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READING'S ONLY NEWSPAPER

MAY DAY EDITION

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NEWS and general enquiries

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HERBERT HERBSON'S HERB GROWING COURSE.

EPISODE
TWO.



'Now pluck up thy hemp, and go beat out the seed, and afterwards water it, as ye see need.'

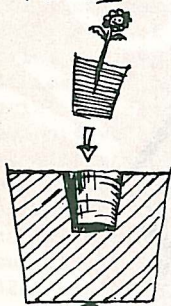
(Thomas Tusser 1557)

A healthy six-week -old cannabis plant is between four & six inches tall and on something like it's third set of proper leaves. It may be that it's getting very spindley with a long thin stalk which can barely support the weight of the leaves. When this is the case, when the plant hasn't grown much for the last two or three weeks, or with peat pots if roots start poking out through the side of the pot, it is time for a larger pot.

A growing plant will want repotting about three times over the space of the summer; if it doesn't get space to develop it's roots it will stop all other development as well before long. Each pot should be one or two inches larger in diameter than the previous one. 'The Cultivation of Hemp in Great Britain' (published in 1915) recommends a 'deep rich loam containing a good proportion of sand', potting compost (from Woollies etc) is not bad & for later repottings you can 'dilute' it with garden soil. Go easy on anything that looks at all like clay, your plants won't be too keen on it.

HOW to repot (this applies to other sorts of plants): Spread a lot of newspaper on the carpet. Fill the new pot with earth, not too loosely leaving a hole the size of the old pot (fig 1). If the stalk is thin and in need of support, make the hole an inch deeper so that the base of the stalk can be held in place with soil (fig 2).

FIG. 1

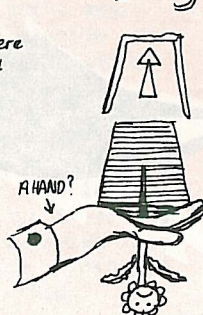


Make sure the pot has drainage holes.

FIG 2



FIG 3



PEAT pots go into the new pots along with the plants (make sure the peat is covered on the surface) & decompose, feeding the plant as they do so. If the old pot is not made of peat it must be removed, which is done in three easy stages. First, give the plant a little water, so that the dust it is sitting in looks a bit more earthy (and doesn't fall apart when the pot is taken away). Next, grab the top of the pot (making sure that the hand covers the whole of it) and invert the lot (fig 3). Finally use your free hand to lift the pot away from the soil (you may have to give it a gentle twist or tap before this works). Now (both hands) turn the plant the right way up, supporting it from below all the time, and put it into its new home. Water it straight away. (Note: Sunlight is bad for roots. Close the curtains before repotting any type of plant, or do it when the sun is not about.)

+ + + +

KEEP your plants somewhere where they'll get a lot of heat and light. No light, no smoke. South facing windows are ideal. Gardens and greenhouses are risky, though I have heard of someone who used to disguise ping-pong balls as tomatoes and hang them on quite a different species. Alternatives are (i) in a cupboard, under grow-lights (household lights are not suitable for this as the they emit the wrong kind of light, so you'll need to invest in specific equipment*) and (ii) outside somewhere.

paid advertisement

BANC/READING CND GENERAL MEETING

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE 8 PM OFF LONDON ST. READING

TUES. 10TH MAY.

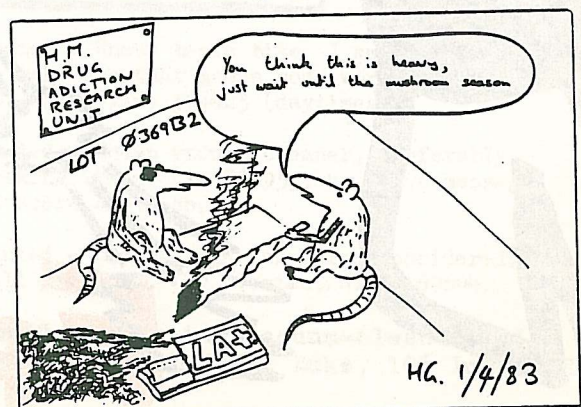
CRUISE
MISSILES
AND
NUCLEAR
WARFARE

WITH MIKE PENTZ

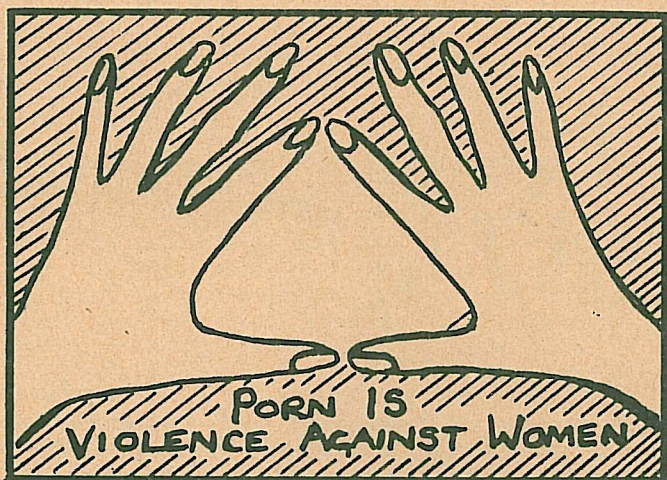
VICE CHAIR CND
CHAIR SANA

By this I mean an isolated spot where plants can grow undisturbed by agents of the law and order, other amateur botanists, bunny rabbits (they'll eat anything they can get their teeth into), the path of the new motorway etc. Visit the site twice only- once to plant them, once to harvest them - and keep its location a secret. Cannabis is a voracious weed and can look after itself very well in the wild; lots of visits to your plot could draw attention to it.

DOES this sound paranoid? While I don't believe in H M Govt. telling me what to do with my life, my first priority is not to get caught. It doesn't matter how good your plants are, if they are seized by the law, you'll never have a chance to smoke them (or anything else if you have been locked away). The cultivation of hemp used to be obligatory (from 1535 on). While libertarians (and non-smokers) would regard that as a rather extreme move from the current position, some relaxation would be a good thing. As with the legalisation of CB, a good way to get this 'official permission' is to do it anyway. LET it grow. . . . Love from 'someone who wishes to be known as Bill' and Reading L. C. C.



HG. 1/4/83



THE word pornography, given its original meaning, translates as "pictures of prostitutes", that is, images of women as objects to be brought and sold, used and abused, whose sole purpose is to provide men with service. THE degradation of women into mindless bodies assaults us daily in advertisements, newspapers on TV. This is the acceptable face of porn. Hidden away in Private shops and under the counters of video shops are all manner of goodies to excite and titillate a male mind; these range from erotic underwear to "Snuff" movies, whose selling point is that you never know whether the women in the film are being tortured, mutilated and murdered for real, or whether they're just acting. While violence against women is as common as it ever was, sex and video shops are marketing mags and films which depict the most hideous brutality as a turn-on.

THE porn industry is big business and its interests will always be well protected by legislation. Every penny that is spent at sex shops goes into the pocket of some rich man who doesn't give a shit about the exploitation of women or the enormous contribution the porn industry makes towards the misery suffered by many women as a direct result of the attitudes it perpetuates.

THE madonna/whore complex, drummed into us by false images, bears little relation to reality. No woman fits the virgin/mother category, but that doesn't mean we must all sacrifice our bodies for men's pleasures. Porn misrepresents and distorts reality. It makes violence against women seem acceptable and even desirable. It is vital that the attitudes which allow porn to thrive should be resisted.

AT the last WAVAW conference it was agreed that May 14th-21st should be a week for women all over the country to show how they feel about porn.

EVENTS to be arranged in Reading are:

Sat. 14th; Picket of sex shops-- Meet at Women's Centre. Old Shire Hall at 10.30 am.

Mon. 16th; Party at Women's Centre. Bring a bottle 8-late with a break at 9.30pm. for a Reclaim the Night March round Reading.

Wed. 13th; Film: "Not a Love Story"-- R.F.T. 109 Palmer Bdg. Whiteknights campus 8pm. (members + one guest only)

Thurs. 19th; Workshops, films etc. at Bulmershe College. Topics to include pornography, rape and incest.

Sat. 21st; National Day of Action in Soho organised by London PIVAW. We hope to hire a bus/coach, to be subsidised by PIVAW.

For more details and offers of help with publicity(+ cash) phone Lynn or Caroline on Rdg. 667517

READING'S HEALTH NEEDS WATCHING

Remember what the Oxford Regional Health Authority was talking about last year when it thought it had to "save" £12M from the NHS in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire? Closure of hospitals, more day surgery, residential qualifications for hospital admission, families being responsible for transport, food and laundry for hospital patients?

