Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

A fig for those by law protected;
Liberty's a glorious feast;
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.
—ROBERT BURNS.

Vol. 19, No. 20 — May 17th, 1958 — Threepence

To Win the Strike
BUSMEN NEED THE RAILMEN

AFTER just over a week the London bus strike has receded from the front pages of the newspapers and its news value written off. This time there is not even any hooliganism to keep the story alive; only the continued inconvenience of the busmen's own fellow-workers as they struggle to get to work by packed Underground and local line trains or by lifts from couldn't-care-less motorists.

In a public transport strike it's the workers who suffer. Ironically, those who tend to sympathise most with the busmen —those in the same economic plight—are those most effected by the strike, and those who don't think they should get a rise are those with their own means of transport who are thus least affected.

But the patience of those who sympathise with the bus workers is liable to get strained in view of the unimaginative handling of the struggle. The strike seems to have been called with no real preparation or liaison with other workers to give it a chance of success from the start and one feels that the daily struggle, as one swelters in overloaded tube trains, is for nothing.

Employers Don't Feel It

As long as workers can still get to work somehow—anyhow—no effect of the strike is felt by the London employers. They feel no need to appeal to the Government to intervene as long as they can carry on much as usual. And as long as workers are prepared to tolerate the travelling conditions, even getting up and leaving home earlier so as not to be late in the morning, and the Underground and suburban railway workers are prepared to cope with the extra work, then the busmen will be left roasting.

They talk bravely of their willingness to face a six or eight weeks' strike—as though that is in itself virtuous! The only purpose in engaging in a struggle of this kind is to win, and that means making sure that every possible thing has been done to lead to victory. If the struggle is so protracted that it brings great hardship to the strikers then it is quite clear that something is wrong with their organisation, or timing. After all a bus strike like the present one is not over any great issue of principle; it is simply over money. Therefore the tactical struggle can quite clearly be one where the pounds, shillings and pence should be a prime consideration.

Last Strike: 1937

A strike like this shows up the weakness of the transport workers' organisation in a way that years of steady wage-bargaining never will. It is twenty-one years since the last London bus strike and in that time one improvement in organisation has been effected—and that has been because of overall London Transport Executive planning, not because of forethought by the busmen's leaders.

In 1937 the busmen came out—but the trams kept running! As well, of course, as the Underground. Inevitably the strikers were beaten back to work. Since then all the trams have been scrapped and replaced by trolley-buses, whose crews come under the same agreements as the petrol bus workers. So that in this strike the trolleys are out as well as the petrol (or diesel) buses. That gives a tremendous added strength to the busmen—but it is an advantage that was not looked for by their leaders—it was given them through the bosses' decision to scrap the trams!

Long Sectional Strikes Useless

But perhaps now the real lesson will be learned: that it is fruitless for one section of London Transport workers to come out on a protracted strike while others continue to work. For if the present strike fails it will be because of the continuance at work of the Underground men—who are not even in the same union as the busmen anyway!

The busmen are in the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Underground men are organised in the National Union of Railwaymen—for even in this they are governed by agreements separate from those of all the surface railmen! So that it is quite possible that if there is a national railway strike, the London Underground workers will continue to work! And what conditions of travel would be like *then* on the Underground we shudder to think! Perhaps bad enough to bring the workers out?

But this whole ineffectual way of going on brings glaringly into the limelight the faulty structure and way of thinking of the trade unions. Surely it is clear to the merest student of the tactics of industrial struggle that *all* the workers in public transport should be in the same organisation? And that they should act together?

Big and Short

If the Underground and suburban trains had come to a stop last Monday with the buses the strike would have been over by now. And that is how strikes should be: big and short. Big to be effective, short to result in the least hardship for the strikers—and, in the case of a public service, for the public.

This is so if a stoppage is the method to be employed. But in the case of public transport it is by no means certain that a walk-out strike is the most effective method. It antagonises the public, can't break a public corporation financially and, as long as workers can get to work somehow, doesn't interfere with production, our sacred cow.

The Glasgow busmen, some years back, found that a most effective tactic was to take out the buses, carry the passengers, but take no fares. Immediately the public were on their side! And the Corporation gave in within a couple of days.

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The Algerian Slaughter

AS the war in Algeria continues in its fourth year yet another attempt to form a French Government is under way, this time under the leadership of M. Pflimlin, leader of the Catholic M.R.P. Party.

Whether M. Pflimlin can achieve what his predecessors have failed to do—an end to the Algerian war—seems doubtful in the extreme. His task is a seemingly impossible one, even by political standards, he must combine a policy of resolute support for the military effort in North Africa with vigorous endeavours to bring about peace by means of negotiation.

In a speech to the Assembly last week he said:

"In Algeria peace can only be the fruit of courage."

Brave words but almost meaningless since the use of the word courage in this context may be taken in two opposite ways. If the recipient of the speech is a Right-winger he may assume that it implies the courage to commit a still greater military force in Algeria and inflict an early defeat upon the rebels despite the enormous economic cost. Alternatively a Left-winger may take it that the courage required is of a moral kind, a willingness to make concessions of an unpopular nature calculated to pave the way for negotiation. Such are the terms in which would-be French Prime Ministers must speak.

Meanwhile the course of the war goes from bad to worse. It is not that either side is coming any nearer to winning or losing, but that the death rate climbs ever higher and the methods employed become more and more inhuman. Continuously the headlines glaringly report the bombing of villages, terrorist outrages, torture by the police and French army units and the burning of farms.

French forces in Algeria number about 500,000 and control the urban areas in an atmosphere of terror and repression reminiscent of a Nazi occupation. No Muslim can be certain that he will be safe for another day, but Europeans live in a state of reasonable security providing they do not sympathise with the rebels. Outside the urban areas the *Front de Liberation Nationale*, with a force of 100,000 and many times more supporters in the villages and farms, is in control. Not entirely of course for the French army has "persuaded" part of the population to its point of view by organizing a system of executions, destruction and the torture of suspects. The population is therefore caught between the terrorism of both sides.

The attitude of the French public to this aspect of the situation may be described as indifferent. Such concern as there is, is with the

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BEYOND THE TRANSPORT STRIKE
Public Services: Whose Responsibility?

IN a message to London's busworkers on the eve of their strike, Sir John Elliot drew their attention to the fact that

"The bus business is declining, not only in London and in Britain but all over the world, and it will continue to do so.

