

5 - 19 July^{Sept} 1982

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News: phone 599804 or 61257 or 666681

Going Out Guide - phone 663083

Distribution - 666681 or 61257

Events Guide - phone 666681

or write to Red Rag c/o

Acorn Bookshop,

17 Chatham St.

Contacting Red Rag

The Thin Red Rag.....



NEWS DIGEST...

W.BERKS JOINT HEALTH TRADE UNION
COMMITTEE/READING T.U. COUNCIL

NHS PAY CAMPAIGN

From NOW until september 22nd

The TUC has called on all affiliated unions to increase support for the national Health Service Workers, and particularly to back the national day of action on sept 22. We are writing to bring you up to date on the action being taken by the 9 NHS unions in Reading and to ask for your support over the next 3 weeks.

Stores and transport staff are on strike at Battle Hospital, and the telephone switchboard is only handling emergency calls and those relating to admissions on that day.

The aim is to reduce Battle to accident and emergency cover only, in line with TUC guidelines, and as the Battle stores serve other hospitals in Reading the effect is being felt there too. The workers would welcome help on the picket line, if you can help, please contact Jim Roy (secretary of W.Berks JTUC) on 583666.

£300/wk is needed to help with strike pay, and while much is already being given, cheques can still be made payable to W.Berks JTUC and sent to Jim Roy c/o WBHA, Gt Western House, Station Rd. Reading.

SEPTEMBER 22nd - national rally of health workers in London, JTUC is organising coaches. Members of other unions welcome, but most helpful support would be to take over the picket lines for the day, enabling more Health Workers to go to the rally. Please contact Jim Roy if you can help, or if you'd like a speaker for branch or workplace meetings, to put the case for 12percent NOW.

The government is getting rattled, the action is increasing. We urge ALL trade unionists to give this campaign the fullest support.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Abstracted from a circular by RTUC and WBH JTUC.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ASBESTOS FEAR AT RT.

Drivers at Reading Transport Old Mill Depot are worried about the danger of asbestos dust drifting across to the garage from the nearby old Courage Brewery site. Workmen at the site are pulling down lagging and the danger to the drivers seems obvious. Courage, however, deny there is any danger to the public or to Reading Transport employees.

Environmental health officers have told Reading Transport to close all doors and windows at the depot.

Airchecks have been made at the depot and have shown that the amount of asbestos in the air is actually below the legal limit. Environmental pressure groups and health groups believe the legal limit to be too high. Unless Norman Tebbit changes his mind and allows a public inquiry into the dangers of asbestos, this may never be ascertained. Unfortunately, in a question of economic expediency (the last thing Britain's flagging industries need is to be inundated with claims for compensation) human beings are dispensable. Any amount of asbestos could be deadly....which is why the concept of the "legal limit" is so much bureaucratic bullshit.

TGWU rep at the depot, Mr Banning, said that he was worried and annoyed that Reading Transport was not consulted before or after the work began.

MOD SNEAKS IN CRUISE

The Rainbow Peace Settlement believe 70 CRUISE missiles have already been flown in by helicopter and secretly installed at Greenham Common RAF/USAF base, although the date set by the MOD is for sometime in 1983. The news was apparently leaked to someone in the Rainbow Peace Settlement at Greenham and the MOD is fobbing off inquiries into the claim. 96 American CRUISE missiles are destined for Greenham Common - so the fact that there remain only 26 to be brought to the base, and that the construction of their specially-built silos is well under way, means that the battle to stop CRUISE missiles at Greenham may already have been lost.

Beautifully avoiding all danger of open confrontation, the MOD has sneaked CRUISE in through the back door. Are you angry?

(Reported) ATTACKS ON WOMEN

* Two women were raped in Prospect Park after being given a lift from Rebecca's nightclub. One of them was raped a second time in Coley Park.

* A 16-year old boy raped a girl in a flat in Tilehurst in February.

* Two women were sexually assaulted in separate incidents in Caversham and Chatham Street, Reading.

Are you angry?

STILL BIRTHS IN BRACKNELL

Four unborn babies died in eleven weeks between May and July on a Bracknell housing estate. It is likely that chemicals used or dumped on the Crown Wood Estate killed them.

Support for Reading University's Women's Group has come from the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, in a motion passed at its national conference. The motion condemned Reading University students for their disbanding of the Women's Group, and backed "women and other systematically disadvantaged groups."

NEWS DIGESTION

What is 'local news' and where does it come from? RedRag has often been criticised for merely commenting on stories from the Post and Chronicle. But after all, those stories are themselves usually culled up out of phone calls to "people qualified to speak on behalf of others" and out of "events that have to be covered". Last week saw the first appearance of the name 'RedRag' in the pages of the Post in a sizeable piece deriving from a slightly comical exchange in the 'Rag', merely because it involved two councillors. Then the sensation-alist banner headlines in the Chronicle Midweek - "Despair of Jobless may lead to Riots", "Grim Prophecy of Trouble to Come" - arose from (or rather, after) a casual conversation with Dan Archer (misquoted, of course) at the Centre for the Unemployed. This quite arbitrary "news item" displeased the Centre's Management Committee. A further insight into the workings of the news factory comes from the fact that no sooner had Mr Archer been told that someone from Management would like a word with him than a Chronicle reporter rang him up to ask him if it was true that he'd been suspended..... What some of us would like to see more of in the 'Rag' is people's own accounts of their life and work, like the pieces on the psychiatric hospital ('inside stories' on the institutions you're involved with may not be as sensational as that - but they're still probably more important than most of the drivel that passes for 'news') or the piece by the hospital telephonist a few weeks back.

Reading
September 2nd 1982

Dear Red Rag,

Having recently moved to Reading from equestrian Ascot I was delighted to discover 'Red Rag' as an alternative to the racist/sexist garbage produced by the 'popular' national and local press. Please accept these few paragraphs as a contribution to your next issue.

As a Socialist and a fairly social sort of Socialist I was keen, early on, to discover where in Reading I might enjoy a drink, a laugh, and indulge in the occasional stimulating conversation.

Umm.....where do I start?

The Boar's Head, well you've got to start somewhere! This I found somewhat lacking in intellectual/social stimulation. The cattle market, fart filled atmosphere was a little difficult to stomach at first, but I braved an hour or so smiling and nodding at the young people I found around me. At one point my glance fell upon a rather large macho chappie with 'Up Yours Argentina' tattooed on his chest. I was promptly called a 'poof' and asked if I wanted to go to Luton in the morning for a National Front rally. I politely declined the invitation and retired home.

Where now? Rebecca's.....? Top Rank....? I think not, after my performance at the Boar's Head I decided to give both venues a miss. After all, it appears the qualification to be a 'hit' at such places is to spend £15 on a young lady making 'low level' sexist conversation, condemning the old men, especially the 'Pakki's' for looking such 'wankers' on the dance floor, then give her the money for a taxi home. Next day, back up the Boar's you must then boast loudly about the act of incredible sexual outrage you committed with the young 'Martini' girl in the back of your car.

I heard from a friend the other day that at a pub called The Dove you can meet Anarchists and Social Workers.

Perhaps I'll go there next week....

Yours in enthusiastic support,
Pete Stevenson

(Dear Pete, Nice letter, I wonder how fairly social sort of Socialist women new to Reading get on? Typist)

MASS PICKET

There will be a mass picket at Heathfields at Slough on Thursday 9th Sept from 12.30 'til 2pm. The picket is in support of 38 workers (GMWU members), who have been unfairly dismissed.

