

TRAMMIES

LINK.

March, 1992

NEW LEAFLET, OLD NAMES

Some members will have seen a newsletter headed "PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORKER" in the depots. It ask a number of interesting questions like, 'do you think we need more communication, links between depots, discussion on issues facing our Industry, what is happening on the Executive".

While the rank and file of our Union and the Rank and File Committee welcomes all genuine attempts to make our union more answerable and responsive to its members, and to re build our union from the ashes it now occupies, to its former proud position of militancy, there are questions that must be asked of the group putting out the newsletter.

It would be absolutely hypocritical not to point out, that the very people whose names appear on the bottom of that leaflet are the very same people who organised secretly with the right wing of the union led by DiGregorio, to destroy the genuine militant leadership of our Union when Jim Harper was Secretary. They are the same people who prostituted their principles and members democratic rights to gain positions of power for themselves.

IF YOU LAY DOWN WITH DOGS, YOU GET UP WITH FLEAS.

We warned these people at the time, that by uniting with DiGregorio's right wing, anti working class clique, they would play into the hands of certain government forces who want a tame cat union, and our predictions have been proved absolutely correct.

The very people who are now calling for an open, democratic union, are those who destroyed those very things we had. What has changed is that DiGregorio no longer needs them and is currently preparing to unload them, just as he unloaded Monica Harte.

The newsletter claims that the EXECUTIVE IS IN CRISIS. Of course it is, it is in the hands of the very group they collaborated with, a group who used every lie, corrupt means and uniting with the worst elements to destroy Harper's militant leadership and WHY, so that they could control and weaken the union to ensure that it creates no problems for the Government when they introduced policies which will impoverish our members.



TREATING MEMBERS LIKE MUSHROOMS?

Of course they did, it has been the policy since they put DiGregorio into office. The newsletter went on to say "members and depots have been angered and critical of both the practices of DiGregorio and Strebs as well as the general lack of direction emerging from the Executive" If those putting out this newsletter are genuine in their desire to work more correctly and to help restore our union to its former militant strength, then they must first acknowledge their mistakes and criticise themselves to the membership for putting themselves first before the needs of members.

WHERE HAVE THEY BEEN TILL NOW

We must not ever make the same mistake again in the future. We need to be sure that the people we elect to positions in our Union, have a record of service to the members. A record of honesty and commitment, a record of serving the people before themselves.

These people have been part of every decision, every policy, every failure to inform members since DiGregorio was elected, and until now, not once have they publicly questioned his or their role.

WE HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT

During Jim Harper's Secretaryship of this union, members were kept fully informed and Jim constantly raised the need for members to be organised active and involved.

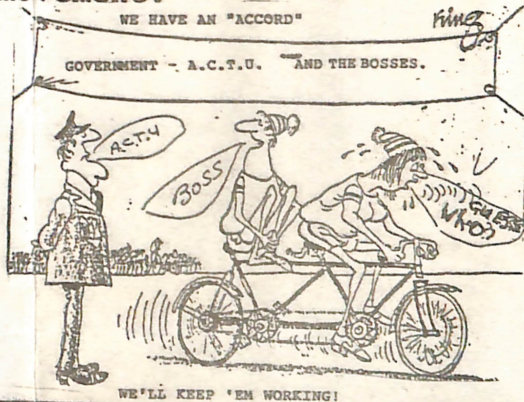
We need to ask WHY DO WE NEED ANOTHER GROUP, ANOTHER LEAFLET IF UNITY IS REALLY WHAT THEY SEEK.

SAY NO TO CORPORATE BOSSES UNIONISM.

The amalgamation of Australian unions into twenty super unions under the guidance of the ACTU led by Fergusson and Kelly, will not result in stronger more militant organisations of workers. The result will be the opposite, a workforce they seek to control by a bureaucratic structure of officials whose job will be to dampen down workers struggles, to seek workers co-operation in their own exploitation, to assist monopoly big business in its schemes to restructure Australian Industry in the drive to maintain big business profits.

WHO IS DEMANDING AMALGAMATION?

Amalgamation can be positive when it comes from the workers, to improve workers struggle to defend wages and conditions, not when it is being forced from the top down. The push for amalgamation is coming from employers, government and ACTU leaders. The employers are seeking a tame cat union movement.



