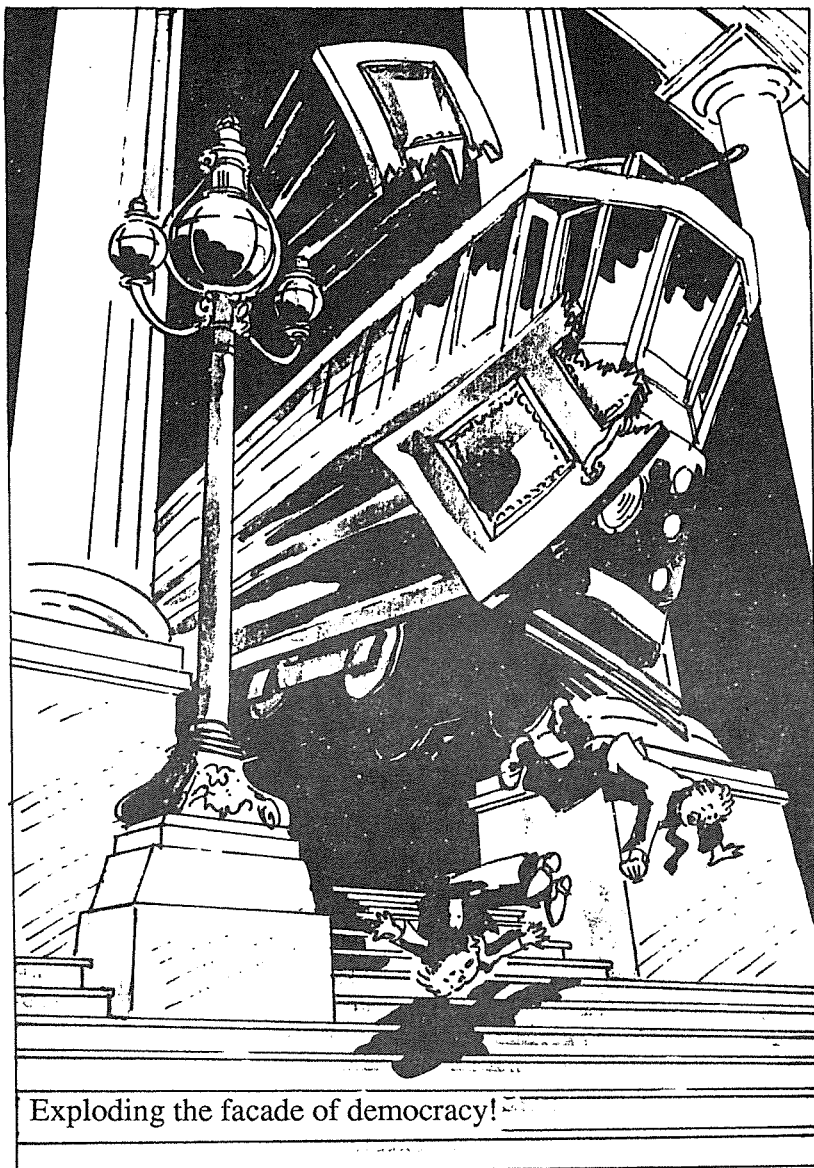


# SPARKS

A NEW ERA IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS



Exploding the facade of democracy!

NO. 21 SPECIAL ISSUE JANUARY 1990

# DISABLED DERAIL MET TICKET

Disabled people are being discriminated against with the new MetTicket and will be further discriminated against if the conductors and station staff are removed.

On 29/12/89 the weak-kneed Equal Opportunity Board (EOB) refused an application from 9 disabled people to issue a restraining order against the PTC - saying no discrimination had yet happened so they couldn't rule on the case.

But in a surprise turn of events Justice Beach of the Supreme Court said on 3rd Jan that the EOB had got the law wrong.

They could rule on discrimination that was about to occur & that the 9 people involved could appeal the decision. He also said that it was a matter of substantial public importance & set an early date of Jan 22nd for the hearing (the law moves slowly!).

So hang in they're trammies! Meanwhile disabled people are organising a support group for tram workers.