THE STORY RUNS:- The 180 workers in the factory belong to 2 unions - GMWU & SOGAT - according to the nature of their work. Heathfields made a pay offer acceptable to SOGAT but not to GMWU. Four weeks ago, management and GMWU sat down to negotiate. The following day 21 GMWU members received letters - delivered by hand to their homes - dismissing them.

17 further GMWU workers came out in sympathy. GMWU have made the dispute official and are organising it. Slough Trades Council, Labour Party, etc., are rendering help and support as requested and directed by the GMWU official in charge.

It so happens that all 38 out are coloured. So are 42 still at work. The other 100 of the work force are not coloured. It is NOT being seen or treated as a racially based dispute.

CB 26/8/82

~~~~~(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)(C)~~~~~

## MIND CONTROL

THE issue of psychiatric treatment rears its ugly head again ...as a nurse at Wexham Park Hospital in Slough is suspended for refusing, against the advice of a doctor, to forcibly administer a tranquillising drug to a woman patient.

The woman had apparently appealed to a mental health tribunal to have herself released from compulsory detention, and had been judged "unsuitable for compulsory treatment" (E/P 1. 9. 82) by another doctor at the hospital. She had previously severe side effects from the drug.

Oxford Regional Health Authority had already set up a committee of inquiry into working relationships at the hospital. Nurse Paul Walsh is sure that by suspending him, the management of the hospital are trying to pre-empt the inquiry's findings.

Berkshire health unions are demanding the reinstatement of Paul Walsh and intend to bring the district to an emergency service only if necessary.

Derek Thorpe of East Berks Joint Trade Union Committee said "Mental patients should have the same rights as anyone if there's no danger to life or limb", a view long expressed by the mental health pressure group MIND.

Mental patients, whether "voluntary" or "involuntary", have few enforceable rights - the threat of a section is enough to make "voluntary" patients comply with doctors' wishes. For those in prison hospitals, the chances of returning to society must seem so remote as to be unthinkable. Alan Reeve despaired of ever being allowed to leave Broadmoor and made his escape. Unfortunately, nurses in mental institutions usually comply with and perpetuate a regime of systematic repression, simply because there is no alternative - the system only allows for inmates to be sedated/kept quiet.

The mentally handicapped, too, are lumped together in "special" institutions, supposedly for their own good, but of course, really for our own peace of mind. Basically, the whole philosophy of what we do with people who are mentally ill, or even mentally "handicapped", has got to be rethought.

The fact that the health unions are making a stand on an issue which goes beyond a wage demand is very important. The health workers, conned for too long in wage issues, are angry enough to see clearly in an issue of human rights.

Meanwhile, watchdog group East Berks Community Health Council is angry at being refused permission to sit in on an official inquiry into ill-treatment of patients at a Bracknell hospital for the mentally handicapped. Four staff at Church Hill House were jailed for abusing mentally handicapped patients. In terms of treatment and rights, the handicapped fare no better.

The "insane", the "criminally insane", or the "mentally handicapped", - however we categorize them, they have few rights and little choice in a society which prefers to keep out of sight and out of mind.

Laura Norder.



GOING OUT GUIDE

Sun 5 Forbury Gardens-East Woodhay Silver Band  
3pm

Fives-Tropical Fish lunchtime free

Allied Arms St Mary Butts-Readifolk 8pm  
free

Angies Milton Road Wokingham-Ruthless

Blues 9ish £1 + £1.50 membership

South Hill Park Bracknell (SHF)-Tarka the

Otter (A) 2.30 75p, End of August(A) and

The Europeans(U) 7.30 £1.90

The Mill Sonning-Two Inches of Ivory

Mon 6 Hexagon-Hot Chocolate £4-6 8pm

" -Exhibition-paintings and drawings  
by Valerie Jones.To 18th

The Horn St Mary Butts-Jazz 8pm free

SHF-Reds(AA) 7.30 £1.90.To 11th

Watermill Theatre Newbury-This Thing  
called Love.7.30

The Mill Sonning-Beside the Sea 7.30

To 11th.(expensive)

Playhouse Oxford-The Night they raided

Minskys 7.45 £3.90 Sat 4pm £2.45, 8pm

£4.90

Bull Hotel Nettlebed-Fred wedlock + Chris  
Newman 3pm

Tue 7 The Crown Inn Fishill-The Hillsiders 8pm  
£4.50

Wed 8 Grosvenor House Kidmore Road C'sham-  
Denny Illett Jazz Band 8pm free

Thu 9 Upper Deck Duke Street-Folk club 8pm free  
Progress Theatre The Mount Christchurch

Road-Reading Youth Theatre 7.45 £1.50

To 11th

Four Horseshoes Basingstoke Road-Jazz  
8pm free

Angies Wokingham-Inner City Unit 9ish  
£1 + £1.50 membership

Fri 10 Hex-Stephane Grapelli £3-5 7.30

Caribbean Club London Street-The Ballistics  
+ sounds 10.30 £1.50

Angies Wokingham-Snort Stories 9ish £1 +  
£1.50 membership

SHF-Bonnie + Clyde(X) 11pm £1.90.To 11th

Moorlands Farm,Murcott,Oxon-Friends of the  
Earth festival weekend.

6.30-11.30 ceilidh with Martin Carpay.

£6.50 for weekend (see Sat + sun), under

14s free, stalls, exhibitions, kids entertain-

ment, theatre groups, dance, wine bars, real

ale, etc.

Sat 11 Hex-Graeme Hewitt's High Society Jazz Band

12.15 free

Museum and Art Gallery-Exhibition of

Leonard Baskin's work free

Caribbean London Street-Ital Survivors  
10ish £2

Angies Wokingham-Illusions 9.30 £1 + £1.50  
membership

Sat 11 SHF-Nick Hooper + Megan Edwards (folk)  
8pm £1/£1.20

Moorlands Farm,Murcott-11am-late

Hank Wangford Band,Muckram Wakes,Badgers

Meadow + the Box Bros. 11.50

SHF-Exhibitions-1)Erica Deborn-paintings,

2)Anthony Davies-etchings and lithographs

Both to Oct 17th

Sun 12 Forbury Gardens-Woodley Concert Band

3pm free

Hex-Royal Marines Band 7.30 £2.50-3.50

(post Falklands euphoria)

Fives-Doctor Knox lunchtime free

Allied Arms-Readifolk 8pm free

Angies Wokingham-The Bottles 9.30 £1 +  
£1.50 membership

SHF-The Dragon at Pendragon's Castle(U)

+ Ambush at Devil's Gap 1(U)

12.15 75p

Fassbinder double bill Fear Sats the

Soul(AA) + The Merchant of Four Seasons(X)

7.30 £1.90

Apollo Oxford-Elvis Costello £4-4.50

7.30

Watermill Theatre Newbury-Woodbine (trad  
+ early music) £2

Mon 13 The Horn St Mary Butts-Jazz 8pm free

Apollo Oxford-Level 42 7.30 £1

SHF-And Justice for All(X) 7.30 £1.90

To 17th:

Fulcrum Centre Slough-Showaddy waddy

8pm £2-5

Tue 14 Hex-the Blues Band 7.30 £3-3.50

Apollo Oxford-Tygers of Pan Tang 7.30 £1

SHF-Talk on Kafka's shorter works 7.30  
20p

" Ragtime (AA) 7.30 £1.90 To 18th

Wed 15 Top Rank-Simple Minds £3.50 8pm

Grosvenor House-Denny Illett Jazz Band  
8pm free

SHF-An Inspector Calls (theatre) 7.45

£1.50 + £1.70 To 18th

Princes Hall Aldershot-George Hamilton 10  
8pm £4.25-5

Thu 16 Hex-Ella Fitzgerald 7.30 £5-12.50

" 1.10-2pm London Sax quartet free

Upper Deck Duke Street-Folk club 8pm free

Four Horseshoes B'stoke Road-Jazz 8pm free

Angies Wokingham-Red Bean and Rice 9.30

£1 + £1.50 membership

SHF-Mark Theatre workshop (club night)

8.30pm

Fri 17 Hex-Victor Borge 9.15 £4-7

Caribbean London Street-T.B.A + sounds  
10.30 £1.50

Angies Wokingham-Sonny Black Blues Band

9.30 £1 + £1.50 membership

SHF-Shampoo(X) 11pm £1.90 + 18th



Sat 18 Hex-12.15 New Concordia Follies free  
 " George Hamilton 1V 7.30 £3-4  
Central Club London Street-The Vol-  
canoes sounds by King Dick £2.50  
 8 till late. Afternoon domino  
 competition  
Angies Wokingham-Sam Mitchell Band +  
another band 9.30 £1 + £1.50 member-  
ship  
Hi-Come All Ye (folk) 8pm £1 + £1.20  
 Sun 19 Hex-'Festive Moods in Music' 7.30 £2-3  
Forbury Gardens-Shaw Social Club Brass  
Band 3pm free  
Allied Arms-Readifolk 8pm free  
The Mill Donning-'That's Entertainment'  
Angies Wokingham-Laverne Brown Band  
9.30 £1 + £1.50 membership  
SH-Seals Island(U) + Ambush at Devil's  
Gap Episode 2(U) 12.15 75;  
The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant(X)  
7.30 £1.90  
 opera club first night with Gavin  
 Henderson 8pm  
 Mon 20 Hex-see sat 19  
The Horn St Mary Butts-Jazz 8pm free  
SH-independent films 7.30 free  
Princes Theatre Aldershot-'The Most  
Happy Fella'(musical) 7.30 sat matinee.  
2.30 £1.10-3.20 To 25th

Forthcoming events at the Central club, London  
 Street:-

Sat 25th Sons of Jah + Abacush, Shaka sounds +  