"London Transport road services are to-day carrying just under *two million fewer passengers every day than they were in 1950, and the numbers are still falling*. Did you know this?

"That is why I wish to tell you straight that, in my belief, the disappearance of the buses, trolley-buses and coaches from the streets and roads of Greater London at this time, quite apart from its tremendous hardship to the public who rely on them to get to and from their work, will be disastrous to us.

"It can only result in turning away from our road services tens of thousands of passengers more, and all of these will leave us permanently. Thus the inevitable result of a strike will be that when the buses do come back on to the streets there will be *less work* for *fewer busmen* and eventually *less money* with which to pay wages."

We could well understand an industrialist, at a time of shrinking markets and cut-throat competition and dumping, making an appeal in these terms, but here is the Chairman of a nationalised public service using just the same arguments as any common or garden business man with something to sell! But then, of course this is not surprising, since the nationalised services *are* run by people who by training, or as a condition for holding down their jobs cannot or must not make a distinction between good business and good public service. Both political parties when in power have made it quite clear that the Nationalised industries "must pay their way" (as well as some £30 millions a year interest to the former shareholders of the four main line railways and to the London Passenger Transport Board).

That is the basis of good business; it is hardly conducive however to the achievement of a public service which answers the public need. And when on top of this, the Government expects the public service to "pay its way" but discourages fare increases—not because it is defending the poor defenceless public but because it knows that increased fares add another point to the cost of living spiral, and automatically invites wage demands from the industrial unions—it is clear that the Transport Executive can only "pay its way" by keeping down the wages in the industry and by reducing the services available to the public.

A factory owner whose order book is half full, will not hesitate to pay off half his operatives or work his factory only half the week. He is in business to *make* money, not to lose it, nor to create employment for a number of workers, or serve the public. He employs labour because he needs people to operate his machines; he "serves" the public so long as the public in sufficient numbers are prepared to pay his prices. when they are not and production is no longer an "economic proposition"—*for him*, that is!—he stops producing that commodity whatever the consequences to his workers, or the feelings of the loyal core of consumers.

A public service cannot be organised along these lines without ceasing to be a public service. Just as the hospital services are available to all in sickness or health; just as water is, as it were, on tap, whether one is using it or not at any particular moment; just as the electric mains are always alive and the gas pipes are always ready to disgorge their Therms, so should public transport be available in slack hours as well as peak hours. A public service can be considered uneconomic only when a more efficient alternative is

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PROTECTING SOCIETY

At Bridgewater the other day there was only one case for the court. A boy charged with a breach of probation.

The Recorder travelled 144 miles from London for the case. So did the court shorthand writer.

A detective and a probation officer came from Bath (44 miles). Another detective from Keynsham (40 miles).

Two barristers from Bristol (32 miles), one to prosecute and one to defend on a dock brief, with a solicitor to instruct the prosecuting barrister.

An officer came from Taunton (11 miles) to pay the legal fraternity, and two warders travelled from Bristol in case the boy should be sent to jail.

The local figures in court were the clerk of the peace, his deputy, his legal assistant, the county chief constable, a police superintendent, a chief inspector, a sergeant to open the court, and some constables to keep order.

What did this expensive gathering achieve? The boy was put on probation again. What did it cost the ratepayers? Poor dears, they'll never know.

Sunday Express 27/4/58.

The Top People from Tolpuddle

THE MAJOR UNIONS' INVESTMENTS

—	Total fund £	Gilt-edged £	Municipal stock, loans, &c. £	Bank deposits £
Amalgamated Engineering Union	11,975,671	5,561,691	1,505,640	433,000
Transport and Gen. Workers	10,761,070	6,034,676	3,441,792	567,561
Nat. Union of Railwaymen	5,461,364	1,683,130	1,038,643	265,953
Nat. Union of Gen. and Mun. Workers	3,964,206	1,217,100	1,129,937	901,664
Nat. Union of Mineworkers	1,097,439	597,332	200,000	144,397

(Figures are based on balance sheets dated December 31, 1956.)

The Times, May 9th, 1958.

It's Now £100!

PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT!
WEEK 19

Deficit on *Freedom*	£380
Contributions received	£282
DEFICIT	£98

May 2 to May 8

N. Rhodesia: J.W. £2/10/0; San Francisco: R.C.L. 7/6; London: T.F. 5/-; Houston: B.T. 17/-; London: P.F.* £1; Preston: R.S.M. 2/6; Hartford: M.G.A. 7/6; Oxford: Anon.* 5/-; Peterborough: A.W. 11/-; Torino: G.I. 4/-; Llanelly: L.W. 2/6; Forrest: H.E.M. 11/-.

	£	s.	d.
Total ...	7	3	0
Previously acknowledged ...	275	9	9
1958 TOTAL TO DATE ...	£282	12	9

GIFT OF BOOKS: London: S.F.

*Indicates regular contributor.

REPORT ON THE CO-OPS - I

IT has always struck me as a little odd that anarchists have not shown more interest in the Co-ops. Like the socialists, anarchists—with a few exceptions—have generally treated the Co-op Movement as very inferior to the Trade Union Movement. It is true, of course, that few anarchists have anything good to say about the *existing* trade unions which they rightly see as one of the bulwarks of the wage-system. But at times, when the Trade Union Movement has indulged itself by going through a 'revolutionary phase', many anarchists have waxed enthusiastic. A whole school of anarchism has developed with the basic postulate that labour unions could be made into revolutionary organisations which would usher in the free society. And at one time—in France just before the First World War—there was a distinct possibility that the anarchist movement would merge with the syndicalist movement. Contrast this with the typical anarchist attitude to the Co-ops. The Co-ops. are criticised—again with a good deal of truth—for being capitalist-minded and exploitative in their relations with employees; but no leading anarchist, as far as I know, has ever suggested that a 'revolutionary' form of co-operation might be a vehicle to carry us along the road to the Promised Land.

I find this odd for several reasons. One is that the Co-operative Movement contains within itself some not insignificant examples of organisations which approximate more closely to anarchist ideals than do any other organisations of a productive, as distinct from a propagandist, character. I refer, of course, to the producer co-operatives—the nearest thing we have to worker-controlled enterprises — and, of greater significance, to the integral co-operatives, or communities, such as the Israeli *Kibbutzim*. 'Communiteers' are always popping up in the anarchist movement but hardly one of them realises that it was Robert Owen, 'the Father of Co-operation', who first popularised the community idea.