Well, they're only trying to "save" £8M so not all of that is happening yet. But what is happening is serious enough that a new pressure group, Reading Health Watch, has been set up to campaign to save the NHS as we know it and to expand its services to meet the people's need.

Here in the West Berkshire District (Reading, Henley, Newbury, Wokingham) the Health Authority is planning:

- closure of Prospect Park Hospital in Reading, the Henley War Memorial Hospital, and the casualty unit at Newbury
- closure of the Royal Court Holiday Home for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped (which took over 800 patients last year)
- stopping family planning services at Emmer Green and Woodley and reducing those at Battle, Henley and Newbury
- "privatisation" of domestic services at Wokingham Hospital, which would almost certainly mean loss of jobs and reduced level of service
- selling off tied accommodation for Health Service staff, pushing them onto local authority waiting lists

In addition, many services such as chiropody, speech therapy and health education are being cut and voluntary organisations working with the disabled are almost in despair as to how some of the needs of their clients are to be met. While the proportion of the population over pension age is increasing, health services - including hospital beds- for the elderly are being cut. The burden is transferred to "the community" - in practice meaning the daughters of elderly and disabled people are forced to devote themselves to caring for their parents with a minimum of support from the NHS.

The NHS was founded by the post-War Labour Government to make health care freely available to all at the point of need. That principle is being destroyed in this Region and across the country, as the service we have learnt to depend on suffers the death of a thousand cuts.

Reading Health Watch aims to make those cuts visible, to fight them in whatever way it can, and to publicly defend the basic principles of the NHS. Our next meeting is on Tuesday May 19th at 7.30 at the Centre for the Unemployed and all are welcome to come and help in this task.

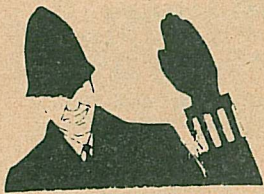
Pete

READING WOMEN'S PEACE GROUP

Originating from the BANC/Reading CND meetings, we are a small group of women trying to become active and useful in the peace movement in our own way. We discuss our involvement in the nuclear issue and ways of organising events for women such as a Day Group recently set up and a Weekend of Workshops to be held in May. The work requires a certain degree of commitment and willingness to take time for small tasks which we assign to each other every month. We need much more support to keep the meetings innovative and rewarding and welcome women of any age who feel they can help in the advancement of the Womens Peace Movement.

We meet at 71, Hamilton Road on the first Monday of each month at 8pm. Next meeting see events.

*In August 1982 the El Salvador government created a Human Rights Commission of its own. The president of this commission is the head of the National police, an organisation attributed with 10,000 political killings in 3 years. This commission was formed as part of an attempt to whitewash the Salvadorean regime's international image, and justify the 165 million dollar U.S. economic aid and 61 million dollar military aid forthcoming in 1983.



CLOWN COURT



Imagine for a moment your petty smuggler of drugs. A chameleon individual arriving at Heathrow Airport, very much like all the other holiday-makers and business people. It is easy to envisage a handbag, full of hash, swinging carelessly at their side; or their jacket collar, plump with coke.

But as she or he approaches the customs desk her or his face hardens into an almost painful expression of honesty.

The Vanishing Suitcase

This expression will often follow them all the way to the dock, and will hinder them and denounce them even as they manufacture the most plausible of alibis. Mr. l'Mumba (African for Smith) were just such an expression as he stood in the witness box, being interrogated by the Counsel for Prosecution. But unfortunately his alibi was not plausible at all.

"Truth to tell, Mr. l'Mumba, you're making all this up, aren't you?" murmured the Prosecution.

"No."

"But you went to Mrs. Henderson, and said, 'That's my case'."

"It looked like my case."

"Mrs Henderson says you put your hand on the case. At this point Mr. Whaite looked out from his office and saw you with your hand on the case."

"No. I didn't. I didn't have time to look at it."

"When he took you into his office Mr. Whaite says you were shivering."

"No. I wasn't."

- And perhaps he wasn't, but at that time he had no inkling of the British judicial system.

Mr. l'Mumba was charged with smuggling 13 kilos of cannabis from Nigeria to Britain. The only evidence the Prosecution had was that he had identified a case containing the cannabis as his. But as background to this Mr. l'Mumba appeared to have two passports, a brother who practiced his signature, and the unfortunate claim that his own case, the one he had thought he was identifying to Mrs. Henderson, had vanished. Besides this, the reason he gave for visiting England was weak: he had come to collect £2000 owed him by a particular company. The Prosecution pointed out that a return ticket from Nigeria had already cost him £700+.

But these facts were only circumstantial. The Prosecution had to admit that there was "No direct evidence" and "...nothing essentially concrete."

The Counsel for Defence (an unfortunately dramatic individual) was quick to highlight this. "There is no real link, except for the defendant's identification of his case." When Mr. l'Mumba was taken into the office, and the suitcase brought in and opened, he proceeded to deny that it was his. And at some earlier time all identifying tags and stickers had been removed from the case.

"There is no evidence linking the case to my client whatsoever," said the Defence. "It may have come from some other West African country, from Latin America, it may have come from anywhere..."

And as for the defendant's identifying the case to Mrs. Henderson, who was clearly a customs official, the Defence asked: "Extraordinary coolness, members of the jury, is it not, for a guilty man to draw attention to himself in this most obvious of fashions?"

But the jury were unmoved. Mr. l'Mumba was found guilty, and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

Certainty

How can the jury have been so sure? Prosecution's case was undeniably weak; Mr l'Mumba's alibi may have been true, or Henderson and Whaite may have simply considered him an opportune scapegoat. Perhaps it was more likely than not that Mr. l'Mumba was guilty as charged, but should any person be imprisoned on a likelihood?

In British courts it is repeatedly stressed that only if 10 of the jury are totally certain of the defendant's guilt should they return a verdict of Guilty. Trials such as the one I have just described force one to wonder at the frailty of evidence able to engender this curious state of mind - certainty.

An Invitation

The majority of people charged with smuggling at Heathrow, or via Heathrow, are committed to trial at Reading Crown Courts. Innumerable cases pass through the brightly-lit and cheerful courtrooms of Artillery House. Casefiles of cannabis are common. Usually they are unmarked or -labelled; and by the time the customs official becomes curious they have no owner. Cricketbats stuffed with heroin are not unknown; and herbal remedies come in numerous guises.

The alibis given are often extraordinarily inept: Someone gave the defendant an attache case to carry, a friend who subsequently vanished. The defendant hadn't thought it might contain anything illegal - but is unable to explain the presence of a cheque for £1000, found in their breast pocket. Or: A young man went to Ghana. He returned the next day with two new suitcases. When asked why he had returned so soon he said it was because 'the hotels were rubbish. They were all falling down.' The cases contained 24 kilos of cannabis, and his sentence totalled 5 years.



Such stories as these can be heard almost every day at Artillery House; they are illuminating, and fill one with a sense of moral superiority. It is for this reason that Judge Cecil Blumefield has offered the entire readership of Red Rag an invitation: come and see it for yourselves. You may leave the courthouse bitterly depressed, but at least you will discover what not to do.

Next time.

Mr. Jobsworth

I reported issue before last that THERE IS A CONSPIRACY. I am now in a position to describe another episode. A few days ago I arrived at Artillery House, crept through the fire door, hurried up the stairs, and arrived, in this steadfast manner, at the office of a Mr. Jobsworth. -After a polite cough, I entered, and informed said Jobsworth that though I now looked completely different (I had shaved) I was the same person who had come 3 weeks



earlier, asking about advance information on trials. He had asked me at the time if I were a member of the public and I, not realizing that members of the press were treated somewhat differently, had said, "Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, are you a member of the public?" asked Jobs-worthy.

"No," I said proudly. "I'm ah - um, a journalist."

Unfortunately this did not sway him; and when I showed him Red Rag, with the Clown Court column on AN INFORMATION CONSPIRACY, he became less helpfull than ever. "But are you a newspaper?" he demanded, when I told him I knew he sent advance lists to the Evening Post.

"Yes," I said, pointing out that Red Rag was read by maybe 3000 people.

"But it doesn't look like a newspaper," he sneered. "It could be anything. The Bogtown C. of E. has a parish magazine, but that isn't a newspaper." Then: "Are you a registered newspaper?"