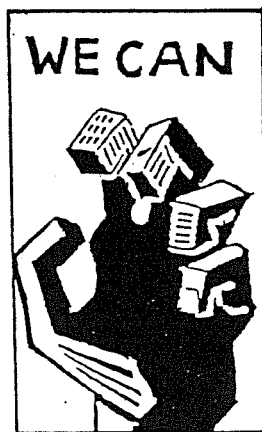
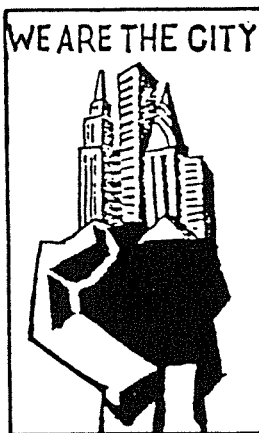
# January 6:

Trammies can be proud of themselves the way they are conducting this dispute. The trams are still blockading the city giving the dispute a high profile. At least 6 depots are now occupied, including some of the managers' offices. At most of these depots there are committees that have been set up to carry out various responsibilities such as security, finances, rosters and the like. Sign-on books are being kept- after all it's a LOCKOUT not a strike.

Despite the fiasco with the buses and the feeling of being kept in the dark by the union, morale is still high and if support continues to come in it will stay that way. Support groups are vital to all this- and the more communication between workers and supporters the stronger we get.

There's still alot of trammies who think the union will sort it all out and that the answer is negotiation. Well that's falling right into the Trades Hall Council trap. The question of keeping connies is not negotiable- I've heard too may drivers say they'll resign if the connies go - to think otherwise. Kennan has to back down and that's all there is to it. Walking a mile to buy a ticket is a stupid idea and he should have to wear it.

Now the union officials will be under a lot of pressure to back-down. In most disputes that's what happens. But if the depots stay solid then they can't go in and bargain away jobs 'cos they know they wont be able to go to another depot again. And by depots we don't just mean the delegates and proxies but everyone. A lot of people are still sitting around thinking that someone else should do the work, someone else should raise money or go and speak or whatever- it's time you lot got off your arses.



# SOLIDARITY



This dispute is the make or break for all concerned. Either Kennan wins out or we do. A 3 month trial of anything is just a trick, and has any worker been told yet what the 8 points of the peace plan were? That's how things run from Trades Hall - the full-timers work it out, sell it to the Government and then try and back the workers into a corner so they've got no choice but to give in.

So it looks like we are digging in. They'll try and take the depots when they realise that we aren't going to break easily so we should be very wary of leaving the depots short of numbers. They might try and get people to the city on a false alarm first or even a sizeable diversion. But let's face it where will they take the trams if they can move them? The best they can do is block off the suburban streets and then they'd have to guard them to stop them being moved again. No, first they have to get the depots - so we have to stay put.

And it's a good time to go to the surrounding shops and ask for support and to keep a record of which ones give and which ones don't, so when it's all over people buy at the shops that backed us up. That's what solidarity is all about. And what about the local job sites, factories, offices: it's time to walk in and ask to see the delegate and see if some money can't be raised- don't be put off by some scumbag telling you to piss off, ask to see someone else. Already the CSR workers who remember the solidarity they got during their recent dispute have offered money.

And support is coming in from other workers in the industry- train drivers collected \$100 and Guards \$600 with more to come. Station assistants have raised \$100. The dispute still hangs in the balance and we still say: ALL POWER TO THE DEPOTS.

# 'Team Work Wins 'The Game One Transport Union!

The current lockout of tramworkers highlights more than ever the the urgent need for one single Public Transport Workers Union. At the moment trammies are being forced to go it alone against Met Plan's cuts, yet 3,000 railworkers also face the chop. This crazy situation only helps the bosses who can pick us off one at a time. It's the old story of division leads to defeat.

So why do we as workers in this industry put up with this division when it works against us? The fault lies squarely on the shoulders of the union bureaucrats who like the bosses also benefit from having 16 different unions in one industry. Our union bosses would be left like a shag on a rock without their little empires. And they do deals with the Government that allows one group of workers to be out on the grass while others keep the trains running.