Another reason why I find this anarchist neglect of co-operation odd is that ideologically anarchism and co-operation have a good deal in common. Both emphasise mutual aid on the basis of non-exploitative relations; both, in their different ways, insist upon self-help as opposed to political action; both underline the evils of competition and laud the virtues of co-operation. Both, in short, belong essentially to the libertarian wing of the wider 'socialist' movement. I am talking about ideology, of course, not practice. It may be that co-operative practice falls short—far short—of co-operative theory; but alas, does not the same apply to the anarchists? Co-operators, my cynical self tells me, have merely had more opportunities than anarchists to 'betray' their principles!

The connection between anarchist and co-operative ideology is not altogether surprising. William Godwin, the first English anarchist, may not have directly influenced Robert Owen but the early British co-operators undoubtedly shared many of Godwin's principles and assumptions. Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* may be one of the great unread classics of anarchism but it is also a book that fits easily into any comprehensive bibliography on co-operation and is to be found in many a Co-op. library. This libertarian aspect of co-operation has no doubt been overshadowed by twentieth century developments but it still turns up in, what superficially may seem to an anarchist, the most unlikely of places. Jack Bailey, as secretary of the Co-operative Party, is second to none in his insistence that the British Co-op. Movement did right in 1917 to break with the tradition of political neutrality and establish its own political organisation. But he is also perhaps the most vigorous exponent of the view that socialism is not to be equated with statism. The pamphlet he published last year, *Co-operation and Modern Socialism*, is impregnated with libertarian sentiments. One would be hard put to find anything comparable in the recent writings of any trade union leader. And the reason for that is simple. Ideologically, trade unionism is more pre-disposed towards political action than is co-operation. For many trade unions, political action appears as a natural extension of direct action in the industrial sphere—a way of gaining or preserving trade union objects. For co-operatives, on the other hand, political action is primarily seen as a regrettable necessity, the only way, in present circumstances, of defending legitimate co-operative interests. More co-operators, *quâ* co-operators, do not seek any aid from the State: they ask to be let alone. They see State-controlled co-operatives *à la Russe* as spurious co-operatives, perversions of the ideal of free association.

Yet a third reason why the typical anarchist attitude towards co-operation strikes me as odd is that the British Co-operative Movement exhibits some of the basic principles of anarchist organisation. Owen's original idea was that men would freely associate to form small, self-supporting communities, each with a few thousand members engaged in agricultural and industrial pursuits. In their relations with one another, these communities would be autonomous units but, for purposes which extended beyond the particular community, they would be federated 'in 10's, in 100's and in 1,000's.' The British Co-operative Movement has abandoned the community idea. It is no longer interested in integral co-operation. It seeks instead to unite men and women along segmental lines—in associations of producers or, more typically, in associations of consumers. But, in adjusting its sights to aim at this more limited and attainable objective, it has retained the original principles of organisation. At the present time, the British consumers' movement is made up of some 950 societies of varying sizes, ranging from less than 100 members on the one hand to the 1¾ million members of the London Society on the other. Each of these societies is an autonomous association in which, formally at least, the individual members are collectively sovereign. From this basis has been built up, on the federal principle, societies extending over wider areas—regional federals, for bakeries and laundries, and national federals like the C.W.S., for wholesaling, production and banking. Another federal body, the Co-operative Union, has been established to provide common services, such as research and legal and technical advice. Every year this Union calls the Co-operative Congress attended by delegates from the constituent societies. This Congress has been called 'the Co-operative Parliament' but this is a misnomer. It is no sovereign body: it has no authority to legislate for the movement. It may pass resolutions, it may advise, it may cajole or, in the last resort, even expel 'recalcitrant' societies. But—as the federal principle implies—the local associations remain autonomous.

By comparison with the Trade Union Movement, the Co-operative Movement is a 'grass-roots democracy'. There have been plenty of *theorists* who have drawn up blueprints for democratic unions but precious few instances of genuinely democratic unions. The typical union is a national body divided into branches according to the centralist principle. The branches are not autonomous units and the general tendency has been for effective power to concentrate in the hands of leaders at the central office. And this tendency has not been simply a consequence of the oligarchical proclivities of individual trade union leaders. It is inherent in the logic of the situation in which trade unions operate. As organisations whose primary purpose has been to protect the narrow economic interests of their members, they have found in practice that centralisation pays and that, in the short run at least, it is the most effective form of organisation to combat the increasingly centralised employers' organisations. One may conclude that in this respect, as in respect of political action, trade unions, unlike co-operatives, are pre-disposed towards non- or anti-liberatarian solutions.

It is true, of course, that the Trade Union Movement *considered as a whole* exhibits pluralist features. Each union is autonomous and the federal principle finds expression to some extent in a number of local federations of unions and in the T.U.C. But the General Council of the T.U.C. has a good deal more authority than the Central Executive of the Co-op. Union and the Trade Union Congress is not dominated by its few large constituent members than is the Co-operative Congress. Clearly, in the Trade Union Movement the locus of power is national, whereas in the Co-operative Movement it is local.

These reflections, however, have not been occasioned by the desire to write an anarchist critique of the co-ops. (Such a critique, I suggest, would be well worth while and might illuminate many of the problems discussed by anarchists. Rather they have been occasioned by the recent publication of a report by an Independent Commission on the trading problems facing the British Co-operative Movement today. This report has made sweeping proposals for changes in the structure of the Movement, the nature and implications of which I shall discuss in subsequent articles.

GASTON GERARD.

(To be continued)

BOOK REVIEW

Marriage, Divorce and Happiness

MARRIAGE, anarchists hold, is an unnecessary condition on which to base a union, whether temporary or permanent, between a man and woman. A licence permitting them to sleep together should not add or detract from a love relationship. Unfortunately marriage is a part of the social pattern, a status which women in particular are ambitious to attain with all its supposed accompanying securities.

The law makes provision for a woman and her children deserted by an erring husband by securing for her part of his income. As far as we know no such law exists for the protection of the male and his children who may be left by the wife!

We are not arguing in favour of males having *no* responsibility for their offspring but rather pointing to the economic basis of marriage which has little to do with love.