IT WAS OLD PALS ACT,
NOT RACISM

The investigation by Public Transport Corporation equal opportunity officer [redacted] Ritman into the [redacted] of tram conductors ('The Age', 8/2) has brought to light the unfavourable recruitment practices of a certain section of the PTC. I am glad that the person responsible for these practices has been removed from recruitment and a more fair system is being adopted by the PTC for future recruitment of conductors.

I do have a particular interest in this as I, too, have been one of the many people who have had a raw deal in the hands of a certain employee and about whom I, too, have raised concerns with the PTC. What I find hard to accept is Ms. Ritman's comments about there being racial discrimination in some tram depots to the extent of favouritism of people from Sri Lanka and India. I think this statement is incorrect.

It is not the Indians and Sri Lankans who have been favoured, but just close friends and relatives of the employee concerned who, unfortunately, happen to be either Sri Lankan or Indian. I, for one, am an Indian who after being kept on the waiting list for 1 1/2 years was told I was unsuitable for the job of a conductor, with no reason being given.

Ms. Ritman is only doing more harm to races such as Sri Lankans and Indians in making such statements.

It has been well known that MET employees have used their contacts to get friends and relatives jobs in the tramways or railways and if in the past year a substantial number of Indians or Sri Lankans got in as conductors it was because of being either a friend or relative of the person concerned, and not because of their "race".

S.A.Hossain

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KEW DEPOT

This dispute still has not been satisfactorily resolved. Union Secretary DiGregorio ducked his responsibilities by calling in the Federal Secretary and President who took two days to find no wrong doing by the Kew Delegate, but at what cost to our State Branch, airfares, expenses and wages what a fiasco!!

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To those who say the "Link" divides the Union, read and note who really does!" Progressives"? What nonsense, this leadership has nothing in common with progressive.
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UNION DUES

When we had responsible democratic leadership we were informed of an increase in union dues by a meeting and newsletter from our Union, now, we learned from our wage packet.

It is reported that an Essendon Depot meeting, Sam Branciaforte was asked why the increase. Poor Sam's reply, 'to pay the wages of Fairway Rep. Jim McCrumb'.

A.C.T.U. LEADERSHIP

We are being asked to trust the ACTU, that they will be good custodians of our interest. Do they deserve our trust?

The experience of the various "Accords" vigorously opposed by our union before DiGregorio came to power, have left most workers some 30% less purchasing power during the last nine years. Workers and their unions that have put up a fight during the Labor Government/ ACTU Accords have been isolated and allowed to be picked off by the employers, to the point where these ACTU leaders have conspired with employers and government to destroy like the BLF and Pilots.

Award Restructuring, Enterprise Bargaining and Individual Contracts now lay ahead of us. These are embraced by the ACTU to serve not our interests, but those of the top bosses.

We must question our own union leadership in accepting these corrupt policies.

CROSS CITY LINKING

AN END TO OUR DIVISION.

Our Union/Management have set up a committee to draw up proposals on this issue. Union reps. Strebs, DiGregorio, Martin.

They have called on depots to form committees to put forward proposals. In our view, this is not the way to go. It would pit depot against depot. What depot will propose to 'give away' work from its members.

Depots are being encouraged to put to Management proposals to take work from our depots, creating

resentment from depots losing the work.

The ~~proposal~~ are now going to the ~~management~~, condemning other depots or delegates from trying to take their work.

South Melbourne Depot has passed resolutions that a ban on the removal of any LRV and a stoppage will occur if any move is made to remove its LR routes.

Cross City Linking is part of restructuring services to operate with less crews and vehicles.

RESOLUTION FROM SOUTH MELBOURNE

"South Melbourne Depot insists that no proposals on cross city linking are to be submitted to Management until depots affected by route changes have agreed to accept them."

WE ENDORSE THIS RESOLUTION

If we do not take this stand, our service our jobs and our work will be irrevocably affected.

NOR WILL WE TOLERATE BEING TOLD THAT ANY WAGE INCREASE IS DEPENDENT ON ACCEPTING THESE PROPOSALS.