For us workers this is useless and works against our real interests. The cuts in Met Plan don't stop at new tickets and D.O.O. trams. It is part of a package that aims to get rid of over 3000 jobs across the board (although not from the board room). 700 station assistant positions to go, shunters in the Melbourne and Jolimont yards face the sack, Loco assistants will be kicked off the Loco over at V/Line. Tradespeople, officeworkers, labourers, maintenance workers are all targetted for attack. Bus drivers will be on 6 month contracts and are faced with losing all previous hard-fought for conditions.

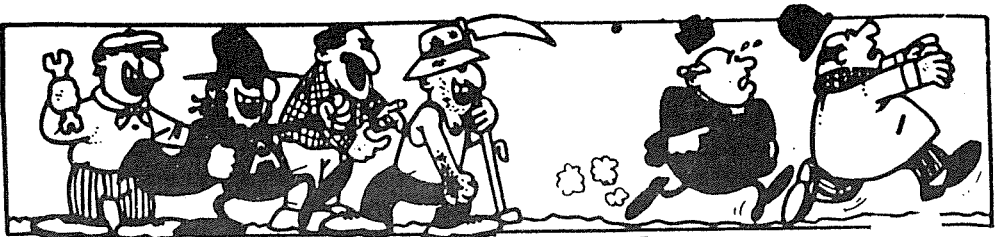
From all this it is obvious that when our officials in the railways tell us to keep working or not get involved that they are only delaying the inevitable! When the crunch hits V/Line and MetRail we can hardly expect trammies to help us if we stand back and do toss-all during the current dispute. Besides there'll only be half as many of them.

Whether we like it or not we all face attacks from ONE Government and ONE Transport Department and we need to fight as ONE UNITED TRANSPORT UNION! - whether we work on buses, trains or trams.

Think about football terms. It would be no good if we were playing the bosses for the premiership and our rover refused to kick the ball to the man on the mark because he was a full-forward. Of course not! Team work wins both football games and industrial disputes.

The division between train and tram worker will go on forever if we allow ourselves to continue thinking about the past. Last year we saw the Berlin Wall come crumbling down between East and West. Perhaps now is the time for a few walls to be TORN down in our industry. Remember UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL!

V/LINE Bob



# CONNIES TODAY, GUARDS TOMORROW?

Connies can take inspiration from the struggle guards put up on their fight for survival in '87. Guards though have let history cloud their judgement - on Jan 4th ARU guards rejected a rank & file motion for weekly 24 hour stoppages in support of connies largely because 'they never took action for us when we needed help'. The vote: 54 against, 31 for.

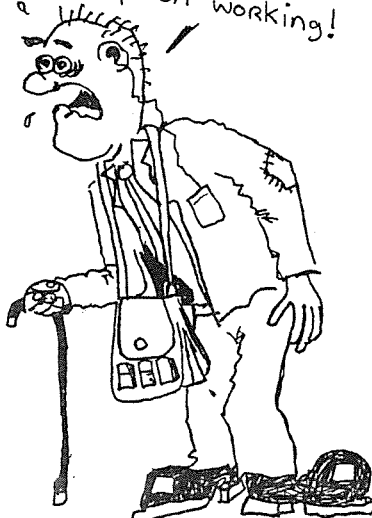
I've been around the industry for over six years. All I've ever heard when a section of workers under attack approach others to seek industrial action support is, "You never helped us, so we won't help you". Now guards have given trammies another opportunity to continue this archaic, backward pattern - in 1991 the guards job comes up for review and if we have to to the trammies for help many will feel justified in saying, "We remember 1990 - Go Away!".

Those who rule over us working people need to keep us divided. They aren't stupid - they are shit scared of what we are doing when we stand together and confront their actions. Racism, sexism, the divisions of the workplace are all used to separate us from each other. Keeping us thinking that Joylene Bloggs' battle ain't our battle. Too many railworkers reckon the connies fight doesn't affect them but... if Kennan succeeds in killing off connies then he'll know that by fighting hard and dirty enough his government can defeat any group of resistant workers.

I REMEMBER  
1913 when  
you didn't  
help us!



WELL I REMEMBER  
1923 when you lot  
kept on working!