Upholders of the marriage institution tend to stress the "spiritual" nature of marriage which, they argue, is necessary for emotional stability. Many devout Christians go further and maintain that it is sinful for a man and woman to live together without the blessings of the Church and regard a civil marriage as not valid.

We have to admit that most people feel insecure without some form of marriage, but the high rate of divorce, apart from separations which are not legalised and are therefore not taken into account in divorce statistics, would indicate that marriage does not necessarily provide the security for a life-long relationship sought so strenuously by moralists. Indeed, objective investigators into the sexual behaviour of the human male and female have found that extra-marital relationships are common practise, and therefore marriage as such does not guarantee fidelity or provide the emotional security that we are assured are two of its chief functions. Neither does marriage alone create a stable background for children. If a man and woman get no pleasure out of their relationship their misery must reflect on the children who are too often used, even when parents are separated, as a means by which one of the partners can continue to have a hold over the other.

Opponents of the anarchist view very often accuse us of only advocating "free love" to satisfy our "promiscuous tendencies". Certainly definitions of "love" will no doubt vary, but anarchists generally have a responsible attitude to sex, notably their honesty with each other which makes a refreshing change from the bourgeois attitude of concealment which is the normal practise in our society.

The underhand sexual adventures of Mr. & Mrs. Bloggs are odious to anarchists and are usually the result of a desire to have their "bit of sex" but to retain the marital status for reasons which are generally not very "spiritual" —economic security on the woman's part, business and social considerations on the male side, or the common excuse, "For the sake of the children," etc.

Reformers of marriage and divorce, whose efforts sometimes deserve our support, do not argue as we do that marriage is unnecessary. But they do advocate an honest and less hypocritical approach to the problem. They maintain that happiness is more important than an adherence to a religious dogma or ridiculous social code, and recognise that these combined forces often get in the way of happiness and keep couples together even when their relationship has become impossible.

When people are only bound by law and not by religious dogma it is possible in this country to get a divorce after complying with various legal formalities which may take years, but the existing laws are far from satisfactory or humane.

To the radical reformation of the divorce laws men like Robert Pollard* give much of their time and knowledge. Mr. Pollard's latest book is an illuminating document which deals with the history of divorce in Britain and the attempts of the Church and other interested parties to obstruct divorce law reform. We hope that his plea for a more rational approach to the problems of divorce will be taken up by others and pave the way for even greater reforms in the future.

We, however, go further than most reformers when we maintain that rational and intelligent people do not need laws to regulate behaviour, and that by contracting out of these "human institutions" which are destructive of happiness anarchists are attempting to responsibly destroy social patterns which have been proved inadequate to meet human needs.

*Lawyer and Justice of the Peace for Middlesex. Also on the Executive Committee of the Abortion Law Reform Association.

THE PROBLEMS OF DIVORCE by **Robert S. W. Pollard. Watts 12s. 6d.**

CINEMA

Chrysanthemum Petals

THE BOYHOOD OF DR. NOGUCHI
(Curzon Cinema).

ALTHOUGH one is rather appalled at the exploitation of sadism in *Camp on Blood Island*, and by that wholesaler of atrocities Lord Russell in *Knights of Bushido*, the obverse of the coin is apt to be almost as distressing. The metamorphosis of Marlon Brando into a retrospective anti-Nazi in *The Young Lions* adds to the vague conviction that the Germans were 90 per cent. anti-Nazi and now *The Boyhood of Dr. Noguchi* shows us the picture of the 'good' Japanese. Dr. Hideyo Noguchi was a Japanese doctor who worked on bacteriology, specialising in syphillis, yellow fever. The course of his work led him into all countries and he won many awards and citations. He died from yellow fever after a life devoted to service.

Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword;* her analysis of Japanese society and psychology, points out this ambivalence in the Japanese character symbolized by the chrysanthemum, the appreciation of beauty, delicacy and refinement of living whilst the sword symbolizes the authoritarian and totalitarian aspect of Japan.

The Camp on Blood Island obviously has gone for the sword whilst *Sayonara* and *Boyhood of Dr. Noguchi* go in for chrysanthemums. Just as 'lilies that fester smell worse than weeds' the odour of chrysanthemums is apt to be a bit heady and 'Dr. Noguchi' goes a little too far in proving that all the Japanese are really 'good' Japanese like Dr. Noguchi, who, suffering from a maimed hand, worked hard at his studies, was inspired by his mother to work for humanity and we leave him departing for the big city to work for a doctor.

But midst the petals of the chrysanthemum lurks the sword of Bushido. The whole educational system and family structure of Japan appears authoritarian, and totalitarian. The class bows to the teacher *en masse* as he arrives and departs; learning and hard work are held in holy reverence as ends in themselves. The subordinate position of women is never questioned.

The film is approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education for showing, which proves that these ideas are not yet in disfavour in post-war Japan.

Both the tarring and white-washing of ex-enemy peoples are undesirable, what is needed is a human approach to the Japanese, Germans, Italians, Russians and all peoples showing all their faults, and all their virtues.

The Boyhood of Dr. Noguchi (which runs only 50 minutes) could form part of a triple bill which *Children of Hiroshima* and *Camp on Blood Island* which might produce a fine confused state of mind in the audience. Alternatively it might be just better to boycott *Camp on Blood Island*.

J.R.

Freedom
THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

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Public Services: Whose Responsibility

Continued from p. 1

...ilable to take its place, and not ... the grounds that the number of ...sumers does not warrant it being ...intained.

...r what moral and social grounds, ...nstance, can it be argued that ...ple living in isolated country ...tricts are not entitled to the same ...vices as people living in densely ...pulated cities? There is no moral ...social argument for such discrim...tion unless one is also prepared ...assert that those members of the ...mmunity who grow our daily ...d and who often perforce live in ...rsely populated areas are less ...rthy than the City's teeming thou...ds of clerks and bookkeepers. ...a public service which is geared ...financial considerations must in...itably sacrifice those of public ...ed; it must discriminate between ...services which are "economic" and ...those which are not, and indulge in ...the all-too-familiar "gimmicks" of ...siness advertising which are aim...at inducing the public to want ...what they do not need just for the ...sake of keeping the wheels of indus...try turning.