"No," I said. "But you don't have to be registered to be a newspaper. It's a matter of convenience."

Even this did not convince him. I then made a terrible mistake: I admitted that Red Rag was free.

"There!" he cried, like a man suddenly inspired. "You can't be a newspaper! You have to flog newspapers, you know. Look," he said, waving the Evening Post in the air, "You have to flog the Evening Post!"

This was something even I couldn't dispute; but it was a point Jobsworthy continued to flog for a further $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour. Finally I gave up. Even a journalist can only take so much.

- Luke



One report about

NEW GAMES

NEW GAMES IN PALMER PARK (or, play your way to utopi@)

On sat 23rd with the sun beaming down, lots of people arrived at Palmer Park adventure playground to take part in a 'new games spectacular' (a what?). No-one really knew what to expect . . . but within a few minutes the 3 foot high 'minature Earth ball' had broken the ice, & about 30 big and little people were charging around the park in a no -rules game of 'push ball'. Scoring was almost impossible because the ball is so big, but no-one cared - the fun was in playing.

Then followed games of Glue-tag, Snake in the Grass, Blob, Wink Killer and many more. All the games were co-operative rather than competitive; even the Push-Ball because when the ball got trapped between two masses of pushing people every-one had to lift together to lift it out of the stale-mate.

The kids were amazing, they joined in all the games with no inhibitions, and made the transition from the competitive to co-operative games with no difficulty at all. We all had a couple of hours of absorbing FUN. I think we all realised that play is a lot more important to us than we often admit. The love, trust and happiness that can come out of non-competitive play is boundless. What also struck me was the kids will play with any-one; so if it's a nice day, and you feel like letting go, just wander down to your local park and join in the fun. Once you get to know the kids and they get to know you (which takes about 10 minutes) try introducing some 'new games'; and take it from there.

In co-operative play there are no losers, every-one feels good afterwards (if a little exhausted) not only in themselves, but towards the people they have been playing with.

Non-competitive games have got great potential, especially if the attitudes and spirit that go into a good co-operative game are carried into a philosophy for life.

Keep HAPPY . . . LOVE and PEACE Andrew.

P.S. Someone has written FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE

TEACH THEM LOVE, on one of the tarmac paths through Palmer Park, that says it all . . . Play your way to utopi@.

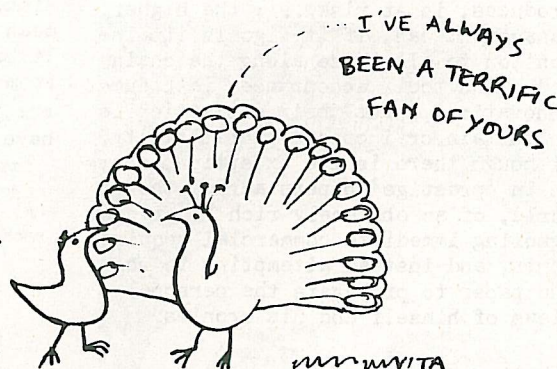
LIBERTARIAN GROUP

On wednesday the 11th of May there will be an introductory meeting of the University Libertarian group at 1pm in the executive office (upstairs in the Unioun). Anarchists, libertarians, revolutionary greens, students and non-students are welcome. No more sterile dogma and fake criticism- this is the real thing!

(Note: this will be the regular venue for the meetings, except on the 1st of June and after the end of term)

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY HOUSE

Newtown has its very own community house at 117 Cumberland Rd, faculties include information on state benefits and forming groups, coffee and chat mornings (mondays 10.30 to 12.00p.m.) Local Councillors also do surgeries. Anyone interested in getting involved with play provision for the summer or redecoration of the house can contact one of the house committe.



RED RAG'S NEW GAME THIS WEEK IS. GLUE -TAG

Get together as many people as you can.

Mark out the area of play.

Decide who the catchers are to be. (The more of you there are the more catchers you should have.)

START PLAYING.

If you are tagged then you must stop with your legs apart and your arms up in the air.

You are released if someone crawls through your legs.

The game ends either when every-one has been frozen by the catchers, or when every-one is too tired to keep on running. enjoy yourselves Andrew. xxxxxx

(pastel-uppers note: we call this 'stuck-in-the-mud' where I come from).

WHAT



Daily Mail
GUARDIAN
SUNDAY TIMES
Sunday People

the papers say -

Our society has many means of social control. Two institutions which particularly regulate our behaviour and thought are the police and the press. Anyone participating openly in anything innovative and/or "political" is quite likely to come into contact with one or both. Neither are exactly what they pretend to be, so it is well to be prepared in advance to deal with them and their dishonesties.

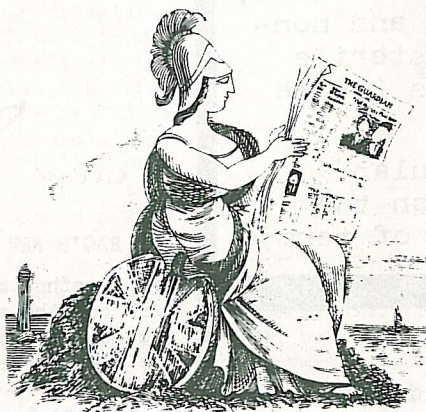
The 'media' consists of a variety of establishments, each strongly defined by the technology they 'use'. Many are inter-linked, and many of the individuals involved develop a shared perception of 'news' and how it should be reported. Even if an individual fails to absorb and then in turn express as theirs (internalise) the standards that newspapers constantly re-iterate and re-emphasise at all of us who read them, the structure of a newspaper is such that its contents fit a prescribed pattern.

The reporter will produce 'copy' that s/he thinks the sub-editor will like, because then there is more likelihood of it being printed and their careers being furthered...; the sub-editor will be limited on one side by the material submitted by the reporters and on the other by the knowledge that the finished product has to be consistently acceptable to the Editor, or his career, and ability to have any control at all over what the paper produces, is at risk...; the higher management can, if it signals its intention to all those along the chain and gains their acceptance, introduce innovations. But their motivation is to sustain or increase profitability, although there is the exception, common in 'prestige' papers across the world, of an obscenely rich Proprietor ignoring immediate commercial requirements, and instead attempting to use the paper to propagate the personal views of himself and his cronies.

As well as this structure, there are also a set of values shared by most journalists ("professional standards" is what they call it): look at any newspaper critically and you should be able to pick out a few. One dominant one is that something is more "newsworthy" if it is other than what is expected. This applies especially to what does occur; what does not occur, even if it was expected, is far less likely to be reported. As a classic example, if a demo goes as planned, it gets little coverage; if things happen otherwise, and especially if there is violence on what is planned to be a peaceful event, it becomes highly "newsworthy". If workers in a

nationalised industry don't go on strike to win a pay award, the "objective" press don't bother reporting the level of the pay award, however significant that fact may be in its own right. There has been the occasional small reference to the prison warders dispute, but no outraged headlines about interference in the freedom of the press, because the warders are not publicly telling the press about what is going on (because they have been "reminded" that the Official Secrets Act covers them).

This leads onto another very sensible press requirement that also happens to discriminate against fair reporting of some events: "Attribution" Papers such as the Evening Post have a policy of including as many quotations as possible; only, to give them credence, they should be attributable to someone. This is why a reporter will nearly always ask your name - somebody to whom the information can be attributed in print. There are many occasions when only a fool would give their name. There are also many occasions where many of us might feel it is wrong as well as stupid for one or two individuals to allow themselves to be singled out by the press. For single events it may not be too bad, especially where the reporter appears prepared to quote several different people by name (but remember, it is not the reporter who takes the final decision of what goes in and what is cut from the final version.) In a sustained campaign, it can mean press reports (on which most people base their impressions) always come from one person's version, for reporters prefer to deal with people they have previously had contact with.



In any situation which is not completely chaotic and violent, the authorities often find it hard to believe that there are no leaders. As soon as one or two individuals allow themselves to be seen as anything more

than just individuals like all the rest, then there is the danger that they will soon be seen as leaders, both by the authorities, and by people who would otherwise be perfectly capable of being self-responsible themselves. If we could just keep our nerve, we need have no leaders at all.



The press generally likes things all to be in easily recognisable form: clichés and easily understood situations and phrases are their stock-in-trade. Newspaper reports are designed for the lowest common denominator of the market they aim for, so anything that hasn't been reported before by that or a similar paper has little hope of fair coverage. This, again quite natural, feature of the press system discriminates against any new ideas and thinking.

