of Driver's elbow, so Driver's elbow catches the toggle switch, pushes it down and locks the doors. This is a serious problem, it has caused accidents and will continue to cause accidents unless its fixed.

Sparks – Amigo you are just a Bus Driver and if you are aware of these problems, surely it follows that the STA Management, the Union and others must also know these things, so the six million dollar questions is why are they not doing their job and fixing these safety problems?

Amigo – I've noticed by experience that the STA makes improvements when under pressure, i.e. when too many people were being hurt from being trapped in the rear doors, the press got hold of the story and there was a Ministerial enquiry. This pressure brought about better automated mirrors for Bus Drivers. When assault statistics on Drivers came to public attention in the press (with reports of a Bus Driver rape etc) we got cameras and so on. So I have come to the conclusion that the STA just don't act on what they know to be safety hazards, but wait until things get bad enough and are in the papers, then at that late stage they take some positive action.

Sparks – How do you think Bus Drivers salaries will fare over the next couple of years, with the 3% pay increases in the award.

Amigo – I feel it's plainly evident with the GST (which reportedly will raise an additional extra \$30 billion in taxation - No prizes for guessing from whose pocket this money will come from!) and the petrol increases that Drivers salaries will be seriously eroded even to poverty levels, as there is no way I feel that 3% can ever compensate for these increases. Bus Drivers I think will find it tough to finance even their basic family needs, especially in Sydney where prices are the highest in Australia and the work pressures and stresses and productivity gains are the greatest.

CABBIES' NEWS

HOLIDAYS?

Sparks: Well, driver hope that you had a nice restful time over the festive break like the rest of us, or if you had to work, that it was lucrative?

Cabbie: My practice is to work the Xmas and New Year break and take – as I am a night shift driver, 5 weeks leave after the end of the first week of January.

Sparks: Five weeks is a long time without any income, how do you survive, and where do you arrive at five weeks anyway?

Cabbie: Actually, all taxi drivers (bailees) that qualify as permanent drivers under the terms of the Taxi industry (contract Drivers) Contract Determination 1984, TI (CD) CD 84, a legally binding award covering all non owner taxi drivers in the Sydney metropolitan area – except those drivers who (just) lease taxi licence(s), as opposed to just leasing both the licence (plate) and the vehicle – falls under TI (CD) CD84 and the NSW Industrial Relations Act 1996 definition of bailment; in other words, all permanent – bailee taxi drivers, are entitled to 5 weeks paid leave, (except where part of the year is spent as a permanent – a minimum of which is 3 months – a pro-rata amount is then arrived at). The rate of Holiday Pay (H.P.) is set out in Clause 19 of the TI(CD)CD84 – and the definition of what is a Permanent Bailee can be found in Clause 2(b). Presently, the rate is set at \$531.00 per week, multiplied by the number of weeks that a driver is entitled to have off. That is to say, this is, for the majority of drivers in the industry namely, the drivers working under Method 2. However, if drivers exercise the choice to be on the method of pay in that allows the driver the right to pay in 50% of the shift takings, less fuel and wash costs – as opposed to the fixed pay method, Method 1, - also mentioned in the TI (CD) CD84; the deal is, that he is entitled to average up the shift earnings over a year and multiply that by the number of days that he/she is entitled to have off, which usually comes to about 20% more than the Method 2 annual leave – H.P. rate. Note that a shift is defined as being of (at least) nine hours.

Sparks: Okay, how can you be sure that the owner (bailor) has been keeping records of what he and you have accumulated over the year in terms of days worked – so that you can justly lay claim to the permanency qualification that you need to have, in order to claim to the Permanent Bailee status thus qualifying for H.P. – and what is the minimum number of shifts worked, that you need to qualify for H.P.?

Cabbie: Firstly you can not be sure that the records that the owner has been keeping, are truthful and accurate – the best thing is to keep your own records and to make carbon copies (for yourself) of the work sheets that you hand over to the owner – the bailor at the end of the shift, with your pay-in. The bailor is compelled, by law, for his own taxation purposes, to keep, the daily work sheets for 7 years and can be compelled to produce these by the courts or tribunals in settling disputes between driver and owner.

Secondly the minimum number of shifts is, to quote the TI (CD) CD84, at clause 2b & clause 19: taking day shift workers first: 5 day shifts per week for 3 months to qualify as permanents – and a minimum 230 day shifts per year to qualify for one year's H.P. and secondly, night shift workers, - at a rate of 220 night shifts per year, for 3 months to qualify for permanency and of course a minimum of 220 night shifts to qualify for one year's H.P. Note that it is not the TI(CD)CD84 that establishes the 3 month duration, but NSW labour law itself

Counted as "shifts worked" as those days/nights that are occasioned by: illness (in which case you are entitled to Sick Pay - Clause 20), annual leave itself (last year's),

SPARKS welcomes contributions in the shape of poems, cartoons, songs, articles by public transport workers.