Big business thrives on waste and ...artificial wants, but why should ...London Transport's Chairman be so ...worried that fewer people are using ...public transport? Only because the ...more people who travel the more ...are the tickets issued and paid for. ...By contrast it will be noted the ...Metropolitan Water Board issues ...advertisements exhorting us to save ...water, to repair our leaking taps ...(indeed they will send somebody ...round to do the work for nothing!). ...Who for instance has seen advertise...ments issued by the hospitals en...couraging us to make more use of ...the hospitals? Yet the Electricity ...and Gas Boards vie with one an...other to win our support for their ...respective services and to encourage ...us to burn more of their commodi...ties!

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A PUBLIC service is a public necessity and as such the responsibility for the whole community and not just of those who use it. For, as we pointed out on the occasion of another (that time, partial), stoppage of London Transport in 1954*: "Public Transport is not only for the benefit of those who use it to reach their places of work, or for their pleasure; it equally benefits the employer, public and private, who, because of the planning chaos of our large cities has to draw his labour power from outlying parts of the city. And without public transport the theatres, large stores, cinemas and restaurants concentrated in the centre of London might as well close their doors . . . Yet in fact what is being attempted all along is to make only the people who actually use public transport pay to maintain a service which ultimately is of direct value to the whole community, from landlords to shopkeepers, from business and industrial undertakings to the entertainment industry. Let us add in passing that even property values are enhanced by proximity to transport services, a benefit which the landlord reaps in increased rent but for which he makes no contribution."

To these observations we would now add yet another: If working hours in the large cities were staggered not only would a smaller transport service adequately deal with the same number of people, but they would also travel in greater comfort and with less congestion on the roads. *It is not the users of public transport who oppose such a plan, but their employers, who neither use it nor subsidise it for operating in such a wasteful manner!*

★

IN our editorial on the 1954 stoppage we concluded that there was only one way to ensure maximum efficiency of public transport in London:

"The buses and underground trains should be run by the workers themselves in the interests of the community as a whole. These interests can easily be ascertained by periodic consultation with the public at local levels. Abolition of fares, and with it the major part of the bureaucratic machine, ticket punchers, inspectors, ticket counters, cashiers, etc. Then even with paying the busmen a proper wage the cost of running an efficient service will be less than it is now and will be met out of the rates."

That this was not such a fantastic suggestion as some might have supposed is demonstrated by an article in the *Sunday Pictorial* (April 13, 1958) written by Mr. Harry Knight, General Secretary of the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians, in which he proposes:

Do away with passenger fares. Make travel on the Railways a "free" social service.

In place of fares, levy a tax of 2s. 6d. a week each on both employers and employees. Collect this "fares tax" with the usual National Health Insurance contribution.

Such a tax would provide nearly £300 million a year as against the 1956 passenger traffic revenue of £263 million. (Some local authority receipts are not known and are not therefore included in that figure).

The tax receipts would balance all but a small percentage of the TOTAL national passenger receipts on fares.

Freight charges would continue to be levied as at present.

There would be big savings in costs: Out would go the elaborate schedule of charges.

Printing and issuing tickets, collecting fares, manning booking offices, selling and accounting for tickets, ticket collection and inspection, and the whole passenger accounts organisation, all would disappear.

Mr. Knight refers to a few minor "snags" but adds that

The biggest snag of all—as with all new ideas—would be to overcome the rooted opposition to any fundamental changes.

Yet nothing less than a revolutionary plan will solve the problem.

Which is what we said nearly four years ago when we concluded our article with these words:

This may sound like "idealistic moonshine" to some. If it does, may we suggest that those people just pause awhile and think of what the situation in public transport will be like in say ten years' time if the present attitude of the Transport Authorities continues unchanged.

What better time for both the public and transport workers "to pause awhile and think" than the present, with a complete stoppage of London buses on our hands and a railway strike just round the corner?

*London Transport (FREEDOM, Oct. 23, 1954), reprinted in *Freedom Selections*, Vol. 4, 1954, pp. 313-314.

PEOPLE AND IDEAS

PULL UP THE LADDER, JACK . . .

HOW Londoners have enjoyed the bus strike—the first week at least! Motorists doing their good neighbour act, clippies doing their spring cleaning, drivers doing their gardening, West Indians doing the Science Museum. Everybody with a reason for getting to work late, a new crop of jokes, an inexhaustible topic for conversation, a reopening of the discussion on whether traffic jams are caused by cars or buses, people sniffing the petrol fumes and swearing that they're better than diesel fumes. And the evening papers full of sloppy-copy: sensible shoes for walking, "Relax those shoulders and hands, walk from the hips not the knees". "London can take it. Everyone is so cheerful and helpful, it's just like the Blitz or one of those disasters . . . "

Just like the Blitz—what extraordinary things people say. How we love to dramatise every trivial and temporary discomfort. Yet one knows vaguely the feeling behind the absurd over-emphasis of that remark. What people enjoy is a break from the meaningless routine of their lives. "Tired? I've never felt fitter," said a stockbroker walking to Throgmorton Street, echoing in a curious way the remarks made by a girl interviewed by BBC Television after walking from London to Aldermaston. "Tired?" she said. "I've never felt happier in all my life."

In his recent book on *The Blitz*, Constantine Fitz Gibbon, drew this important lesson from the bombing of London:

" . . . during the Blitz, the number of people with neurotic illnesses or mental disorders attending clinics or hospitals actually declined. There was no increase in insanity; there were less suicides; drunkenness declined by over 50 per cent.; there was less disorderly behaviour in public . . . is it not possible at least that this relaxation of social rigidity . . . the friendliness of people towards one another during the Blitz, the feeling of excitement among the young, of being very alive, of the sweeping away of social and sexual barriers?"

Release from the tension of looking after number one, from the ethic of Pull Up the Ladder, Jack, I'm Aboard (or whatever your version of that well-known saying is). Release from the violence that a competitive society does to our deepest biological needs. Here (from *The Observer*, 5/4/53, writing about the East Coast floods of that year), is the typical comment on this often-observed phenomenon of release:

"Moreover, once the tragic side of the disaster had receded, people scarcely bothered to disguise the fact that they were enjoying themselves. They seemed to welcome the chance to work without sparing themselves, in co-operation with others . . . Nobody was worried by the thought that he was working to make profits for someone else . . . "

★

IN fact, we are all so fed up with the values of a competitive society that we positively revel in their frank avowal by some plausible rogue on the stage. In the best of the songs from *My Fair Lady*, Stanley Holloway sings with enormous gusto as Alfred P. Doolittle,

"The Lord above made man to help his neighbour, but—
With a little bit of luck, with a little bit of luck
When he comes around you won't be at home."