"Novelty", however, is hastily snatched up. Trivial, easily appreciated (because there is so little to appreciate?), but with a slight suggestion of innovation, it is one of the few things that gives any credibility to the word "news".

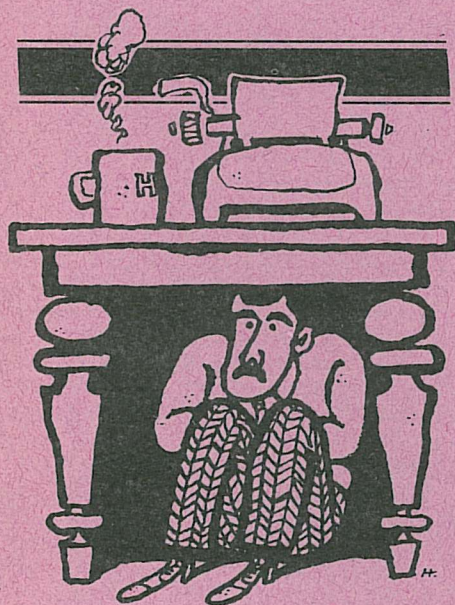
Generally, all things are described in clichés, with catchphrases and headlines deliberately provocative or spectacular to grab attention. All this serves to simplify and distort the truth of the event.

Clear examples of this arose from the occupation of the cinema at Cemetery Junction a few weeks ago. The Evening Posts coverage revealed several weaknesses of the press and Red Rag's coverage similarly was disappointing in failing to convey an accurate image of the occasion. (The Chronic just gave a brief summary on the back page, much like the Evening Posts material).

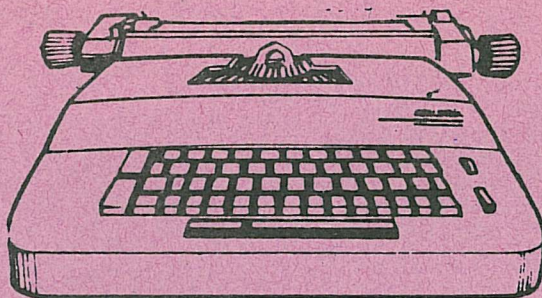
For a start, the headlines: "CINEMA SIT-IN BY TEENAGERS Hundreds occupy empty ABC for an all-night party" was the main headline on the front of Saturday's

paper. There wasn't much sitting from what I saw, and I would be surprised if many of the people there would have used the words "sit-in", but it is a convenient cliché from the past, suitable from sticking on anything that seems like "student protest", however slightly.

Monday's paper wasn't so innocent: the main headline was "60 YOUTHS IN GANG BATTLE" over another story, but right next to it was the connection, "And trouble breaks out at a 'peaceful' sit-in - APOLOGY AS CINEMA SIT-IN ENDS IN TROUBLE". That day's story is 'trouble' and 'disappointed organisers'. No suggestion that that weekend had seen a joyful sustained, albeit limited, rejection of what "they" ("organisers" all) have to offer us. This feature, that we, without "funding", "official status", "representatives", "elected leaders" "structure" without requesting permission, negotiations or any of that "realistic" crap, had taken what we wanted and put a wasted community resource to good use, was undermined as well as ignored by Tuesday's coverage. "Sit-in group plead for youth club in cinema"; "Give us somewhere to go, plead sit-in leaders" on Wednesday. Note as well that "hundreds of teenagers" is replaced by "organisers" which in turn is replaced by "leaders" as the days pass. The longer the paper has to assimilate the correct information, the more able are they to fit the story into a familiar pattern that "they" can understand. Accuracy can go get stuffed.



One cause of journalists "turning" a story like this, often without even realising that they are doing it, is their need for "attribution". Whether the active participants give names or not, journalists approach "respectable" people with some connection to give their views AND names. Hence a third of the text of the first report is devoted to Chief Inspector David Clark of Reading Police and Peter Baker, a prospective buyer of the place. What was't incorrect (most of the policeman's pronouncements) could have been said by anyone,



THE Sun

but the important thing was that they should give their names. Monday's report was apparently almost exclusively drawn from a conversation with one person who was there, but who felt "responsible" and is accordingly very subjective (although not explicitly so). Tuesday, the police were again given almost a third of the coverage. Wednesday, the police were at last left out of it, to be replaced by the views of Berkshire County Council's Senior Youth Officer (4"), Hexagon Director (2"), and EMI's Press Officer (2"); a full half of the total report!

The views of all these "worthies" get an enormously disproportionate share of the coverage compared to the views of participants in the actual event which made it all "news" in the first place.

Red Rag's coverage doesn't get distorted in the same way, but even so it appears to reflect the preoccupations of the writer as much as the actual events. The cinema report appears to be an attempt to compress a mass of different ideas, events and feelings into a coherent story, which of course distorts it. It reads very strange when it appears to be telling me, and everyone else, the things that prompted us to participate. One person's view, even five persons' version, that should be made explicit: they shouldn't attempt to portray it misleadingly (dishonestly?) as a full objective account. This leads to minor inaccuracies as well as major differences of emphasis. For instance, troubles and tensions I experienced on the Friday don't feature in any of the coverage. Perversely, much attention is paid to negative things on the Saturday, which I felt was much more relaxed and more together, if not quite so exciting. I suppose the fault is mostly on the part of those who don't bother to write down and contribute their experience of such events, rather than on the part of those who do make that effort. Ideally we should all put a bit more in to Red Rag?

To get back to the straight press, the whole, largely inflexible structure serves to defend a standard set of ideas and values from any radical change, but if one understands some of the criteria by which the people in it operate, one can have some small influence:

The only point at which most of us can hope to influence what the press contains is through contact with the reporters. Obviously, if you're getting no coverage and you want it, the reporters are the people to get hold of. To maximise coverage, you can try just giving them as much material as possible. Only this is

often counter-productive: if there is too much detail, dry facts, too little "relevance", or bad presentation, the journalists, busy people that they are, may never get around to reading it. But, even if you make it highly readable, this approach is just patiently accepting the press's

requirements and feeding them what they want in the hope of some return, a hope not always fulfilled. When it is, it can be counter-productive.

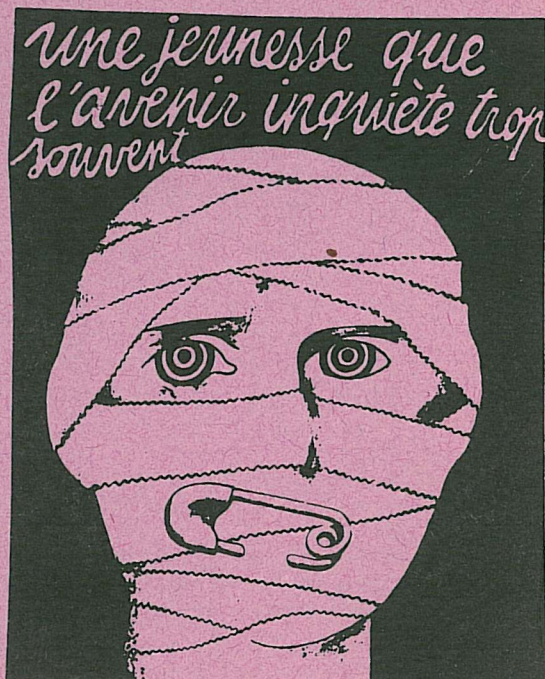
So, rather than naively giving as complete an account as possible, one can aim to deny the reporter the opportunity to produce a slanted, partial report by being selective oneself. If you suspect that one element that you see as minor is such that the press may blow it up out of all proportion, you are totally justified in withholding that information from the press.

Many people in Reading and the surrounding area, I am sure, have had experiences of the press distorting events they have participated in. Perhaps we could get together sometime and share our experiences, swap notes on useful, and useless, contacts and develop an understanding of how we can use rather than be used by the media.

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned the police as well as the press. Experiences of the Thames Valley Police trying to deal with new situations are fascinating: if anybody has any, we'd be very interested to hear from them. A bit of publicity for their inefficiency, their abuses of what powers they already have, and the implications of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill would be a good thing.

More worthwhile than writing to your MP, at least. Anybody who was in the cinema will probably agree that thousands of stamps could have been wasted writing to Gerry Vaughan without us getting anywhere at all. Taking what is ours by right anyway is the only thing that makes sense these days.

Cliff.



LESSONS FROM BURGHFIELD

As it would seem that civil disobedience and non-violent direct action are going to play a major part in the future of the peace movement; and with the Upper Heyford blockade only a few weeks away, I would like to open a discussion in red rag about the lessons we can draw from the mistakes we made at Burghfield this year.