Please send to SPARKS PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: To ensure that you get your copy of SPARKS on time, please consider subscribing. The damage is \$5 for a one year subscription. Please make cheques/money orders out to REBEL WORKER.

SPARKS is published by Sydney Local ASN (Anarcho-Syndicalist Network).

"Anarcho- Syndicalism in Practice: The Melbourne Tram Dispute & Lockout of Jan.- Feb. 1990"

New Pamphlet published by Anarcho-Syndicalist Network - \$3.00 plus \$1.00 handling postage. Make all cheques out to Rebel Worker and send to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

REBEL WORKER

REBEL WORKER is the monthly paper of the Anarcho -Syndicalist Network (ASN) for the propogation of anarcho-syndicalism in Australia

ADDRESS: PO Box 92

Broadway 2007

SUBSCRIPTION: \$12 A YEAR

public holidays and/or other authorised leave. Furthermore if public holidays fall during the period that you are on holiday, then the 5 weeks leave is, "exclusive of any public holidays occurring during the period," thus extending the period but not the payment.

Sparks: Speaking of tax, can the bailor take tax out of the amount of money that he pays the driver for holiday pay, do I have to mention the fact that I received the Annual Leave payment in my annual tax return, and further, do I pay GST on Annual Leave payments?

Cabbie: No. Under recent court rulings, the practice of bailors having the right to extract tax out of the holiday pay has ceased. Nevertheless, bailees are expected to pay the tax owing on Annual Leave payments, to the tax department with his/her annual income return. Note: the bailor still has to issue the bailee, annually, with a Group Certificate – which is eventually sent to the Australian Taxation Office with the bailee's annual return. There is no requirement to pay GST on this money.

Sparks: Can the bailor escape paying holiday pay by simply saying that the bailee was on a low pay in, mate's rates – or that he's a conscientious objector to observing the law or can he reduce the amount of HP by the difference between the TI(CD)CD84 maximums and my "low" pay in?

Cabbie: No.

Sparks: What do I do if the owner simply refuses to pay the driver?

Cabbie: Firstly, remember that you have a right to this money, it is your money! Secondly, it is possible that the bailor will claim the holiday pay owing to you as a deduction in his own income tax return, anyway, irrespective of whether he/she paid the money over to you. Thirdly, you are entitled to claim, in the courts that you be paid, not only for the current year that is owing, but for unpaid Annual Leave in previous years, irrespective of whether or not you still work for the guy.

The best thing to do if he/she will not pay you is to take it up with the Secretary Treasurer of the Transport Workers Union – if you are a member – setting it all out in writing, or if not, you can either go through the courts, or, go to the Dept. of Industrial Relations and lodge a "complaint" – be warned it's a slow process, or if you go through the courts, take it a solicitor, or if you feel confident, go to the Industrial Relations Commission, 50 Phillip St. Sydney and ask about taking it to the Chief Industrial Magistrates Court where you have the option, as the plaintiff, to appear unrepresented and insist that the bailor be unrepresented too. This last option is cheap but its not Judge Judy!

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM means anarchist unionism. This is as opposed to trade unionism. We advocate all workers in one industry to be in one union so as to remove artificial divisions amongst workers. Such a union must be fully organised and controlled by the membership.

To achieve this we want a union organised along the following lines:

1. That no person employed by the union earn more than the average income of the membership;
2. That spokespeople have no executive power - all decisions are made by the membership affected;
3. Spokespeople are only to act as delegates elected by the membership to carry out decisions made by the membership;
4. That a mechanism be instituted for the instant recall of spokespeople/delegates who break the above rules.
5. That all positions within the union be held as a limited tenure, i.e., two years (unless no one else stands).
6. There is to be no body of full time paid officials. All loss of earnings are to be paid by the union to the extent of the lost wages.
7. That a programme of decentralised decision making be implemented within the union structure, so that we won't need full time paid positions.

Only in this way can we see a democratic, united, fighting organisation be created which will stand up for the rights of workers and their families against all governments, political parties and all bosses.

Any questions please ask.

Cont. from page 19

Where do I get a copy of the Taxi Industry (Contract Drivers) Contact Determination? NSW Dept. Of Industrial Relations, Lvl 2, 1 Oxford St. Make sure that you name the document correctly & that it comes with 4 variation documents. The last variation (to deal with holiday pay) of the Taxi Industry (Contract Drivers) Contract Determination 1984. Serial B4755 Serial B5527, Serial B5528 & B7322.*