History can inspire us: the struggles of working people in this country over the last 100 years have created our (reasonably good) standard of living. The bosses haven't given over wage increases or improved conditions because they're 'wonderful people' and jobs haven't been saved through a boss having a twinge of conscience. History can also be a smothering hand across the face of COMMON SENSE.

Guards have played into Kennan's hands. He is using the lack of worker solidarity action for connies as a way of wearing down their resolve. A show of SOLIDARITY from guards could have sparked other workers across the city into action.

This dispute has reached a critical point. Guards have an obligation to rethink their 'No Action' position.

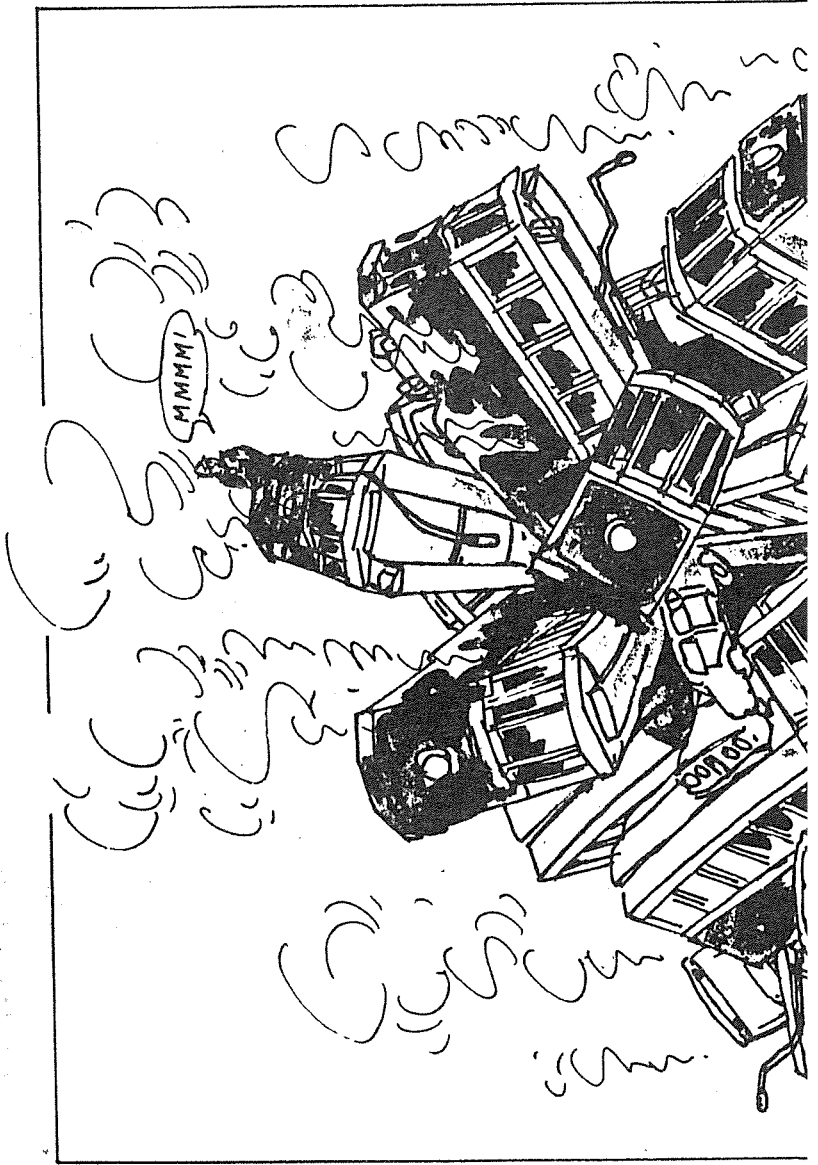
Adam Muyt  
ERD Guard.

Station Assistants have set up a Hit & Run Squad to disrupt the Met Ticket scheme. The Squad will look at Flying Pickets at 7-11's, Amcal chemists, rail sidings, etc. Contact Vic Moore, ARU Station Assistants' Delegate, Glenroy Station, 610-5720.

I GAVE AN  
ARM AND A LEG  
FOR THE CONNIES,  
WHAT ABOUT YOU?