The biggest mistake to my mind was in allowing our selves to be relegated to either end of the Meeting -s by the M.O.D.-afterall we were taking part in an act of civil disobedience, and I think that the right of the M.O.D. to a) own the land,

and to b) refuse us permission to cross it, as well as thier right to make weapons on it is questionable. I feel that an organised trespass of people approaching the main gate from either end of the Meetings and perhaps from the footpath too would have been more effective, even if we had all been arrested before we reached the main gate, and the factory had remained open. This course of action would have avoided the problems created by the fact that the meetings is an access road to a number of houses as well as the weapons factory.

Given that we were blockading peoples homes I think that the second mistake we made was in not giving people easy access to thier homes. Surely ~~it is not~~ people have the right to live wherever they choose. I'm sure it is not within the principles of non-violence to refuse people access to thier homes.

I feel that we should have allowed anyone who said they were a resident of one of the houses to pass through unhindered. For if we are working towards a world of love, peace and trust, then we must practice what we preach.--If we mistrust then we create a world of mistrust-- Even if someone did lie to get through the blockade to get to work; we would have won the battle of truth by trusting thier dishonesty.

Our third mistake - which we made largely because of our inexperience; - was that some of the workers managed to clamber through/over or around the blockade. This could have been prevented if we had been lying or sitting more closely together, especially at the edges. These 'breaches' of the picket caused quite a lot of confusion amongst us; in the confusion people began to stand up and shout this reaction only increased the confusion.

Because of this I think future blockades should remain as still as possible, and also as quiet as possible. Another mistake I think we made was in allowing the police and press to move as they pleased through our ranks - it would have given the blockade more symbolic importance if no-one at all had been allowed through.

Lastly I feel that the nature of non-violent direct action needs to be better understood by those who intend to use it. It is not, as one blockader said: "just not hitting the workers if they try to get through". It is the expression of a philosophy of love, and understanding. We must try and love everyone, including the people who make and use the bombs. I am sure we should direct our energy to converting these people and not simply opposing them; we can only do that by ~~achieving~~ gaining thier respect - we will never do it if all they feel for us is fear and hate.

Love and Peace Andrew. xxx

FIDDLER'S REVENGE

The 'super-snoopers' - the Government Spies who prey on the unemployed and single mothers - are on the prowl in Clydeside.

They chalked up a significant victory over Christmas: by capturing an out-of-work man who was working casual in a Glasgow store - as Santa Claus...

But these down-market detectives don't have it all their own way. In Ferguslie Park recently the police were phoned about a dubious character lurking in the back-courts. It resulted in a Snooper being held for five hours on suspicion of child molesting.

(Thanks to 'Phil the fiddler' writing in "Practical Anarchy", newsheet of the Clydeside anarchists.)

THIS YEAR'S "BIG BOOM" INDUSTRY - 1983

Peace Paraphernalia - do YOU need it?

If you go out and buy a copy of "SANITY" (sic) "Voice of CND", then you will find yourself being sold not only the concept of unilateral nuclear armament but also that of consumerism.

Would you like to buy, for instance, some "Totally Waterproof" waterproofing compound which has "kept feet dry in places as far distant as South Georgia (South Atlantic)"? Or pine beds "that don't cost a bomb" (from £50)? Or a "bold, historic, delightful Poets against the Bomb video" (only £24.99)?

Hey you lefty white-collar workers/young trades unionist cats, how would you like to increase your workplace-cred and keep your mates guessing into their Guinesses during the lunch "hour" with an upfront CND tie - buy them by the 100 and get 25% discount. Never again will you be stuck for a fanbelt for the Marina. Help your friends keep up their trousers during a nuclear holocaust!

Why not amuse yourself with the Peace Pack (£4.75)?

Albert Einstein is therein quoted as saying: "Mere praise of peace is easy but ineffective - what is needed is to achieve participation in the fight against war and everything that leads to it."

If this is the case then you really ought to get a copy of the "soft-back 204-page book advertised: "Naked as the day" - an entertaining investigation of the strengths and weaknesses of the nude-leisure movement!"

"Alternatively", why not invest in a pair of Spring Dungarees (£14.50) with a women's peace symbol on the pocket as an optional extra (£1 which goes to the "women's peace movement" - who exactly do they mean?). Presumably if you're a man you don't need a symbol - because you're a man. Ideal for toking in the mud at Glastonbury (at £14 for a weekend ticket).

Plaster your sagoul with Peace Badges - if you buy enough, they'll act as personal armour - handy for those impromptu encounters with "certain right-wing organisations".

Following in the wake of CND jewellery, watch out for the new fashion craze of '84 - recycled NHS Gandhi/John Lennon spectacles. All we are saying is give peace a chance... Would you hit a guy with glasses?

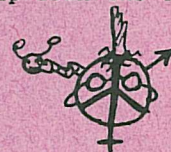
You could always pay to prove you believe The Obvious by joining National CND: Adults £6, Couple £9, Student £3, Under-21s £1, Unwaged £2, (OAPs-tough?).

For the sake of peace -don't buy it - live in it!

Cynical Ranters against Bull Shit.

Large donations in used notes please to: The prospective Reading and district local election candidates - for Plaid Cymru. May you never crap down the back of your wellies.

Iechyd da boyos!



READING PPU met for first time - pacifist group poised to carry out anti-militarist actions and more. For meetings see 'Events'. Contact c/o Box 10, Acorn Bookshop.

THE SCROUNGER The first issue of a new publication is now available. Produced at the Centre for the Unemployed, it's free and monthly. (Grab the first issue now before the funding's cut off.)

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

Where I come from, they say 'There's nowt so queer as folk.' And there have been some funny goings-on down our street these past weeks.

■ SLOW-MOTION-ACTION-REPLAY

First, one of our local leaders, Gerald Vaughan (Tory MP for Reading South, & Minister for Consumer Affairs) scores own goal of the month. Vaughan, 'a smooth but not very successful politician' (Sunday Times, leader, 24.4.1983), attempted to instigate a witch hunt at the 'benign but innocuous' National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB). He threatened to withhold half their annual (£6m) grant until they'd 'put their house in order'. You know: don't actually give anyone useful advice about their rights (could be 'political'); sack workers (80% of whom are volunteers) who might have political thoughts on the premises, or even in their own time (let's keep it neat and tidy); get rid of anyone whose other commitments might interfere with CAB work (many paid workers are part-time). No prizes, then, for spotting CND chairperson Joan Ruddock as a prime target: she happens to do part-time CAB work in Reading.

■ MOONLIGHTING

Joan Ruddock can take care of herself: could eat Vaughans for breakfast, I guess. But it was amusing to see people speaking up for both her and the CAB: many jokes about company directors moonlighting as Tory MPs, and so on. And it wasn't lost on some observers that the CAB is, in some areas, a fine model of blue-rinse voluntarism. Even Patrick McNair-Wilson, Tory MP for Newbury (where Ms Ruddock lives) opined that Vaughan had lost his marbles.

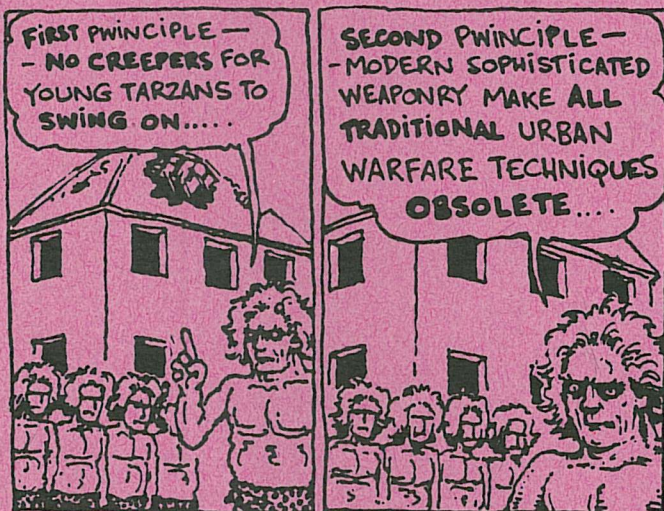
■ OMELETTE SUPRÊME

Vaughan, humiliated, has backed down, and is currently trying to hide behind a face-saving formula. Too late: already much egg on face. So far, so good.

