

EDITORIAL

NEW price 50 pence; still not a low price unfortunately, but lower than the 1986 price. Printing costs are reduced by cutting the number of pages (not the amount of reading material), but they are still not covered by a retail price of 50p, so we remain dependent on donations until the circulation increases by some 500. If you buy the paper regularly please take out a subscription; the packing and postage costs less than the combined mark-up of distributors and retailers.

Our editorial policy

Freedom is an anarchist magazine, which means it is against all governments, bosses and coercive institutions of every kind, and in favour of voluntary co-operation between sovereign individuals. We seek to show thinking people that government is an unnecessary evil, and anarchism a sound and sensible idea.

Opinions differ among anarchists about how freedom from coercion might be achieved. We ourselves tend to the opinion that the anarchist revolution is now, that we work towards the free society by siezing every opportunity to widen the scope for individuals in our own society, rather than hoping for the millenium to come suddenly.

However we do not restrict the pages of Freedom to our particular viewpoint. Editorial policy for more than a century has been to provide a forum for all shades of anarchist opinion, so long as articles are clear, readable and not too long.

This is not to say we publish everything alleged to be anarchist. It is sometimes alleged, for instance, that the Guy Fawkes conspirators were anarchists because they attempted to blow up the government of the day; but their objective was to replace one government by another, so they were not anarchists at all, and an article from them claiming they were anarchists (supposing they were alive today) would not be acceptable. Nor would articles from self-styled anarchists advocating participation in government, conscription, censorship, or that so-and-so should be jailed.

Objections to anarchism and denunciations of Freedom's editorial attitude are welcome as letters, not more than 500 words.

Charlie Crute, David Peers, Donald Room, Francis Wright, editors

MILITANCY but not here

THERE is a heartening surge of militancy around. Not so much here, unfortunately. We have a vicious, self-serving, discredited government, yet the only opposition seems to be restricted to speculation whether the general election shall be in the spring or the autumn. That shall be decided in the interests of the government and after it we shall have a government. We look abroad. Current foreign news has a reminiscent ring to people of a certain age, students, strikes, France, China, a super-power trying to extract itself from a colonialist suppression enterprise. There's no real connection of course, just the effects of age. What is heartening is the grass-roots basis of these movements.

The first was the French students' rising. It came just too late for the last issue. It was, on the surface, a triumph for street militancy. The right wing government was arrogant in its assumption of a mandate to deal with 'socialist' softness. The security forces, never shirkers in France, were implementing this on the streets. The government announced some university 'reforms' and was rocked by the backlash (and someone died). The proposed action has been shelved. This is not, however, a return to the heady days of the 1960s. With all its limitations and narcissism (and how smug we were!) that was addressed to wider concerns; the word 'lifestyle' hovers. Last month's French government cave-in was to the potential enmity of the privileged, seeing their children gassed and batonned by the CRS. A comparable move in Britain in 1984 was sorted out without riots, middle class pressure was enough to frighten Tory conviction politicians.

The achievement of the French students was to rock the government's confidence and credibility. This helped the impact of the public sector strikes, notably on the railways. These are a real triumph. The strikers have out-manouevred not only the government (with, of course, CRS support) but their own hide-bound bureaucratic unions. Local committees have alarmed responsible labour movement negotiators and the CGT and Communist Party are scrabbling around trying to get a toehold.

The attempt is to rally the left to avoid the need for 'co-habitation'. President Mitterand is busy playing both ends against the middle, meeting strikers, insisting on the need for rigorous economic policies and generally consolidating his own position. Responsible people pop out of the woodwork. The students' organising committee condemns acts of vandalism, committed of course by outside agitators. They call for young people to become registered voters. The establishment insists that the railway strike is 'political', as if it could be anything else. And, as all the official politicians all salvage what they can, the ones who are really worried are the CGT and the Communist Party: "For the first time since the war, a desire for grass-roots organisation on a national scale has appeared. The unions are being forced to support a protest movement by workers, not the other way round." (Henri Vacquin, industrial sociologist - whatever that is).