 Wahsefah sounds + 2 poets + poetry  
 £5, £5.50 on door 8 till late  
 Sat 2nd Prince Far I + support + Marcus sounds  
 about £3  
 Al Campbell + Musical Youth will also be  
 appearing, dates not yet arranged



Bestsellers for July were very like  
 June's (predictable lot you are!). Fate  
 of the Earth, Maggie Thatcher's lots  
 to do book, Little Red Schoolbook, When  
 the wind blows, Squatters; Handbook,  
 Chas'n'Di bumper fun book, Hells Angels,  
 Guide to growing marijuana. New in at  
 number 6 the now sadly almost out of  
 print Buffo!-"anthology of political  
 pranks and anarchist buffoonery"- how  
 to be a revolutionary and enjoy it.

August would have been much the same  
 were it not for Douglas Adams and the  
 Festival goers, also predictable but

## BEEKEEPERS AND A STING TO THE READING SHOW

On Friday 20th August the three-day Reading show began. Red  
 Rag readers may be under the impression that this show was  
 meant to be primarily a display of Reading's horticultural  
 prowess. The prize onions, however, were eclipsed by a  
 false mountain decorated with painted soldiers and cr owned  
 with a wooden bayonet. At its base was a generous scatter-  
 ing of military paraphernalia; the sky rained parachutes;  
 and on closer examination paratroopers were seen mingling  
 with the crowds. Soldiers enticed small children with the  
 lure of glamorous new playthings - guns, uniforms, military  
 assault courses. Meanwhile their bigger brothers (and sis-  
 ters?) were being seduced by smooth-talking recruitment  
 officers.

But the beekeepers were prepared. A small nucleus of enthu-  
 siasts donned their protective clothes and were present  
 every day of the show to counter the evil propaganda of the  
 militarists. We distributed leaflets at the main gate  
 warning people of the military presence within and asking  
 them to complain to the organisers if they agreed with us  
 that the Forces had no place in a horticultural show. The  
 reaction we received was mixed; most people seemed indiff-  
 erent or amused, although we did get some support. We also  
 received a fair amount of harassment and abuse. On Friday  
 evening we were quite politely asked to move from the main  
 gate by the stewards, so we stood by the road. Then the  
 show manager came out, purple-faced and apoplectic, and  
 demanded that we move to the other side of the road. He  
 was abusive, threatening and very offensive. On the follow-  
 ing days we had quite a lot of contact with the soldiers,  
 most of whom seemed more interested in shouting at us than  
 actually finding out what we were saying. The same attitude  
 was shown by some visitors to the show who were so outraged  
 that they threw our leaflets at our feet. We were also  
 harassed by an over-zealous policeman and by numerous  
 members of the public asking for directions to the car park.

We have no real means of measuring the success of our ac-  
 tion, but we feel that despite the hassle it was worthwhile  
 as we drew people's attention to a military presence that  
 they might otherwise have accepted without question.

B.A.N.K. (Beekeepers Against Nasty Killers)  
 (Contrary to an 'Evening Post' report we weren't all "Burg-  
 hfield Peace Women", but Burghfield Peace Camp was "not  
 uninvolved".)

P.S. Apparently there is now controversy over one of the  
 Farnborough Air Show exhibitions. There was to be a display  
 of Exocets, but as these "deadly" weapons were used  
 against "our boys" they have now been removed. The sort  
 used on ships may still be shown - but as one of these sunk  
 "our ship" the Sheffield this too may yet be removed.

no more than the rest of us!  
 1. Life the universe and everything-  
 the next and presumably not the last  
 in the Hitch Hikers industry. 2. Legal  
 Highs-no objections, officer? 3. No one  
 here gets out alive-Jim Morrison  
 biography. 4. Child's Garden of Grass.  
 5. Recreational Drugs. 6. Hallucinogenic  
 Mushrooms-Release guide 45p. 7. Guide to  
 growing Marijuana. 8. Guide to Psilo-  
 cybin. 9. Little Red Schoolbook. 10.  
 Restaurant at the end of the universe-  
 more Douglas Adams. 11. Fate of the Earth  
 -there are other books about the end  
 of the world and what to do about it.  
 12. Buffo! still a few left! 13. Complete  
 Book of Recreational Drugs (no, we  
 haven't become a head shop-come and  
 look at the politics section sometime!)  
 Maggie Thatcher lots to do book; No  
 Commercial Potential-Frank Zappa bio-  
 graphy; Patti Smith High on Rebellion;  
 On the Road-Kerouac; Eagle's Gift-the  
 new Castaneda. and the best-selling  
 badge at our festival stall?  
 Solidarnosc.



Sun 5 Birthday Party of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. A All welcome for the day.

March to Sizewell starts from London. Details: 1 Fell Rd Buddbrook, Halstead, Essex.

Mon 6 Unemployed Centre: weekly from now: learn to make your own machine knitted clothes. 1.30, 4-6 East Street.

Borough Council: Policy Review Sub 4.30 Civic Offices.

Anarchists: weekly meeting 8pm. Ring Paul 52604 for venue.

Tue 7 Women's Centre seems to be open Tuesdays (but not Sats) 10.30 - 3.30. Basement Old Shire Hall, Abbey Street.

Reading North Labour Party Women's Section meeting: 8pm AUEW Committee Room, 121 Oxford Road.

Wed 8 Borough Council: Housing C'ttee. 4.30 Civic Offices.

Socialist Workers' Party weekly meeting. 8pm the Red Lion, Southampton St. Meetings may have titles which I don't know but which might appear in a postscript....

Thu 9 Borough Council: Leisure. 4.30 Civic Offices.

Unemployed Centre drama group meets weekly 2.30 East St.

Amnesty meeting: film: "Collision Course: the Philippines". Coincides with start of national campaign on the Philippines. 8pm St Mary's Centre, behind St Mary's Church in the Butts, Reading.

Open University: meeting for anyone interested to find out more. 7.30 Bulmershe College, Woodlands Ave, Earley.

Fri 10 Otmoor Fair ("the repossessioning of Otmoor") Costs £6.50. Details from Wheatley Friends of the Earth (08677 2679) or Reading FoE (868260) or see leaflets in Acorn.

Quickest way there is down the M40....

Fri 10 Berks Humanists meeting. Trying to get away from the standard form of speaker meetings by 'interaction' and discussion under four main heads: service to the community; research (into people's beliefs); communication; entertainment - and thereby planning the next meeting. 8pm Friends' Meeting House, Church St, Reading.

Sat 11 "Military Fair" at the Top Rank organised by Newbury and Reading Wargame Societies. 11th and 12th. Demonstration outside 2pm Sat. Bring placards and fancy dress. Afraid I need my consciousness raising on this one.....

Reading Book Fair 10.30 - 4 Catholic Ch Hall, Wokm Rd.

Sun 12 RED RAG Collective meeting. To celebrate our impending anniversary and establish the second Three Year Plan. Anybody interested very welcome. 4pm in Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham Street.

Reading & Dist Vegans monthly event: garden party at 11 Beverley Road, Tilehurst (by the Triangle). 2.30 pm on.

Berks Anti-Nuclear Campaign/Reading CND: mass rehearsal of and preparation for Operation Hard Luck (anti-Civil Defence exercise). Contact David Evans (37 3153); Pete Stevenson (street theatre) (54867); Steve Gavin (posters and leaflets) (663177). 2.30pm, AUEW Hall, 121 Oxford Rd

Tue 14 Borough Council: Transportation. 4.30 Civic Offices.

Friends of the Earth Cycle Group meeting to finalise the cyclist's response to the Central Reading Plan. 8pm, the Crown, Crown Street.

WEA Reading Industrial Branch. First general meeting - all interested persons and delegates especially - to elect a committee and discuss programmes. Contact Pete Ruhemann on 23340 or elsewhere in this Rag for details. 7.30 at the Centre for the Unemployed, East Street.

Berks Anti-Nuclear Campaign general meeting led by the Trades Union and Labour working group on the theme of the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Reading. 8pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Church St (off London St).

Wed 15 Borough Council: Environment. 4.30 Civic Offices.

Rape Crisis Line support group meets every second Weds, 7.30 at the Women's Centre.

Berks Organic Gardeners: Conducted tour round the Univ. botanical gardens by Mr Rutherford. Meet 7pm at the car park outside natural sciences building.

Thu 16 Borough Council: Resources Sub. 4.30 Civic Offices.