■ SOMETHING NASTY IN THE WOODSHED

But wait. Is l'affaire Vaughan purely coincidental with these other goings-on: the paranoid activities of the right-wing Coalition for Peace through Security, the emergence of gossip-columnist and Tory hopeful Olga Maitland's so-called 'Women for Defence', the RAF Club's buzzing of the stand together day down at Nuclear Valley, the Krazy Kardinal of Westminster's finger-wagging at the turbulent Monseigneur Kent, and Tarzan's recent muscle-bound antics on the Berlin wall?

[Hm...this is getting a little far-fetched, isn't it? -]



■ IT'S A FAIR COP, GUVNOR

Meanwhile ... back on Maggie's farm, the Pat Controller has been trying to push through the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. This is designed mainly to keep us off the streets and locked up in the safety of our own homes. Even dampish observers concede that the bill will replace policing by consent with policing by coercion. Controller Whitelaw has, under pressure from influential lobbyists (mainly doctors, but also lawyers, clerics, and even journalists), been playing divide-and-rule. This means:

concessions to some 'professional' interests, but keeping the essence of the bill, which will make it less safe for ordinary folk - like you and me - to walk down our street at night without fear of arbitrary stop-and-search, arrest without warrant, and detention without charge. Is this an exaggeration? Watch this space for more details.

■ PUTTING ON THE FRIGHTENERS

What will they think of next? Well, grown-ups out there will recall that it wasn't so long ago that you didn't have to ask for permission to demonstrate, sir. You just told your local station Inspector, in advance. Now they're talking about making us pay for our parades. You've all heard about that 'one bad apple in every barrel', haven't you? You know: the evidence-hustler, the verbal-twister, the fitter-up, the spare-time porn dealer. This, of course, was small stuff, and strictly freelance. The next really big one to crack: protection. But even with the encouraging climate of private enterprise in today's constabularies,



a protection racket needs organization. A governmental Green Paper (Review of Public Order Act 1936 and related legislation) currently doing the rounds offers the ideal framework. It's simple. You want to march? What you need is protection, sonny-boy, police protection. Just slip a pony to the Inspector standing in the doorway over there, and we'll see you come to no harm.

Think about it: the price of free speech - we have to pay the Old Bill (geddit?)

■ THAT'LL DO NICELY, SIR

Now, we know that police presence at demonstrations doesn't come cheap. But it wouldn't have taxed the intelligence of the greenest cadet to realize, say, that what was needed down Nuclear Valley on April Fool's Day wasn't £200,000 worth of constables, but a few hundred smiling traffic wardens. That would have provided real safety on the streets. Cheap, too.

■ GOOD TIMES ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER

So, dear reader, watch out for this one. The people at NCCL seem to think that it'll be laughed out of court, like the Vaughan shambles. But if Tarzan, TINA, and the Fat Controller are still running the farm after the next vote-in, what's the betting that it'll get dusted down and wheeled out again?

■ ROAD SAFETY

Is there a moral to this parable? Well, that's for you to work out. But do remember, peace-lovers, before you turn in tonight (tired but happy after celebrating the workers' holiday): sending ban-the-bomb postcards to each other might be a comforting way of getting temporary relief to the guilt pangs ... but road safety comes first. Keep watching this space.

Like I was saying, down our street, they say 'It never rains but it pours'. What are they trying to tell us?

Paul Straight

POP RECORDS

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2

PICCADILLY CIRCUS

They sit

Gazing hollow

At the circus and its shallow promise

The doorstep to the lands' gayest nightlife

Materialist splatters of Coca-Cola and Skol lager

But take a closer look at its content

Behind the plastic jing

The distant tourist beauty

Look closer, closer, closer...

They lie there,

Distant

Mindless

Pathetic.

No ground beneath them

Just piss-stained streets

Echoing with car-horns and meaningless tongues;

For them the glamour doesn't exist

Their happiness does not persist

Beyond the daily needle pump

The half-chewed Wimpy hamburger

Their minds intermittently threatened

By blue uniformed wardens

That kick them

Out of public view

In the gutter.

They get no help,

They're not even statistics

They don't exist in your conscience

fence

So next time you're on your way to Marks & Spencer

Step out and look

Out of your materialistic dream

Into reality

You'll find gold paint over grey paving stones

The misery that doesn't exist -

Until it's your kid lying there...

Metal in their arm, cleaned with puke-stained

Tubeway toilet tissue

Stench of blood sweat and chemicals

Lost in a temporary high

Impending paranoia of tomorrow

Living the final stages in their death-life

Eros has no arrows for them.

....by Richard Teed...

CULTURE ✓ CORNER

Reading Camera Club: Annual Exhibition at Reading Museum and Art Gallery, until May 7th.

Despite local colour from France, Iceland, Nepal and Samarkhand there is little recognisable as Reading in this exhibition, just two grey prints by Ron Harris of the Station and Pell Street. Clive Harrison won the Pictorial Cup with 'Wonderful World'; mother and child in what looks like a highly radio-active swirl - perhaps this was Reading after all. He also won the Portrait Plaque with 'Wonder', of a young White girl, one of a set of four portraits of children's faces. The other three are 'Indian Acrobat', 'Oriental Smile', and 'Bright Eyes', of a young Black boy.

The portraits of named people, 'Greg' and 'Sophia' by Timothy Colliou and 'Liz' and 'Nick Read' by Antony Colliou for example, suggest a whole personality. Compare these with 'Watching the Wrestling' also by Timothy Colliou, and Bill Pinkey's study of a young dazed-looking punk clutching a can of beer, 'Special Brew', pinned against the studio wall. The portraits tell you as much about the photographers as they do about their subjects.

Bill Gamblin's dazzlingly-coloured seaside 'Sand Spades' won the Record and Applied Cup. Like most of the exhibitors it seems he had to leave Reading to get what he wanted. It shows what you can do with your holiday snaps but what about the rest of the year? Does this town make people's hands shake or something?

Guy

THE HUMBLE WIMP

Oh my God! A Racist! I crawl on my unworthy belly to bow and scrape at the feet of anyone who was offended by either of the "racist" cartoons (the second wasn't published). It was a simple mistake and I am a very simple person and I hope it won't happen again blah blah woof woof etc etc.....

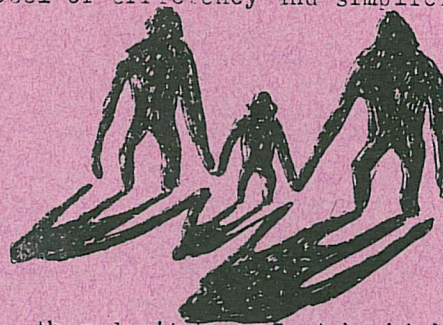
I was interested in Ken Peacock's ideas about anti-celtism being linked with anti-terrorism, but I think everyone is reading too much into the WIMP cartoons. All I attempt to do is take a subject which I feel quite strongly about in either a positive or negative way and humourise it. If people can see the humour in the cartoons, then I am pleased though obviously the idea is to get the reader to think about the underlying subject.

I haven't written anything this heavy since I left college. Finally I would like to point out that this is the first time I've written in RED RAG.

Martyn Cooper (WIMP)

IF I WERE AN APE MAN....

Apes have a very low crime rate. They pay no taxes, never go to war, never go into debt. They have no population explosion nor any threatened food shortage. No one has to spend big ad dollars to tell them, "Never put bananas in the refrigerator." They don't need a beautification programme because they don't spoil their surroundings. They don't pollute their air; don't waste their water. Their government is a model of efficiency and simplicity.



True, they don't have Scotch whisky, cellophane, jet planes, ice cubes or football, but they HAVE established a balanced equilibrium with their natural environment. A million years ago, an ape-like creature came swinging out of the trees and said, "I'm going to stand on two feet, call myself Man, and build a BETTER world." ISN'T IT TIME WE GOT STARTED?

TWELTH NIGHT & BOBBY AND THE SODA POPS
CND/BANC BENEFIT (Last Sat 23rd, as advertised in R.R.)

BEFORE reviewing the groups it is perhaps best to say that the evening made only a slight profit so that everyone that didn't turn up, all I can say is that you are the ones who missed out and you'd better be there next time.

THE disco got a few brave people bopping and set the mood for a relaxed and carefree night out. Bobby and the Soda Pops carried off their first gig with a good deal of audience participation. Their style of music (Doowop/Jazz/Rock n' Roll) isn't really done by anyone else I've heard of and it was unusual and surprisingly good fun, though the sound quality was a bit muffled.