And in Osborne's *The Entertainer*, Archie Rice leers across the footlights as the Union Jack backcloth is lowered:

"We're all out for good old number one,
Yes number one is good enough for me.
God bless you."

In *Expresso Bongo*, the musical play by Julian More and Wolf Mankowitz at the Saville Theatre, a cynical trio declare:

"Nothing is for nothing, that's the human plan,
Line up for the rat race, man must live on man.
Nothing is for nothing, nothing is for free,
I'll look after you Jack, when you look after me."

While the theme reaches its ultimate treatment in Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* where a voice off stage asks "What does a man live by?" and MacHeath answers:

"What does a man live by? By grinding, sweating,
Defeating, beating, cheating, eating, some other man,
For he can only live by sheer forgetting
Forgetting that he ever was a man."

At this stage the smile has been wiped off our faces; it's too close to be comfortable. It's going too far. But here, *advanced in all seriousness* are the rules for success from the conclusion of the series on "How to Make a Million" in one of the Beaverbrook papers:

"Be tough. Be so tough that sentiment has no place in your life. Be so tough that if your dearest friend stands in the way of a business deal you can sweep him aside.

"Be ambitious: Be so ambitious that it becomes an overriding consideration in your life. Smash your way onwards as if everyone was your foe, to be trampled on in the jungle of commerce. And preferably wear hobnailed boots for the job. . . .

"Develop a trading sense. Seize the bargains before the other man can get them. If he complains that you took advantage of his simplicity, ignore his complaints and damn the consequences.

"Apply your mind to your job . . . Think day and night about money making. Live with it, dream about it, talk about it . . . you should be utterly devoted to one aim, and utterly ruthless in its prosecution."

★

NO wonder that as an escape from this people enjoy the sense of being "all in it together" that they get, paradoxically, from shared danger, suffering or hardship, and even from the shared discomfort of a transport strike. But what a strange and precarious basis for the feeling of human community! In his *Memoirs of a Public Baby*, Philip O'Connor observes that

"What preeisely the community was in war-time was more clearly revealed than in peace-time. What is essential in a community is a gearing of self-interest to collective interest; since it lacked this, its demands in emergencies were a theatrical performance of unity, of patriotic bonds, that was absolutely missing in fact. There developed an awesomely embarrassing manner of comradeship, of almost theatrical equality between self-conscious public service workers, for instance, and their social superiors; both sides engaged in a charade of being together that owed its continued existence to an immense fund of social sentimentality; and this sentimentality, interestingly, was produced by the lack of genuine unity it concealed."

Casting this cold eye on the structure of war-time 'national unity' one wonders which expression is nearer the truth, Mr. Fitz Gibbon's "relaxation of social rigidity" or Mr. O'Connor's "immense fund of social sentimentality". Perhaps the answer is that both are true and that one reacted upon the other, that the breaking-down of social inhibitions was such a relief that, under the conditions which gave rise to it, it was emotionally over-emphasised. "They're more like friends than neighbours" a woman said at the time, indicating what neighbours are like under normal conditions. What extreme situations always reveal is the enormous untapped resources of human solidarity which are normally stultified by our manner of living, by the values we honour, and by our social passivity. The slightest or most spurious emergencies bring them out. Think of all those motorists who will regret the end of the bus strike because they will no longer have an excuse for being good neighbours!

C.W.

Christian (& Moslem) Attitudes to Sex

ALL the great religions seem to be the same when it comes to sex. The following quotations have been taken from *Regain* (organ of the *Mouvement Independant des Auberges de la Jeunesse*), where they appear under the general title *Rire Amer* ("Bitter Laughter"), and are quoted from the Catholic Magazine *Filles et Garçons*.

For the Christians:

"During the engagement the conduct to be observed is the following:

1st. Regarding kissing, the question often asked concerns the kiss on the mouth. It is clear that the kiss full on the mouth is for the married couple. But the discreet kiss with lips closed does not appear to be forbidden, on condition that the intention remains correct . . . The close embraces of two bodies, especially lying down, are embraces for married couples only. The more discreet kind of embraces, those which are made by persons sitting side by side, are suitable for engaged couples.

2nd. The engaged girl, who, owing to natural feminine tenderness, seats herself on the knees of her fiancé, ought to know that she is taking up an unwise position . . . She should not permit herself to do so except for serious reasons, for example, to overcome a certain coldness of relationship which renders the necessary intimacy of souls impossible.

3rd. All caresses given under a girl's dress are forbidden. Caresses on the dress should be delicate, measured, made without insistence and without pressure from the hands."

So much for the followers of God, now for the worshippers of his younger brother Allah:

"The handshake between men and women is condemned by the Moslem *Association Educative et Sociale*, because the Koran forbids persons of different sexes to look each other in the eyes."

* * *

In translating the above I found some difficulty, in the first extract, in avoiding unintentional humour. I do not think that I have succeeded, for there is something innately ridiculous in these detailed prescriptions. The man who drew them up can have had no sense of humour. However it would be a mistake to see only the funny side. *Regain*, whose position, judging by the issue I possess, the only one I have seen, November-December, 1956, is libertarian in outlook and considers these things as fit subject for *bitter* laughter. Because, however ridiculous these rules may appear to us, the people who advocate them have the power to enforce them and we have not the power to do very much about it.

In almost all countries of the world, whether Moslem, Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist one meets with taboos such as these, although not usually so ridiculously and baldly stated. It is not an uncommon thing nowadays for people to say that all the great religions are the same in their moral teachings. Certainly it is true with regard to the sexual relationship. *All* religions to-day are hostile to its free expression. Their moral teachings on other matters are often noble, but in dealing with this matter they display a mean-spiritedness of the lowest and most contemptible kind.

It differs in the way in which it is expressed. The Moslems seem to be more concerned with keeping women in tutelage and right away from men as far as can be done, the Catholics accept that a fairly close contact between the sexes must take place, but they endeavour to regulate it by obsessional little rules. What both systems in fact achieve is the production of neurotics. The poverty and degradation in both Moslem and Catholic countries, and their social instability, the chronic wars, dictatorships, treacheries and assassinations which fill their history, may not be wholly unassociated with their attitude to sex.