Pangbourne Peace Group: showing the film "The Bomb". 8pm at URC Hall, Reading Road, Pangbourne.



Fri 17 Borough Council: Development Control 2.30 Civic Offices. Communist Party jumble sale. 6.30 AUEW Hall, Oxford Rd.

Sat 18 Earley Carnival. Procession leaves Lakeside 1.30 for Rushey Way, Lower Earley. Fun-fair, side-shows etc. Reading FoE have a stall and want helpers - phone 868314 (Steve) or 868260 (John or Anne).

B.A.N.C. Jazz evening. 8pm the Crown, Crown St. £1.

Sun 19 Coley Nurseries open to the public. 2.30-6, Wensley Rd.

Mon 20 Borough Council: Personnel Sub. 4.30 Civic Wossname.

Newbury Courts (next to Police Station): appearances of women arrested on 27 Aug at Greenham. Don't know when.

Woodley Peace Group + Earley BANC Group: meeting on Hard Luck. 8pm at 27 Instow Road, Earley.

Wed 22 Friends of the Earth meeting. Comments on the Central Reading Plan by John Punter, Chairman of Civic Society. 7.45 at the Museum, Blagrove Street.

Civic Society meeting. Don't know what about but "the public are invited." 8pm Vachell Room, the Hexagon.

Socialist Educational Assoc. (Open to all who are or are eligible to be members of the Labour Party.) Meeting to discuss formation of a Reading Branch. 7.30 at the Civic Offices, Reading.

### FOOTNOTES TO EVENTS

### RED RAG RED PAGES

Yes, our directory has reached the stage of having a name (borrowed from First of May in Edinburgh). If your group would like to feature in this, copies of a form to fill in will be obtainable in Acorn any day now. We will try to solicit replies from those on our Events contact list at least. The Directory will really include anyone who wants to be on it, not just obviously "political" people. Entries can be of any reasonable length, with contact address, phone no, aims, activities, meetings, services provided, how to join - whatever seems appropriate. The actual questions on the form are only to provoke responses

### ANTI-APARTHEID

Is anyone interested in setting up an anti-apartheid group in Reading? If so please contact Jez on 666681.

### OUTLETS

Get your copy of the Rag from:

Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St (you can leave a donation there too!)

Pop Records, 172 Kings Road

Centre for the Unemployed, 4-6 East St (off Queens Rd)

Reading Emporium, Merchants Place (off Friar St)

Our Price Records, Butts Centre (downstairs)

Quicksilver Records, Butts Centre (upstairs)

Ken's Shop, Students' Union, Whiteknights.

We have two other outlets (in Friar St and in Traders) who prefer not to be named here. Ideas for new outlets always welcome!

To get a copy delivered free to your door every fortnight ring Distribution on 666681 (Nick) or 61257 (Chris).



## THOROUGHLY RIPPED OFF

Last weekend, for those of you who were either out of Reading or couldn't figure where all the denim was coming from, was the weekend of the Reading Festival. Officially the National Jazz Rock and Blues Festival, but no-one's talking about what happened to the jazz and blues. This event has been a fixture in Reading for as long as most of us care to remember; and once again there are dire warnings that this year may be the last. For some reason the organisers didn't send the Rag complimentary tickets. So your intrepid correspondents missed out on the privilege of mixing with the stars on the backstage compound with its marquee with little white picket fences and patio doors. (No I'm not joking) Nor did we manage to get an invite into the celebrities' area in front of the stage where the people who didn't pay for their tickets get the best view. None of us felt like laying out the twenty or so quid it costs for the three days so if you want to hear about the music I suggest you try the music press.

The festival seems to produce some very strange alliances, with Tory councillors opposed to it while good solid socialists (?) side with the capitalist organisers and want it to carry on. (The Liberals can't agree among themselves but think the organisers should pay more.) But apart from the mayor, looking marginally less tired and emotional than at Reading Show the week before, it's hard to believe any of the Council go near the event.

What no-one seems to say is how appallingly organised the Festival is. The whole event is set up to milk the punters of every penny they've got, and to Hell with anything else. A few examples. When people are gathered together they require toilet facilities. These are (surprisingly) provided - but they are inside the arena not scattered about the campsite. So people shit in the bushes, of which there are very few. The site hospital is also in the arena; so if you haven't got a ticket, or you have but haven't exchanged it for a wrist band (the key to entry to the arena) you'd better not get ill or cut yourself on any broken glass. Which brings us to rubbish. You drop it on the ground and three days later someone picks it up when you've gone home. There is no other visible method of rubbish disposal. Another thing that tends to happen is that people get cold. The only way to avoid this is to make a fire. Which is where all the saplings from the Thames promenade went, as well as any low branches on other trees, several people's garden gates and a stack of pallets from outside the abbatoir. Presumably the profit on selling firewood isn't high enough for the organisers to bother. Similarly there obviously wasn't any money in a leaflet explaining that the saplings like any green wood wouldn't burn so there wasn't much point in killing them. All prices of basic commodities (things like hamburgers and lager) are fixed by the organisers. Some of the people selling them were even complaining about the amount they were forced

to charge. 'Daylight robbery' was the phrase I heard. This year there were no cans or bottles allowed in the arena; supposedly to prevent festival goers injuring each other by throwing them. There remains a suspicion that possible damage to the valuable investments performing on stage may have been more important. Certainly in the past Festival security have got considerably more heated about things thrown at the stage than amongst the audience. Of course the near monopoly this gave to Courage who were selling beer in plastic containers (if the booze don't get you the fumes when you burn it will) had nothing to do with the decision.

The obvious way to improve the Festival is to get rid of the organisers: they've had lots of chances to try and do better. A less commercial venture would seem likely to cause less nuisance to the local populace and improve facilities for festival goers. There's also the not unimportant point of the music. Reading is very well-positioned to hold a Festival (good transport and all that) but attendances are falling. This may not be unconnected with the highly unimaginative billing. Even headbangers occasionally need time to recover! Why not hold several festivals with different styles of music throughout the summer, some small some large. Answer: because they might not bring the Council lots of money and the Hexagon is the only entertainment allowed to make a loss. But why bother to suggest improvements - the Council have their own plans for the site: a swimming pool with plastic palms and artificial waves.

A Reading Ratepayer

## POLICE NEWS

Once again Reading Police have failed to get all their vehicles painted regulation colours. Perhaps this is a step towards privatising the police force. After all the Met are already brown as the best police force that money can buy. In any case next time you need to know the time or hand in some lost property, the occupants of the following Ford Cortinas should be only too pleased to help.

FWL 398V FWL 105V FWL 107V FFC 587X  
FFC 595X FFC 596X RWL 573X RWL 971X  
TFI 595X.

Incidentally they all have an array of aeriels that would make a lot of breakers mouths water.

Reading police described their presence at this year's festival as a softly, softly approach. This resulted in well over 100 arrests mainly for smoking or possessing cannabis and a massive police presence in the Caversham Rd with police stopping and searching people on the basis of their appearance (which does not constitute valid legal grounds for a search).

Presumably Toxteth has got nothing on Reading police when they decide to get heavy. Incidentally the main drug being abused was known as 'Courage' because that is what it needs to survive its horrific effects.