TWELTH Night, who only stepped in to replace After Dark who let everyone down by cancelling only a few days before, (THANKS LADS) came on to the applause of their fans and the cheers and clapping got louder for each number. Their slick, well practised style was well appreciated by the audience and despite people around me trying to find the name of a group who they sounded like, no one succeeded. The Group seem to be going from strength to strength and there is little an inexperienced 'hack' like myself can say about them that hasn't already been said by a 'proper' critic. Suffice to say the whole evening was a good crack. Public thank-yous to all concerned for their endeavours.

Keep on Rockin' BASSO MIRVANA



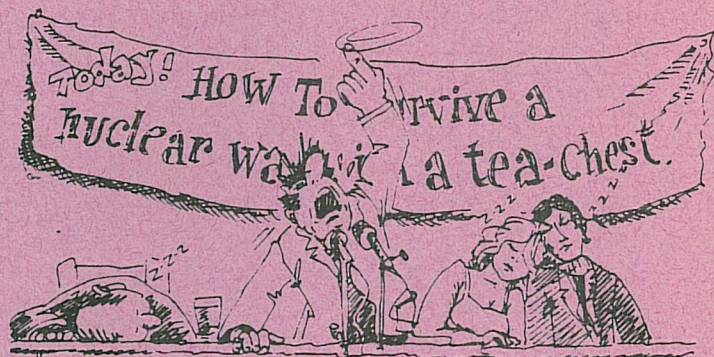
RED RAG EVENTS

from Sunday May 1st

- Sun 1** May Day at Greenham "Huge children's party ...family Sunday picnic...reclaim Common land...bring musical instruments...positive force of mayday hope...join us in our laughter and the ripple will become a tidal wave" Possibly women and kids only.
- Irish Freedom Movement demo in Birmingham, commemorating the hunger strike deaths. Details from 01-274-3951. Organised by Sinn Fein Britain. (Compiler's note: I think Sinn Fein are just as authoritarian as the Brits. Both prey on the sectarian divide which has kept Ireland in its place and politicians on top for centuries. P.S. "Outta Control", 25p monthly, available at Acorn, reports the situation from the perspective of people who live in it.)
- First of the Month meeting at the Women's Centre (basement of Old Shire Hall, entrance just through Forbury Arch) at 8pm. All women welcome.
- Mon 2** "Propaganda by Deed" - history, theory and practice. Presented by Reading Anarchists. Ring 666681 for venue.
- Ecology Party meet at 25 de Beauvoir Road. Details from Maria on 663195.
- Tue 3** ROAR (Animal Rights) - pub meeting, 8pm. Back room of the Crown, Crown St.
- Tilehurst CND "Report of a visit to the USSR by a Quaker". Plus (maybe) something on peace canvass and forthcoming local elections 13 Wardle Avenue, 8pm.
- BANC/CND Women's Group Planning for next weekend. 71 Hamilton Road, 8pm.
- Woodley and Earley Peace Group - Peace canvass. 14 Portrush Close, 8pm.
- Wed 4** Berufsverbot (West German practice of making sure anyone Left of Ghenghis Khan "never works again" in anything funded by the govt, e.g. sweeping the street, brain surgery.) - Planning meeting of local campaign, 79 Baker St, 7.30pm. Open to all interested.
- West Reading CND - Doing the Peace Canvass (you mean everyone else has only been talking about it?), start 6.30pm at 8 Chester St
- Socialist Workers' Party meets every Weds at 8pm in the Red Lion, Southampton St.
- Thurs 5** "Natural First-Aid Remedies" - informal talk in the Thames Valley Natural Health Centre series "Help Yourself to Health". 8pm, Friends' Meeting House, Wokingham. 50p. Details from Solo, Crowthorne 2061 or Ian, Bracknell 25343.
- Ballot-Stuffing - It would appear that the most vulnerable and gullible sections of the community are at risk from certain people who are only after their votes. Don't be conned - stay at home.
- Fri 6** "Alternatives to Nuclear Power" - a Conservation Society talk by Dr George Whitfield (from the University). Refreshments. Free. 7pm, George Palmer School, Northumberland Avenue. For details ring 868442.

Reading Gay Switchboard - every Friday evening 7-9pm, on 597269.

- Fri 6** "Women for Peace" - a weekend of workshops (assertiveness training, peace camps, non-violent direct action....), speakers (medical consequences of nuclear war, "emergency planning") and skill-sharing, run by women for women. "Increase your power to oppose the nuclear threat." Women-only social on Sat. Creeche + meals provided. £2.50 (£2 to the jobfree) per day. (?At Reading Centre for the Unemployed). Send your pennies (to 'Reading CND') to Women's Weekend Workshop, PO Box 158, Reading. Details 61261, 479358.
- Sun 8** Women's Centre Open Day from 10 to 4:
10-12 video + discussion group
12-1 lunch - bring bottle & food
1pm opening of Nearly New Shop
"Spontaneous entertainment"! (Bring an instrument) Workshops, stalls, info, lots more. Ring Sue 867355 for details. (Girls' Club, 2.30-4.30, and Music Club, 11-12 are scheduled for today, I don't know if they're still on.)
- East Reading Rights Group - information stall outside the church on Cemetery Junction, 11-1 every Sat. EERG is very short of people to help - see Thurs 12th below.
- Upper Heyford - leafletting in Town Centre. Contact Sarah, 667204, for details.
- "Medical Consequences of Nuclear Weapons" - 7.30 Chiltern Edge Centre, Sonning Common.
- Youth CND Festival - Brockwell Park, Brixton Assemble 11.30 at Embankment, then stroll to music, stalls, theatre etc at 12.30.
- SWAG (Save Waste and Gain) - monthly waste paper collection (proceeds to local charities from Tilehurst Keymarkets; Palmer Park; Northumberland Avenue; St Martin's Precinct, Caversham; Recreation Road, Tilehurst; cattle market car park.
- Vegetarian Dining - good (vegan) eats for £2, bring a bottle if you want a drink, or a musical instrument if you want atmosphere. 7.30 sharp, Fairview Community Centre, George St. Tickets in advance only, from Acorn. Buy "early to avoid disappointment", at any rate by Thurs 5th.



- Sun 8** RED RAG Collective meeting happens every four weeks and everyone interested is welcome. At 4pm - for venue ring 581509 or 666681.
- Mon 9** Peace Pledge Union meets at Flat 6, 117 Kendrick Road. Ring 867955 for details.
- South Reading BANC - Doing Peace Canvass (there, they've said it too). Starts 6.30, S. Reading Community Centre, N'land Avenue.
- Anarchists - for cheap entertainment try ringing 666681 and asking for the venue. (8pm every Monday)
- Tue 10** Berks Anti-Nuclear Campaign (BANC) General Meeting. 8pm, Friends' Meeting House, Church St (off London St). Details elsewhere.

- Wed 11 "Education or Privilege - the Grammar School Controversy". Talk by Wilfred Wood, ex-head of a Peterborough comprehensive, with open discussion. 8pm, St Mary's Centre, Chain St (Organised by Guild of Co-operators)
- East Reading BANC - Video + discussion. 8pm, 21 Eastern Avenue.
- BANC "Saturday Stall" meeting (whatever that means. All helpers and potential helpers are wanted at 8pm, 32 Juniper Way, Tilehurst. Then on to the 'Bird in Hand'.
- SWP - as last Wed.
- Thu 12 Amnesty - Adriana Borquez, former Argentine prisoner of conscience. 8pm, St Mary's Centre Chain St.
- East Reading Rights Group meeting at Wycliffe Church, Cemetery Junction, 8pm. If you want to join but can't make it, phone Elizabeth 665589 or Sarah 666184 or come along to the stall (Sats 11 - 1).
- "Health Care" - Women and the Health Service, the Black Report, alternatives, well women's clinics, using the services. Session 4 in a series of 6 on Women's Health. 7.30, Centre for the Jobfree, East St. Tutor Sue Lister. £1 (50p unwaged) For creche, lift, babysitting, details, contact G.Stewart, 49 Northumberland Avenue. (W.E.A.)
- RED RAG copy deadline and 'editorial' meeting to decide what will go in next time and who will do all the work. Ring Clive 64545 or Sue 666324 for details, or if you want to help.
- "Self Expression" - TVNHC talk, details as last Thursday.
- Claimants' Action Group - as last Thursday.
- "Who Really Runs the Country?" Not, it would appear, the Labour Party Young Socialists, or they wouldn't be making such a fuss. The fuss starts at 8pm, South Reading Community Centre, Northumberland Avenue.
- Sat 14 Anti-Militarist Week starts. No details yet. Try contacting PPU (Box 10, Acorn Bookshop).
- RED RAG paste up and printing. Phone as on Thursday if you'd like to help.
- Anti-Porn Week starts too, with a picket of sex shops. Meet at Women's Centre, Old Shire Hall, Abbey St, 10.30. Article elsewhere.
- Your rights - ERRG stall as last Saturday.
- Assoc for Humanistic Psychology in Britain - Open meeting, 10.30 - 4, St Mary's Centre, Chain St. Details and booking (£1) from Malcolm Young, 30 Ferndale Ave, or 595189.
- Vegans' Social Evening - A chance for new & old members of the Vegan group to get together. 7pm, 12 Tofrek Terrace (Brock Barracks). Ring 597191 to say you are coming.
- Sun 15 Berkshire Peace Movement - Non-violent Direct Action dayschool. 10 - 4.30, Reading Centre for the Unemployed, East St. Creche + basic refreshments will be provided. Films, videos and various workshops, probably including 'Nonviolence', 'Anti-Cruise Consumer Campaign', 'Blockading', 'Nonviolent Action in the Towns' - let us know any other issues you want covered in advance. Contact Cliff 667180, or drop a note to Box 17, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St. (To be followed next Sunday by preparation for Upper Heyford.)
- Coley Nurseries - open day 2.30 - 6, Wensley Road.
- "The Enemy Within" (not quite sure about this...) 6.30, St Mary's Centre. (West Reading Festival)