# ALP TRANSPORT POLICY







*SPARKS* No. 21 SPECIAL ISSUE JANUARY 6th, 1990

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation - Melbourne, P.O. Box 199, East Brunswick, 3057.

# ALL POWER TO THE DEPOTS!

**JANUARY 1st 1990**

The first day of a new decade and trammies showed that bosses are redundant. A sign was put up outside the Brunswick Depot saying, 'UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: WORKERS' CONTROL'. And at Essendon they raised a 'CON-NIES FOREVER' flag. On that day workers' control stopped being an idea and became a reality. Sure it was sabotaged by management when they turned off the power and opted for a lockout, but it had created a feeling of strength. It felt good to be in control. It felt good to run the system as a service. It felt good to see other trammies as fellow workers with a common bond. People came from all over the place to midnight depot meetings and drivers couldn't get out fast enough to take trams out of the depots. It was amazing to take the trams in and blockade the city and to fight for something worth fighting for.

This dispute is one small part of our self-defense as working people wanting a life free from bureaucrats, bosses, polliies fucking up our lives 'for our own good'. Some disputes can lead to victories but many do not and we should have no illusions that victory is inevitable. After all, what is victory? Going back to long hours of shift work, the same old incompetent management, having to take shit for a rundown, over crowded 'system'? A victory is something where you are better off when you come out than when you went in. So, of course no stupid ticket system. No job losses. No standing in the rain selling tickets. No being a psuedo-inspector. But if the Met wins this one what are the chances for no D.O.C.'s, no split shifts, better maintained trams, better services? The very idea of a 'service' is poo-pooed by the corporate megabuck managers. They don't give a shit about some old worker who has to walk a km to buy a ticket, or who is attacked or who falls off a moving tram or who collapses in a crush. If you are on a tram you must be a nobody - whether passenger or worker!

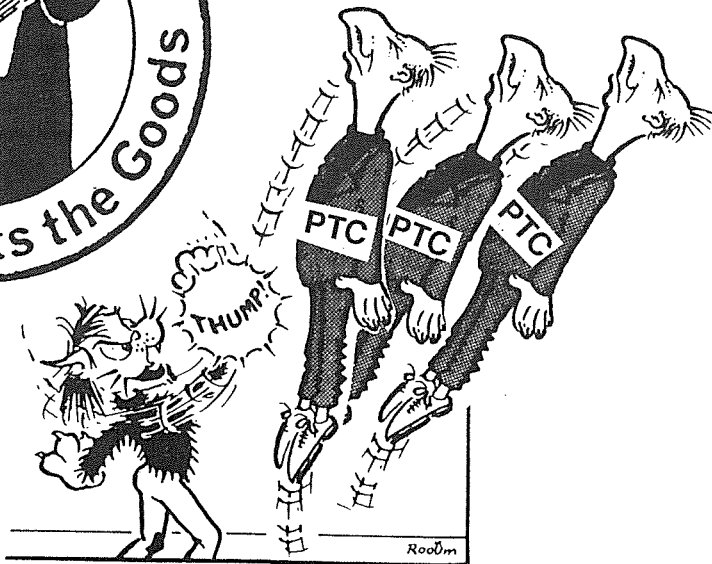
If this dispute is to be won what trammies are doing now needs to be well organised plus we need tactics to take it further.

## KEEPING IT GOING

If workers are to stick it out to the end then there's a lot that needs to be organised: meals for workers and families; money for bills and mortgages, etc.; handling the media; cleaning up; rosters for the depots and blockade pickets; social occasions for trammies, families, friends, supporters.

Many depots - Essendon, Brunswick, South Melbourne, Preston (at least) are already doing most of this.

There is a need for clearly accounted for trammie support funds to be distributed by trammies for trammies at the depots.



The pickets need better communication - using mobile phones or radios, and continually roving cars covering areas not covered by regular pickets, eg: Domain Road.

## MAKING IT STRONGER

\*Regular, probably daily, depot meetings to discuss the running of the dispute and make the decisions about where it should go.

\*Direct permanent rank and file links with other depots to ensure solidarity, communication and unity. The bosses will try and split us up - depot from depot, connie from driver, buses from trams, passengers from workers.