There were no reports of any arrests of pushers of this drug although some of the users were well under 18.

Disgusted of Caversham Rd.



POLICE MAKING AN ILLEGAL SEARCH



# Peace Camps....

REPRINTED FROM THE GREENHAM FREE PRESS

## 14 DAYS - Judge refuses Adjournment Bid

Peace Settlers from the Rainbow Peace Settlement outside the works entrance (Green Gate) at USAF Greenham Common Cruise Missile Base were yesterday given 14 days by a judge in chambers at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, London, in which to apply for the setting aside of an order which he granted for Newbury District Council to regain possession of the land. These 14 days of grace were as far as the judge was prepared to go in maintaining a charade of "justice" for the settlers.

The settlers had from the outset demanded, requested and pleaded for an adjournment of the case, as they had been unable to obtain legal representation at the hearing. But from the outset the judge although being very pleasant and smiling nicely, had seemed to have his mind made up in the matter of Newbury District Council vs. Persons Unknown, and appeared to be in no mood to allow the unrepresented protesters to unduly impede the legal bulldozer of State Power.

13 people answered the summons and appeared to give their names in court - eight men (including two clergymen) and five women. One of the defendants, Jan Jones, then read out a list of at least six other names, people who were not able to be present. It is not clear whether all these names were in fact recorded: the name of Clint Eastwood was certainly a surprise in this connection, but at least raised a smile. However, no mention of that other Hollywood ham, Ronald Reagan, though he if anyone should be the prime defendant in any case about the repossession of land at Greenham.

Anyway, the defendants, some of whom had had only a couple of days notice of the hearing, asked again for an adjournment, as they needed legal representation and time to prepare their case. The judge brushed these objections aside.

One defendant, Michael Parker, then attempted to explain that he had learned that the land was the subject of a dispute between Newbury District Council and Michael John Upton of Newbury, who claims that the land belongs to his family. The defendants needed time to check this out, consult a solicitor, and come back with a proper legal argument.

The judge was clearly not impressed, and did not wish to waste time on such matters. Lawyers on behalf of the Council said that the Upton claim was "misconceived" and "not accepted by the Council" who maintain that they are freeholders of the land. They did concede however that they had received notice from Mr. Upton of his application to the High Court that the land should return to his family.

The defendants then showed the judge a copy of the notice, "This has no effect in law" declared the judge. Jan Jones stated that settlers had seen Mr. Upton and copies of his correspondence with the Council. The judge did not seem interested.

Asked if they were in a position to call their evidence, the Council lawyers answered yes. But we want an adjournment, said the defendants, we want to prepare our case, we want legal representation. Well, said the judge, I want to hear more about the nature of the issues involved.

Walter James Turner, Newbury District Council's Director of Legal and Administrative Services, then took the stand and affirmed that he would tell the truth. He stated that the District Council was constituted under the 1972 Local Government Re-organisation Act, and replaced the former Newbury Borough Council.

The Council lawyers then produced a document which they claimed to be a conveyance dated 4th February 1939 between Christina Erskine of Henley and Orlando Mathews Day of Greenham (the vendors), the South of England Real Estate Co. of Basingstoke (the party of the second part), and the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Newbury (the council) under which the land became the property of the Council. Both the judge and the council lawyer refused to show this document to the defendants when asked to do so. Although the land is registered as common land, "it is clear that the owners are the plaintiffs" said the judge.

Another defendant, Judith Newman, argued that since the Council did not provide a site for travellers, they were entitled to stay on common land and could not be removed unless the council offered an alternative site or accommodation under the homeless persons act. The judge did not appear to hear this argument.

Before he stepped down from the witness box, Mr. Turner was asked how long he'd had to prepare the Council's case. He couldn't say exactly but it had been a "matter of some weeks". Again it was pointed out to the judge that this gave the Council a considerable advantage, and that any sense of justice required that there should be an adjournment. "I do not propose to grant an adjournment" said the judge. "How can you sleep at night?" demanded a man from the back of the court.

Other defendants joined the protest, some even dared to mention the issue of Cruise Missiles and the taking over of the common by the US as a missile base. "The court does not exist to hear political discourses of that kind" said the judge. All the defendants appeared to be talking at once - each trying to raise a different point. "I would suggest that you try and agree on what you want to say, and appoint one person as a spokesperson," said the judge. "Then adjourn the case and let us sort out a lawyer" said the defendants, but that didn't seem to be what the judge had in mind.

The judge said that he proposed to make an order on behalf of Newbury District Council, but to direct that there be no proceedings to enforce the order for at least 14 days, in which the defendants would have liberty to apply to the court for the order to be set aside. And that was that - case over and clear the court please.

None of this took place in open court. Just like in May when Newbury D.C. vs. the Womens' Peace Camp took place in "Judges Chambers", the press and public weren't allowed in. Justice was neither done nor seen to be done.

So now the Peace Settlers have 14 days in which to consult a good lawyer and get a case together. Whether the Upton claim will turn out to be the basis of a real defence or simply a red herring is yet to be determined. If anyone has any good ideas of how the judge's ruling might be overturned, the people at the Peace Settlement would love to hear from you. If no case can be made, then we may expect eviction at the Green Gate on or any time after the 1st September.

MEANWHILE things have not been quiet at the base itself. Big transport helicopters have been making regular landings, usually under cover of darkness. New landing lights have been installed, which would appear to indicate that the flights are to be a regular and continuing feature of activity at the base. They're certainly up to something in there. Also, the road to the Green Gate is being re-surfaced and widened. The road is now officially closed, expectedly for 3 weeks, but the closure order can be extended as necessary by the Minister of Transport.

PLUS the Rainbow Peace Settlement needs money and food. The free press is feeling the pinch too. SO please send money/food/stamps whatever you can, to Rainbow Peace Settlement, outside Works Entrance (Green Gate), USAF Greenham Common, near Newbury. Berks.

## NEWS FROM BURGHFIELD PEACE CAMP

A meeting was held at Burghfield Peace Camp on Wednesday 25th August 1982. It was poorly attended, which reflected the problem it was called to discuss.

Several of the initial members no longer intend to continue their involvement, because of this a crucial time is now here. There are only one or two people at the camp who wish to carry on with Burghfield Peace Camp. Without your support, the camp will formally end on Sunday 26th September.

Whatever happens, the ROF Burghfield campaign will continue - contact Box 17, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St. Reading, for information about ROF Burghfield, about the local area and people, for contacts throughout the Peace Movement, for speakers to tell your meetings about ROF Burghfield, the hazard it poses and the key role it plays in the atomic weapons industry.

As of Sunday 29 August 1982, the camp will no longer occupy its present site on the Burghfield Road, and there is a new telephone contact number for the Peace Camp - Reading 478297.