People who are brought up with the belief that their natural impulses are evil and dangerous can hardly be expected to behave sanely in adult life. What is amazing is not that mankind is always at war but that there is ever any peace anywhere. It is a standing miracle.

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

Busmen Need Railmen

☛ Continued from p. 1

The London Transport Executive might take tougher action if the London busmen tried that. It might declare a lockout. Then would be the time for a complete stoppage, with a good chance of public sympathy for the locked-out workers and resentment against the Executive.

Few Bonds of Sympathy

Or the men could operate a series of rolling, lightning strikes, by pulling out separate garages or districts each day, without advance warning. This would be very inconvenient for the public, but it would be only for a day at a time, not for weeks, the busmen would not lost so much in wages, and if the LTE were provoked into a lock-out, again public resentment could more easily be directed towards the Executive.

The question of labour disputes in a public service is always a ticklish one, for the poorer section of the public are always the most likely to suffer. Unfortunately there is so little feeling of responsibility for service to the public apparent among the public transport workers that few bonds of sympathy are created in advance. In this, of course, the organisation of the industry from above and the centralisation of control in the hands of bureaucrats who have no contact with the public is partly to blame. For the bus crews, keeping to a schedule is more important than picking up passengers or getting them to their destination as quickly as possible, for their jobs depend upon it.

Thus the people who control the bus service have no contact with the public and the bus workers who have contact with the public have no control over the bus service. Not the best way to run public transport you may think. And you'd be right.

The anarchist solution is that the workers who actually do the work, and thus provide the service for the public, should organise and control that work themselves. In that way, public needs could be directly satisfied by the people who have taken on the job and who have immediate contact with the public for that purpose.

Does Service Matter?

But this, of course, pre-supposes that *service* is what matters. Well it would in an anarchist society but it doesn't to-day. For the London Transport Executive finance is the important thing—not necessarily because Sir John Elliott and his colleagues want it that way, but because everything in a capitalist society has to make a profit to survive. For most London Transport workers their job is just a job, for wages—for the same reason.

And so there is conflict and will be as long as finance remains the guiding force instead of peoples' needs. And the anarchist solution —workers' control—depends upon the workers doing their job because they like it and wanting to take responsibility for it. Do they? Will they?

In the meantime the busmen have a struggle for a standard of living on their hands. Their only hope lies in the railwaymen coming out as well—or at least the Underground workers coming out. And if the busmen go under, the Government will proceed to attack the whole working class piece by piece.

It's time that trade unionists learnt that unity is strength!

The Algerian Slaughter

☛ Continued from p. 1

economic factors involved. On the one hand the majority are in favour of the war and feel that their patriotism calls for the retention of the Empire whatever the cost, yet on the other the war becomes a burden on the economy which affects their pockets and this is unpopular. But it is regarded as "defeatism" to talk of Algerian independence.

A committee of 15 Paris University professors plans to launch a campaign for ending the Algerian war, based on the simple but obvious premise that independence is inevitable in the end and therefore negotiations must begin by recognising the right of the Algerian people to self-determination. This will be hard to take for most Frenchmen.

It would be easier for the working-class Frenchman were it not for the fact that the cost of the war in North Africa has been largely cancelled out by an increase in production (45 per cent. since 1950), which has meant that their living standard has not dropped. The fact that it *could* have been considerably improved is presumably outside their calculations. The middle class, and business in general have not been adversely affected either but on the whole have done well.

Nevertheless this state of affairs does not allow for any increase in expenditure on the war. Although the great majority support its continuance, nobody wishes to pay its cost. The economy is just now beginning what may be a severe inflationary cycle, wage claims are starting and prices will rise. At last perhaps—if not on humane grounds —a few million Frenchmen will see the folly of their Algerian war.

What is questionable is whether the kind of Government which comes into being (at the time of writing there is actually no Government) can conduct a policy calculated to keep itself in power for any "reasonable" length of time. For as soon as a policy tends towards what the potential opposition to that policy considers to be too far out of line, it withdraws support and the Government falls. The Government which then follows must therefore start afresh with the same problem.

It has been suggested that there is a possibility that a "strong-man, militarist" Government may eventually obtain power, perhaps with de Gaulle as its leader. Certainly many Frenchmen would welcome this, but it is to be hoped that the Radical, Socialist (and Communist) Parties are sufficiently strong to avoid such a calamity. There can be no question that the Europeans in Algeria would be happy to see such men as M. Lacoste (specialists in repression) wielding supreme power.

On balance it seems to us that the combination of economic pressure and a slightly more liberal attitude in Paris towards the rebellion will sooner or later bring about a settlement and peace in Algeria. Unsatisfactory to both sides no doubt, and for the most doubtful motives—but peace nevertheless. But the essential is that the senseless slaughter and horrifying torture of men and women (whether they are Algerian or French) should cease.

H.W.

We need many more NEW READERS and your help to reach them!

Reflections on 'Ordinary People'

YOU could see what kind of person A. was the day he came up. The traditional method of initiation into the benefits of residential life in a provincial University was the Freshers' concert. The newcomers were required, or rather forced to organise a kind of variety show a few days after their arrival, while the old hands sat waiting for a few minutes, until an appropriate collective piece was on the stage, and then let fly with pea-shooters, bags of flour, and anything else that came to hand. After all, that sort of thing needs continual practice, you don't expect to become an expert marksman by sitting around waiting for a cabinet minister to come and make a speech.

Anyway, while some of us were trying to look as inconspicuous as possible, dodge the missiles, and with pacifism in our hearts even if not in our minds, couldn't even be bothered to throw them back, A. was in the forefront of the struggle, and very nearly turned the tables on our assailants. At least he earned their respect. A good start means quite a lot in a small community and A.'s career through the common room was crowned with laurels, until a year later, it was he who organised the flour-throwing at the next Freshers' concert.

Despite all the nonsense that is talked about the benefits of University life, there is a certain amount of truth in it, and through living in easygoing relationships with people, one comes to appreciate many of one's fellow students' qualities as being good, even though they may have had a flattening effect at the first encounter. They may seem superficial, loud-mouthed, irresponsible and childish at first, but when that impression has worn off, and that can take an unfortunately long time, it becomes obvious that they are what is called "decent chaps" and that most of the peculiarities of their behaviour are reactions and protests against the conditions of student life.