\*Use Community Radio for regular dispute updates. It worked really well during the Nurses dispute.

\*Making contact with other workers and getting their active support - workplace meetings to explain the issues have always been a good way of raising interest and funds. In other big disputes workers have introduced voluntary levies to aid fellow workers. During the '65 Mt Isa lockout the equivalent of \$2m was raised!

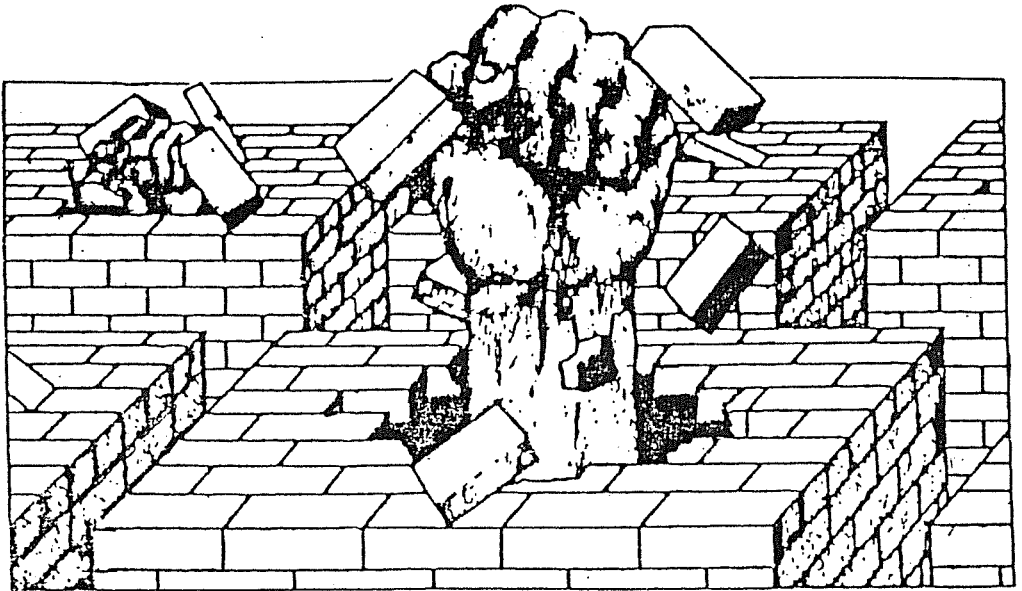
\*Encourage friends, supporters, family to get involved in - or start - a community/passengers' support group. There are at least 2 up and running. Every depot should have one!

## TAKING IT FURTHER

\*Taking control of the rest of the depots, and hold them, so that everyone has a place to meet, discuss, socialise and plot! After all they've got Transport House (for now!)

\*Making links with the sparkies to get the electricity back on and then taking control of the trams to run a service. It would be easy to print tickets to cover wages (and no money to the bosses!)

\*Talk to railworkers - at the moment Met management is forcing them to force the scratchies and 'emergency' tickets onto the commuters. It is important to break the Met ticket at the stations as well as the depots. And if trammies can run the tram service and bus drivers do the same what is to stop the rail workers? And if transport workers can do it, why stop with the transport industry...?



As we write this Melbourne's biggest tourist attraction is stationary in the city's streets. Kennan can't look out his office window without realising that he doesn't have the situation under control.

For weeks now the media and politicians have applauded the workers of Central and Eastern Europe who have taken matters into their own hands, taken over their industries and rebelled against their repression. It's OK if it happens somewhere else, but not here. When trammies try to provide a service to the public, to oppose an expensive and discriminatory ticket system and try to defend working conditions and jobs, they're branded as irresponsible hijackers. The trammies have shown they are willing to fight for themselves and community services. The fightback for independent unions, free from political control, has begun here too.