If much enthusiasm is shown for continuing Burghfield Peace Camp as a physical presence near ROF Burghfield, another site is available and another camp can be set up soon. If not, the Burghfield Campaign will still be active - there is much we can achieve at Burghfield. We have only made a start, the nature and scope of any future campaign depends on you.

A final meeting will be held at the Mearings front entrance of ROF Burghfield (see map) on Sunday 26th September at 2.30pm, when if there have been no further developments, Burghfield Peace Camp will be closing down.

Burghfield Peace Camp.

## BURGHFIELD PEACE CAMP

Burghfield Peace Camp is having a meeting on Sunday, September 26 at 2.30 to decide whether to close down. They are important as a focus of protest. Let's march there in force and help them to decide to stay. I've talked to them and they like the idea. Let's organise and publicise as groups and show that one whole town's anti-nuclear movement cares.

Richard Hunt



People from seven camps met last Wednesday (1st Sept) to exchange news and ideas. There was much concern over the situation at Burghfield, and possibly several new people will be here for the winter. Many people felt that the factory which produces Britain's nuclear weapons is a place that should not be ignored, and that the camp is well situated to stimulate/launch actions against AWRE Aldermaston and to support activity at Greenham.

Upper Heyford, just North of Oxford, is very active, getting good coverage this week in the local press for interfering with an exercise at the base. Unfortunately the day I was there the Oxford Mail had already printed the camp's plans for the afternoon, so the police were waiting when we arrived to block the main gate. Their big event this month is a march and rally on Sat 25th Sept, in response to a 30-acre extension to the base to accommodate a new squadron of warplanes.

At Greenham, the Rainbow Settlement's eviction is imminent - all support very welcome.

The Women's Camp hope to publish a statement in the next edition of Sanity, national CND's magazine, attempting to clarify their aims and the sort of support they would like from the rest of the movement. Within the next few months they hope to sort out the controversy and confusion over the role of men in supporting their actions at Greenham, so as to enable everyone to work together in opposing Cruise missiles before it is too late.

Cliff

#### ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTEST AT THE ROYAL BERKS

Anyone driving past the Royal Berks Hospital on Tues 24th at 4.30pm would have been surprised to see a pavement covered in corpses with a sprinkling of dead patients in the pissing rain. We were not dead, however, but only pretending, as a demonstration of the sort of medical care that will be available in the event of a nuclear holocaust. While most of us were soaking up the puddles a couple of nurses gave out leaflets to passing motorists. The action lasted about half an hour, most of which we spent horizontally. We got very wet, but felt that it was worthwhile as we attracted a lot of attention from traffic on London Rd.

#### READING BIKES GROUP

Whilst everyone has been on holiday (not me-typist), things have been moving in the Bikes Campaign. Schemes for Kennet-side (phase 1) and a link between Beech Lane and Lakeside (Earley) have been included in the new Transport and Policies Programme.

Friends of the Earth have circularised local councillors asking them to include pro-cycling policies. Officers in Berks C.C. appear quite sympathetic and have agreed to meet F.O.E. on Oct. 7th. to discuss their proposals for South and East Reading. By the way, whatever happened to plans for Caversham and West Reading?

F.O.E. have written to the British Rail area manager at Reading about the terrible bike parking facilities at the station. Thefts are so bad that earlier this year the police actually spent several days continuously watching the racks outside. The police reckon ("don't quote me") that BR could do more. If you use the racks regularly write to the area manager at Reading General to complain.

#### Central Area Plan.

The pedestrianisation plans which should lead to a marked improvement for cyclists in the town centre are under threat. If we want the proposals to stay in the plan, then a lot of pressure needs to be put on the Borough Councillors. The plan is out for 'public consultation' so letters should be sent to the Borough Planning Officer at the civic centre by Oct 4th, but come to the meeting on Sept 14th to discuss tactics first.

We now have cheap cycle insurance available through the Cycle Campaign Network for members of the bikes group. Details at next meeting. New Bikes group address - Simon Watkins, 5 Manchester Rd Reading.

#### READING INDUSTRIAL BRANCH: WORKERS EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The first "teach-in" to be held on 29th September, 7.30pm at the Centre for the Unemployed, 4-6 East Street will attempt to develop discussion about the Local Economy. The subject will be introduced by Martin Stott of the Oxford Political Ecology Research Group and will show how changes in the Regional and local economy have developed, their effect on employment, types of work and unemployment. Participants will then have a choice between 4 workshops:

1. Introduced by John Punter, Chair of the Civic Society, will look at planning and its consequences no doubt with reference to the Central Berkshire Development Plan.
2. Nick Clark of ASTMS 750 Branch will lead on the role of multinational companies in our local economy.
3. Pete Ruheman of the Labour Party will question "The Jobs we need".
4. "Defence Industries" and their significance will form the fourth workshop and negotiations are under way for an expert to introduce this subject.

Following the workshops there will be an opportunity for report back and discussion.

A fee of 50p for the teach-in is payable in advance or at the door. Further details from the Acting Secretary, Peter Ruheman, 897 Oxford Road, Reading, RG3 6TR, Tel: Reading 23340.

Should anyone wishing to attend feel they might not be able to do so because of babysitting problems and the like the organising committee will try to help - contact Pete Ruheman.

#### MAYDAY '83 NO LONGER A MYTH - SHOCK.

Out of Trades Council has come - hope for a Mayday celebration in 1983. Ron Knowles, with ideas and energy and a fresh approach to organising this now institutional event, asks you to come along to the first meetings of the 'Working Group' - for those with time and energy to do the work, and the 'Steering Committee' - for those who as individuals or delegates have ideas or contacts or just words of encouragement or advice. The 'working group' it is hoped, will be a sub-set of the Steering Committee, and not in any way separate.

Intentions so far; trying to get Ken Livingstone as a guest speaker. A prize Draw (what would the celebrations be without those prize boxes of biscuits?)

'Working Group' - 39 Ashmore Road, Whitley, at 8pm, 6/9/82

'Steering Ctee' - Unemployed Centre, 8pm 27/9/82.

Tell each other about this, come along and help get a good Mayday Festival together.

Watch next Rag for further developments.

info from CB, Ta. CS.



## CAMPAIGN

to

## DEFEND

## TRADE UNIONS

We are facing a government bent on legislating effective Trade Unions out of existence. After Prior's 1980 Employment Act has come Tebbit's Act and even now the Tories are preparing a further instalment.

All this legislation isn't being brought into force simply because this government doesn't like Trade Unions - with the real number of unemployed at 4million, wages being kept way below rising prices, and the welfare state being dismantled - this government wants to ensure that working people have no effective way of fighting back - hence the Tories' 'legal' attack on the unions.

### WHAT THE LEGISLATION MEANS

The full effects of the legislation are enormous. However the two major thrusts by the Tebbit Act are:

- the removal of Trade Union 'immunities'
- and
- the break-up of the closed shop.

The Act massively reduces the forms of union action that remain within the law.

### ATTACK ON TRADE UNION 'IMMUNITIES'

\*\* Solidarity action by one union in support of another, will make that union and individual trade unionists liable to prosecution by their employers. The by unions supporting the health workers in their recent dispute is now illegal.