Later on one even came to admire A. He was elected to the Hall committee. The dinner table over which he presided was the brightest and most enjoyable to be on. Any attempt to discuss 'serious' topics such as politics or religion was quickly silenced by a deftly thrown piece of cabbage. Thinking back to student discussions on these matters, he was certainly right.

Needless to say he was appointed social secretary in his final year, and convinced everyone that he was the best social secretary in the College, better than anyone had known for several years. Not only was he most sociable, but he organised resistance to authority. The rules laid down that each Hall was allowed to hold only one social each term. A. organised this, and also several parties, thereby evading the restrictions on socials. The doors of the women's Halls were locked and barred at 10.30 but no-one knew the secret entrances and exits so well as A., although the effort seemed to mean more to him than the reward—"Don't you make those kind of suggestions about my girl friend!" he would shout. In many things though, he had the right sense of values, and one often envied him as, sitting amongst a pile of streamers with the congratulations of hundreds on having made such a wonderful party fading in his ears, he would leaf through, without a look of too much concern, Tolansky's "Introduction to Atomic Physics".

He didn't really expect to pass finals at the first attempt, and so while some of us were wandering around, looking for the few loopholes through which a science graduate can do something useful, A. had to spend another year at College.

I met him again recently in Tottenham Court Road, and explained that I was teaching. "Jolly good show, old chap, hope you manage to keep the kids in order. I've just got back from Christmas Island. Conditions out there are pretty lousy, but the woman situation is absolutely appalling. But we made some super bangs, don't you agree?".

These thoughts passed through my mind while listening to a broadcast interview with the gentleman who had revealed (although he himself disclaimed that the news was new), the facts about the American bombers setting off for Russia, after false alarms had appeared on radar screens.

"It's rather frightening," broke in the interviewer, "to think of the people behind this kind of thing. They live in the middle of Nebraska, 45 feet underground, and with nothing but banks of dials and instruments to guide them, they have the power to destroy the world." "No, no, not at all," came the reassuring reply, "they are quite ordinary people, just like you or I. Nebraska is a lovely part of America, that is if you like flat scenery, and they live quite normal lives with their wives and children. Play quite a lot of golf, too."

In the BBC "Letter from America", Alistair Cooke gave another piece of information. Whoever was watching the radar screen in Omaha must have had one piece of history dinned into his head. That was the story of the radar operator who, by ignoring a not very clear signal had allowed the American fleet to be destroyed at Pearl Harbour.

So there they are. In Aldermaston, Omaha, Care Carnervarel, or wherever the Russian government tests its rock[et] and nuclear weapons. Just ordi[nary] people like you or I, enjoying much [the] same pleasures, thinking much the [same] thoughts, with cautionary tales from [his]tory firmly fixed in their minds, diffe[ring] only by the genetic properties wh[ich] make one person a brilliant scientist [and] the other a potential infantryman. [It] in this context, the chief point of simil[ar]ity between these people, and m[any] others, is their willingness to accept [to] work on behalf of the State, not out [of] any positive desire to further the ca[use] of the West (or East), to carry the dem[o]cratic (or communist) way of [life] throughout the world, but simply bec[ause] the work, *in itself*, is interesting, the co[n]ditions are fairly pleasant in gen[eral] and because they have no definite ob[jec]tion to it on any other grounds.

To say that they are just ordi[nary] people is the most devastating criti[cism] one can make . . . of 'ordinary peop[le]

P.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

ANTI-WAR FILMS

DEAR COMRADES,

The remarks of P.S. on the lack of genuine anti-war films are generally true in regard to Hollywood and Wardour Street, but they cannot be applied to films produced on the Continent. Anti-war themes were common in many Italian and French films made during the second half of the 'forties and in the early 'fifties. Particular films which stand out in my memory are *Berliner Ballade* (German), *Unwanted Women* (made in Italy with an international cast) and *The Last Bridge* (Austrian-Jugoslav). Their message can perhaps be summed up in an exchange between a German and a French woman in *Unwanted Women*. To the demand of the French woman: "Say, who lost the war anyway?" the German replies: "Who didn't?"

Mention must also be made of the Japanese film *Children of Hiroshima* and of two British films made in the last decade: *The Village* and *The Young Lovers*. *The Young Lovers* was especially concerned to point the evil of having to choose between either 'East' or 'West'.

Very few of these films received a general release, but they still appear now and again in the programmes of repertory cinemas and film societies. (Ironically enough, the last public showing of *The Village* in London was as a supporting film to the *Dam Busters*. It is to be hoped that it provided a salutary balance to this glorification of an atrocity).

Yours fraternally,

May 4th, 1958. S. E. PARKER.

★

Freedom's Contributors

DEAR SIR,

The question of whether or not to print letters in FREEDOM from non-anarchists depends on what kind of paper you want FREEDOM to be. If you want FREEDOM to be a journal read only by anarchists then you are justified in only printing letters from anarchists. If, as I hope, you want FREEDOM to be read by non-anarchists you must be prepared to publish letters by them. Anyway, if a person reads FREEDOM he must have some interest in anarchism and can be regarded as a potential anarchist. In giving such a person the opportunity to air his opinions you also give your anarchist readers the opportunity of writing letters showing him the error of his ways. I would enjoy reading some controversial leters and replies in FREEDOM and am sure it would encourage sympathetic non-anarchists to become regular subscribers to the paper.

Edmonton, Alberta, May 5. W.G.

[*We thought we had made it quite clear* FREEDOM, April 12), *that our columns were not open exclusively to anarchists when we wrote that* "FREEDOM *exists as a medium for those who seek libertarian anti-authoritarian solutions to all the problems of society. We see no point in giving space to the authoritarian arguments which we can see and experience in practise every moment of our lives*".

We also wrote! "FREEDOM *is read by more non-anarchists than anarchists—and this from our point of view is as it should be, if we are to make any headway.*"—EDITORS].

MEETINGS AN[D] ANNOUNCEMENT[S]

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP

Every Sunday at 7.30 at
THE MALATESTA CLUB.
32 Percy Street,
Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

LECTURE - DISCUSSIONS

MAY 18.—Tony Weaver *on*
EDUCATION IN THE KIBBU[TZ]
MAY 25.—*Closed.*

JUNE 1.—Alan Albon *on*
THE PLACE OF AGRICULTUR[E]
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