**SPARKS MOB**

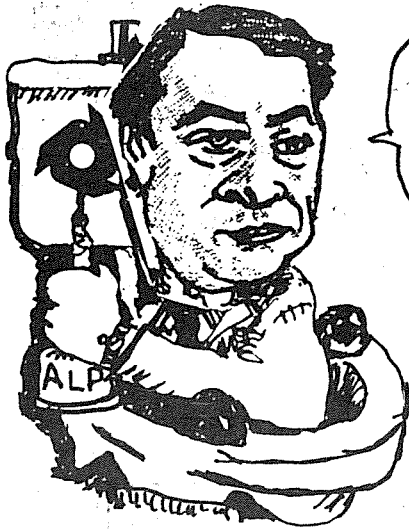
# Passengers Love Connies

Passengers' Support Groups are now up and running at Sth Melburne, Brunswick & Preston Depots, with good possibilities to get something going at Essendon and Glenhantly. The support groups are meeting daily and are building a bridge between community users & the workers. The main activities are food and fundraising, backup on the pickets and moral support. Visit you local Depot for details.

South Melbourne Passenger Support Group meets 7 pm every night at the South Melbourne Tram Depot, Cnr King & Dorcas Sts.

Brunswick Passengers' Support Group meets 7.30 pm every night at the Brunswick Tram Depot, Sydney Rd, Brunswick (just north of Moreland Rd).

Preston Passengers' Support Group meets 7.30 pm every night at the Preston Tram Depot, Plenty Rd, Preston (just past Bell St).



I can't SCRATCH  
my arse, MUCH  
LESS A MET TICKET



# Get Nicked Halfpenny

SPARKS has nothing but respect for the two fellas who got nicked for welding bars to the tram tracks.

Although Halfpence & Parkindaughter would like everyone to 'be good' while they do the talking. Their wishy-washy deals won't help nothin' They've managed to sell out every other groups of workers they've 'represented' - so we've got no respect for them! Already they wanted the connies back selling scratchies for 3 months. There'll be no second chance - we won't get the trams out again. We are in a position of strength & have got to keep it!



This leaflet was a spontaneous initiative of workers at Essendon on Jan 1st and handed out to passengers.

# What's Going On?

We, The Tramways Workers Are Running The System Ourselves. The Management And Inspectors have left The Depot Expecting The Service To Shut Down.

THE DRIVERS AND CONDUCTORS ARE KEEPING IT ALIVE!!!

We're Not Trained To Do This, But We're Doing It!

A lot Of Us Are Using Our Spare Time, But We're Doing It!

None Of Us Are Getting Paid For This, But We're Doing It!

We're DOING THIS FOR OUR BENEFIT AND

We're DOING THIS FOR YOUR BENEFIT!!

So We Just Ask You To Bear With Us And Understand That There Might Be Shortages And Delays.

THANK YOU!!

# THE REAL ALTERNATIVE TO SCRATCH TICKETS

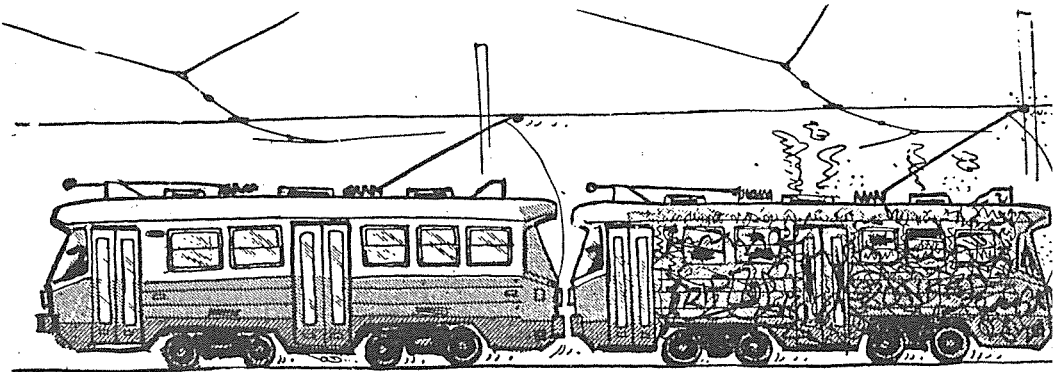
\$2  
donation for trammies in  
dispute

Front

Back

Entitled to one day's travel  
on workers' controlled  
transport

Example of a ticket that could be printed and issued  
by transport workers as an immediate fund raiser  
for depot solidarity funds.



SPOT THE TRAM WITHOUT THE  
CONDUCTOR...

FE