\*\* Any industrial action deemed to challenge government policy can and probably will be seen as a political strike and (yes, you've guessed it!) under the new legislation political strikes are illegal! So, for example, any public sector union challenging government cash limits or cuts in services could face the courts. And the individual workers could also be disciplined or sacked for 'involvement' in 'political activity'.

\*\* Also outlawed is any solidarity action with workers abroad - eg in South Africa or Poland.

\*\* The courts will have the right to impose fines of up to £25,000 on unions they say have broken the terms of the Act - for each occasion that unions break the Act.

### ATTACKS ON THE CLOSED SHOP

Alongside the removal of Trade Union 'immunities' in civil law is the attack on the closed shop. The Tories are out to smash the closed shop - why? Not to preserve 'personal liberty' as they claim, but because they realise that the closed shop is the most effective form of Trade Union organisation.

The government will impose compulsory secret ballots every 5 years on closed shop workplaces - and either 80% of those covered, or 85% of those voting will have to support the closed shop for it to continue. Employees dismissed for refusing to join a union in a closed shop workplace will now be able to claim compensation with a minimum of over £10,000 - and to claim this compensation from unions as well as, or instead of, from the employer dismissing them.

### WORKERS RIGHTS

The Tories claim that the Act does all this in the name of 'personal liberty'. Yet the same act restricts rights to maternity pay; reduces a worker's ability to claim against unfair dismissal; and makes it much easier to victimise Trade Union activists, not least by making the sacking of selected strikers 'fair'.

It is clear that the only liberty that the Tories are interested in is the liberty to smash effective collective bargaining and to smash the Trade Union as an effective democratic voice of its members.

### ACTION!

In the face of this legislation, and with the promise of more to come, the Trade Union movement cannot afford to wait and see. The Tory government has been using the media and the law to bash the unions - the time has now come for unions to organise our fightback.

How can we do this? By organising the combined strength and unity of the Trade Union movement for industrial action to defeat the Acts.

We must start organising now. Reading Trades Union Council urges all Branches to:

\* Inform all members of the attacks embodied in the legislation and its particular effects on your union and your members.

\* Invite Trades Council speakers to address workplace/branch meetings.

\* Send resolutions to your local, regional, and national bodies calling for action and demanding clear guidelines and support for workers who organise action against the Tebbit Act.

\* Ensure this Act is not used in your workplaces.

\* Send contributions and organise collections for the Trades Council 'Defend Trade Unions' Fighting Fund.

\* Send your delegates to Trades Council with a clear mandate to organise a fightback.

### WHAT ARE TRADE UNION 'IMMUNITIES'?

Under British law no-one has a constitutional 'right' to strike. Striking, or any other form of industrial action, is a breach of the worker's contract of employment. Anyone taking industrial action, or any person or organisation encouraging others to take industrial action could be sued or subject to an injunction.

The famous trade union 'immunities' are nothing more than immunity from prosecution if the industrial action is "in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute". Without these 'immunities' no-one could take, or organise, any form of industrial action at all.

The 1980 Employment Act removed immunity from prosecution for certain types of action. The Tebbit Act totally redefines a "trade dispute" - in much narrower terms. As a result, workers and their unions will be open to prosecution if they become involved in industrial action outside the very restricted provisions of the new Act.

Published by: Reading Trades Union Council, 6 Belgravia Court, Bath Rd



The Evening Post has just given you, oh citizen, its latest "Citizens' Guide". That is if your landlady/flatmate/cat hasn't already disposed of it. From the picture of the town's pseudo-Dickensian mace-bearer gracing the front page to the eternal mentions of the new hotel, it seems bent on presenting an image of civic dignity and prosperity that has little to do with the town as you and I live in it.

Pages are devoted to different topics, with the overflows crowded together in odd holes between adverts. The Borough Council takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  a page to dazzle us with meaningless statistics of some of its achievements. "Spent in total £29,100,000 last year to do all this... and a lot more!" Not telling, huh? "And we know we couldn't do it without you." As long as we consent to be governed.....The "M.P.'s" page has a big heading, "Before you decide, look in at Magnet and Southern" - sorry, that's an advert for timber....Borough and County Councillors are listed without party labels - is this because they're all the same? Oddly, the councillors pictured are, I think, all Labour. Apart from our august mayor, of course. The Hexagon's press officer really ought to get into telly, as he seems to think that the Hexagon's being occasionally on the box is far more important than what actually happened there last year. It may help your career, Mark, but it cuts no ice with me.

The subtle distinction between "Charities and Voluntary Groups - our A-Z Guide to the Area" and "Clubs and Societies - activities for every member of the family" (including Divorce!) escapes me completely. Friends of the Earth alone under "Conservation" on one page, Conservation Soc., Transport 2000 and a host of others under "Environment" on the other. And the vegans under "Humanists"?!

The layout is sloppy and confusing, but some of the headings are downright insulting. e.g. Gays are relegated to the "Emergency section". The "Old People" page is cosily headed "Places where they can meet all their friends" - they? i.e. no "old person" can read? No "old person" is friendly with a non "old person"? Yuk. "Faith expressed in many ways" chortles the "Churches" page - and how! Earley, Tilehurst, Caversham and Woodley are religions on a par with Anglican, Methodist Baptist, Roman Catholic and Christian Broadcasts: if you believe the headings. "Other Denominations". And at the end of that, "Various" (Baha'i, Polish Catholic, Sikh and Christadelphian), interesting little sects, yes? I mean, don't these people know it's too late for cultural imperialism?

Look, it's fun pulling this thing to pieces, but I don't think it's much good. "Almost everything you can think of" isn't included. I don't believe there are only three residents associations in Reading.

No mention of the women's Centre, Rape Crisis line, several art groups, anything other than orthodox health care, C.N.D., yoga, Centre for the Unemployed and on and on.

Maybe they're trying to marginalise us. Maybe it's time there was a decent guide to under-publicised activities in Reading. We don't need any more pictures of Tony Durant or the Forbury Lion.

Angry citizen.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THE UNEMPLOYED?

Silly question really, the answer is quite obvious - find them jobs, and meanwhile do something to alleviate the absence of wages.

(But who are "we"? And who are "the unemployed"? What jobs? How?)

They get the dole don't they? And there's the Welfare State with free doctors and free schooling and the Council has made something available cheap or free hasn't it (was it bus tickets, or the Meadway Centre mid-afternoon once a week or even both?) And aren't there all those schemes to do something for all those secondary school kids who leave at 15, sorry 16? And did I read something about a Centre for the Unemployed - surely that gives them somewhere to go - no I don't know where it is but I thought I saw a poster in the public library. Anyway, surely they should be out looking for work; no, I don't know of any jobs but why don't they try the agencies or that Job Centre in the Butts - they've always got some cards posted up.