Things are less clear cut in China. Students have built up a wave of demonstrations, in the face of increasing official clamp-downs. They demand 'democracy', but it is difficult, at this

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distance through various filters, to know exactly what this means. The heroes in a movement showing great courage seem to be Xue de Yuan and another 'self-styled released criminal' who have been arrested for selling illegal publications and poems advocating 'bourgeois' democracy and freedom and stirring up anarchism. There is parallel industrial unrest, sufficient to produce an official circular pointing out dangers and giving guidelines for dealing with them (eagerly reported from Wapping). How much dabbling by government factions goes on is also uncertain.

Student protests alone are limited to publicity. Industrial action tends to have limited objectives. Yet both, organised by people for their own reasons, have an impact beyond such carping. And they encourage us all.

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FREEDOM

anarchist magazine vol 48 no 1 January 1987

published by Freedom Press
(in Angel Alley)
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

ISSN 0016 0504

printed by Aldgate Press
typeset by Mums the Word
distributed to bookshops by A Distribution

THE ANARCHIST SWITCHBOARD is a free access space run according to Free-space principles, that is, that all activities are open to anyone who fairly, sincerely, and nonviolently wishes to participate, and without regard for monetary considerations. The Anarchist Switchboard is maintained entirely by contributions from people who use the space; we receive no grants or funding from corporations, governmental agencies, or other sources. We are attempting to create one small space that is as free as possible from the capitalist-statist world of commerce and commodity consumption. We see anarchism as not only a goal, an agenda for a future society, but also as a process. By implementing and practicing the process of anarchism now, we feel that the advent of a better society will be hastened. 'Process' and 'goal' cannot be

separated. As such, we seek to put into practice our visions of how people will relate to and interact with the world.

The Anarchist Switchboard is a member group of the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation (SRAF) and of the New York Anti-Authoritarian Network.

If you would like to be on our mailing list, send your name and address (and if you are near New York your phone number) to **The Anarchist Switchboard, 324 East Ninth Street, New York, NY 10003**, phone (212) 475-8312.

The Libertarian Education conference, organised by *Lib Ed* magazine, was held in Leicester on October 4, and proved to be a great success. The attendance - 156 people - was far greater than originally anticipated, and reflects a revival of popular interest in alternative ideas in education, both inside and outside the state system. The ideas represented at the conference arise from a number of different interests, from education at home, small schools and free schools, to state funding for alternative schools and alternatives within the state system. The debate was therefore extremely lively, and one which the magazine will continue to cover.

The main initiative that has come out of the conference has been a proposal to start a Libertarian Education Network. This will provide an information library, national contact list, recommended bibliography, and a means for the exchange of information, news, articles, etc. to subscribers. Out of this it is hoped that local and special interest groups will be formed, and together with an improved circulation of information, this will enable the movement to build on the current wave of interest. Membership of the Network will cost £5 per year, which will include a subscription (three issues) to the magazine.

Lib Ed

**The Cottage, The Green, Leire,
Lutterworth LE17 5HL**

Take back the land!

Any Anarchists in the Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire area interested in forming a rambling club for monthly-bimonthly walks in the Chilterns write to: **Box A, 11 Ridgmount St, Bedford, MK42 9HR.**

London Anarchist Forum

Meetings resume 16 January 1987

(Programme for the term will be announced at the meeting and, we hope, published in the next *Freedom*).

Fridays 8pm

Mary Ward Centre

42 Queen Square, London WC1

Anarcho Womens Festival

Bristol, 14 + 15 February 1987

St Werburgh's Community Centre, Ho Road.

Gig. Videos. Dressing up. Workshops. Food. Party games. Discussions. Creative Access for disabled. Accommodation.

More details from A-Fems

Box 101, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol

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December Total = £88

Previously acknowledged = £42

1986 Total to date = £44