Why should I bother - I pay my rates and my taxes (and a lot of money that is too!) and I expect the Council and the Government to look after these problems - why else do we elect them? And isn't everyone doing what they can - the Government says it's trying to get the economy straight (though sometimes one wonders), the Labour Party and the TUC both keep on publishing plans for more spending which they say will create jobs. The CBI are lobbying for what they say will create jobs. And the Institute of Directors says the economy is getting better anyway.

I don't know what the unemployed want - but aren't we all doing our best? And beggars can hardly expect to be choosers, can they? If I can hold down a job, why can't they? Dignity? I'm not asking them to grovel. Of course I expect the Government to be careful with my taxes and to make sure it only gives away my money to those who really need it; and I don't expect the state to keep the idle in luxury at my expense.

How can I know what the unemployed really want - no-one is speaking just for them alone, it's all vested interests. The trade unions say they know, but a lot of the unemployed have never been in unions - after all half the country's workforce doesn't belong to a union. Anyway, like the Labour Party, don't they speak for the working class and we all know that the unemployed kids of today, and a lot of the older unemployed too are middle-class anyway? And the "poverty lobby" is based on deserted mothers with a good sprinkling of left-wing revolutionaries, isn't it?

Perhaps we could teach some of them to write decently and spell properly and to add up and even to behave properly at job interviews. I don't really mind if they want to improve each other's minds. And there's plenty of good causes around desperate for people to put in a few hours spare time. And certainly if anyone asks I'd give a fiver a year to help support their Centre. Mind you, I want to be sure it's properly run and really is doing something for them that I'd approve of - but if the Council is on the Management Committee and so are the Voluntary Services Council then I guess it's OK - the union people won't get a chance to start anything, even if they could..... (Fade-out on the party bore)



# REDRAG - FAME AT LAST ....

## RED RAG COLOUR-BLIND SHOCK HORROR PROBE

Whoops-a-daisy...Oh Damn! Errr...folks? We seem to have made a bit of a euphemism over this one. It's basically a result of proceeding reasonably and according to commonsense without getting hold of all of the relevant facts of the matter. To ramble to the point, you remember that letter from Steven J Foley Reading Cllr.? He's... wait for it...wait for it...a Conservative. Yes I know, by way of Chris' reply we more than implied he was Labour. A not particularly unnatural assumption, given that references to bully boys and Hitler youth do tend to come from the redish end of the spectrum. Who was it said don't believe everything you read in the papers?

Oh well, that's all newsprint through the presses now. So, who do we apologise to? S.J.Foley? The Labour party? Or Chris, because our lot wasn't on the ball enough? Yeah ok...Chris, we're sorry. Will you ever forgive us? Tah. Diogenes...That was all your fault. Why the (deleted) didn't you tell us the bod was a ~~xxxxxx~~ Tory? You're purged!...By 'eck that's better lads. We haven't had a good purge in weeks. Now then hows about this for a good headline:- 'PROMINENT TORY SHOWS SOLIDARITY WITH LABOUR OVER HOUSING STRUGGLE'?.....

The fly on the wall

## GLOWING TRIBUTE TO A COUNCILLOR-FROM A RIVAL

By SIMON MARES

READING Labour councillor Dave Absalom has just received a glowing tribute - from the Tory who had thrown down the gauntlet to him in preparation for next year's election.

Conservative Councillor Steven Foley sprang to the defence of his council colleague after reading an article attacking Councillor Absalom in Reading's alternative magazine, Red Rag.

In his letter he wrote: "In the three years or so that we have both served on Reading Borough Council I have

known Dave to fight strongly for greater expenditure on housing and for the interests of council tenants both in his own ward and throughout the town.

"Certainly, he, and his wife Marian have devoted a great deal of their private time to housing and other cases in their ward."

At the time he wrote the letter Coun Foley was set to fight against Coun Absalom in next year's borough council elections in Park Ward - but since then he has had to pull out of the contest

following a reorganisation where he works.

The article that upset Coun Foley was in an earlier edition of Red Rag, attacking Coun Absalom for complaining about the overturning of some floral displays in a protest about housing.

### Incensed

He said this week: "I felt incensed about the article and despite the fact he's from another party I know he's very conscientious and goes out of his way to look after housing."

"I was also particularly annoyed about the foul language and the imputed slur that he didn't do anything about housing on which he speaks out strongly, as well as being against rent rises."

"If they had some fair criticism to make then I feel that would have been all right," he said.

And to cap Coun Foley's complaint, the magazine prints a reply to his letter from collective member Chris Skilbeck that labels him a Labour councillor.

Coun Foley said: "I have been a Conservative since I was 16 and in Glasgow - in fact Gorbals of all places - and that was 13 years ago. I'm very amused at being addressed in borrowed robes."

Coun Absalom said: "It's lovely isn't it? I'm very grateful he's defended my honour and it shows he's got a bit of humanity. All councillors get down when they are kicked so it is nice to hear something like this."

Post 25.8.82

...continued from page 11

Reading Centre for the Unemployed has been open since February. It has had a Users Committee since May. The Centre is providing drop-in classes, cheap tea and coffee, welfare rights advice, and a few ways of passing the time. A lot of people registered as unemployed don't use it, though some do. The Management Committee has reps from 'a broad spectrum of the community' and has to take money for staff from wherever it can get it (ie MSC), with whatever strings come attached. The premises come at a peppercorn rent but repairs and maintenance and heating and lighting and the phone all have to be paid for. The Users have a democratic small voice on the Management Committee. But...

What do the unemployed want? Who are they? Should more be provided - how, by whom, and who decides what? Do the unemployed want things done and provided for them (for which they will be expected to be grateful)? Is unemployment a temporary state? Are they people? Do different people want different things? Do Reading's 10,000 unemployed want to get together? What for?

I haven't got the answers, I haven't got all the questions, and I haven't been unemployed for years. How about you?

Christine.

PS. I am one of the Reading Trades Union Council reps on the Management Committee and in that capacity follow RTUC policy regarding the Centre. The above is a purely personal outpouring.

## The armaments-factory worker

I cannot influence the fate of the globe.  
Do I start wars? How can I know  
whether I'm for or against?  
No, I don't sin.  
It worries me not to have influence,  
that it is not I who sin.  
I only turn screws, weld together  
parts of destruction,  
never grasping the whole,  
or the human lot.

I could do otherwise (would parts be left out?)  
contributing then to sanctified toil  
which no one would blot out in action or belie in speech.  
Though what I create is all wrong,  
the world's evil is none of my doing.

But is that enough?

This poem, by Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), is from the collection "Easter Vigil and Other Poems", translated from the Polish by Jerzy Peterkiewicz.

### HELP

RedRag is in desperate financial straits  
Thanks to donations from collective members we had about £22 after paying our debts to Acorn.

One issue of the Rag costs about £50 to produce.

PLEASE send money now!

Cheques to 'Red Rag' to us c/o Sue Clarke, 31b Milman Road, Reading. Or use the box in Acorn.

DENIS, GIVE ME A HAND AT COUNTING OUR WEEKLY HOUSEKEEPING MONEY, DARLING! THOSE HEALTH WORKERS SHOULD BE THANKFUL IT DOES NOT TAKE THEM ALL THIS TIME!



### DISCLAIMER

If what you read is not what you wrote, it's probably because I couldn't read your handwriting.

A casual typist.

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