RED RAG collating folding and labelling in the morning, distribution in the afternoon. Again phone 666324 or 64545 to offer help.

- Mon 16 Anti-Porn Week - Party at Women's Centre, 8-late, bring a bottle. Women only. There'll be a break at 9.30 for a Reclaim the Night march round Reading. Then on with the fun.
- Anarchists - as last Mon, I suppose.
- Ecology Party - 38 Longbarn Lane, 8pm. Details Maria 663195.
- Tue 17 Katesgrove Residents Assoc - Electing a new committee, meeting the new councillors, local gossip etc. (AGM) 7.30pm, Wellington Arms, Whitley St. Open to all.
- Wed 18 "Not a Love Story" - Film for Anti-Porn Week at Reading Film Theatre, room 109, Palmer Building, University Whiteknights campus. 8pm. (Only RFT members + 1 guest each, strictly speaking.) £1.50 (£1)
- Civic Society - open meeting. Lord Escher (architect) leads a panel of "distinguished speakers. 8pm. Venue to be announced.

Advance Notice:---

A Walk for Life - Faslane to Greenham, May 19 till August 6th.

"In 1983 the world's future lies in the balance. Fear has driven us under the shadow of extinction to a half-world of broken hopes. Nevertheless, all over Europe women and men have woken up to a determination that one day we will be at peace.

"We now stand at the turning point of civilisation: either we choose death or life; to hide from the truth or with a clear calm voice sing life's music for all to hear.

"Whatever our choice we must make it now.

"All of us have our own way of working for peace. That is right. We all have a contribution to give which is our own. It is often simple actions and ideas which touch people - which makes them think: yes, this is my responsibility too.

"Please join us, this summer, in a walk for life; to declare our commitment to peace, to feel the future start to breathe again... We want to live.

"We are walking from Faslane, a Scottish nuclear-submarine base, to Greenham Common, where this year 96 of the new generation of nuclear weapons, the Cruise Missiles, are due to arrive. We shall be walking to discover a way out from under the nuclear shadow, to find our common humanity.

"Please share your love and hope with us..."

For further information contact: 31 Ickburgh Rd, Clapton, London E5 (01-806-4615)

May 24 Women's Day for Disarmament "...to leave their usual occupation for the day and to take creative and imaginative actions to stop the siting of nuclear weapons..."

May 31 - June 3 "Together We can Close Upper Heyford"

July 4 - 8 International Blockade at Greenham to stop Cruise.

Music Workshop at Reading Centre for the Unemployed - the evenings are to be used for workshops / band practices (not more than two bands per evening - be early) on alternate weeks. Come along on Thurs 5th to the Centre (4-6 East St) at 6pm if you want to put your name or band down for some playing time over the next two months.

Timetable:---

May Thu 5 - Workshop	June Thu 2 - Workshop
Tue 10 - Bands	Tue 7 - Bands
Tue 17 - Workshop	Thu 16 - Workshop
Mon 23 - Bands	Wed 22 - Bands
	Thu 30 - Workshop
	July Thu 7 - Bands



VOTE EARLY

VOTE OFTEN



Dear Red Rag,

The campaign initiated by BANC/Reading CND to have Reading declared a Nuclear Free Zone was stopped at the April Reading Borough Council meeting, when the Liberal and Conservative groups combined to reject a Labour proposal to declare Reading a Nuclear Free Zone. Under Council standing procedures the subject cannot be raised again for another 6 months and, according to the speeches made, it seems unlikely that the Liberal or Conservative groups would change their views, and a second attempt would also be rejected. Fortunately, the local Borough Council elections on May 5th give the electorate the chance to alter the political balance on the Council and by asking all candidates their views on this matter, to elect a council in favour of a Nuclear Free Zone and actively working for nuclear disarmament.

In most wards, the choice of candidate will be straightforward. In four wards (Abbey, Katesgrove, Redlands and Park) this choice may not be so simple, for here the Ecology Party are fielding candidates. Their election manifesto states that they would, if elected in sufficient numbers, declare Reading a Nuclear Free Zone. The Labour party has also made this commitment. It seems possible that the nuclear free zone vote could be split and, in two wards in particular, this could have disastrous consequences for the Nuclear Free Zone Campaign.

In Park ward, large scale canvassing by the East Reading Neighbourhood Group of BANC/Reading CND showed over 60% of voters in favour of a Nuclear Free Zone. Many of those votes will be cast solely on the candidates position on nuclear disarmament. A swing to Labour from Conservative of only 3% (55 votes) would replace 3 Conservative councillors with 3 Labour councillors committed to declaring Reading Nuclear Free. Even a nominal vote for the Ecology party candidate could prevent this happening. In the last Borough Council elections, candidates not standing on behalf of the three major parties averaged 158 votes each. Such a vote cannot get them elected yet could deny the election of those candidates committed to (and likely to be in a position to) declaring Reading a Nuclear Free Zone.

Similarly, in Abbey ward, a swing of 6% from Labour to Conservative (quite possible after the Boundary changes), which average out at only 42 votes, could result in Conservative Councillors replacing Labour Councillors. Again, a split anti-nuclear vote could give the result that no one wants.

It is hard to urge nuclear disarmers to vote Labour rather than Ecology when the Ecology Party commitment to nuclear disarmament is much more concise and less 'fudged' than that of the Labour Party. We are however, trying to achieve goals along the process of nuclear disarmament. The Ecology Party's time will come; in the meantime we must be pragmatic, and support the party that supports our immediate aims, and is most likely to be in a position to implement them. I would thus ask all of us to join together behind the Labour Party candidates to get Reading declared a Nuclear Free Zone.

Yours Sincerely,
Neal Marsden



NUCLEAR FREE

Dear people,

Don't vote for any of them! You'll only be encouraging a load of incompetent power-seekers if you do. The candidate who came round to my place - his name and backing-group don't matter because the rest are just as bad - couldn't give me a single reason for voting for him, beyond the claim that 'his mum's OK.' So why isn't she standing?

Don't wait to be let down, take a walk round town, count the tower cranes and empty offices, remember what 'they' would do to voting if it could change anything, and may the 'spoilt papers' win!

- Love, Enfranchised of Abbey Ward.

Daily
MirrorFORWARD
WITH THE
PEOPLEWHOSE
FINGER?

BIG ISSUES OF 1951

Today
YOURfinger is
on the trigger

SEE YOU
DEFEND
PEACE with SECURITY
and PROGRESS with
FAIR SHARES



VOTE FOR THE PARTY YOU CAN REALLY TRUST

The 'Daily Mirror' believes that Party is Labour

Dear Red Rag,

On Tuesday 19 April the Tories and Liberals on Reading Borough Council defeated the proposals put forward by BANC/Reading CND to declare Reading a Nuclear Free Zone. These proposals, which were supported by 6000 signatories were fully backed by the Labour Group.

The local elections on 5 May will give people a chance to remove the politicians who so blatantly disregard their wishes. Indications from canvas returns indicate that Labour may increase its influence on the council even to the point of taking control - should that occur then Reading would be declared a Nuclear Free Zone. Sadly some of the most consistent advocates of BANC/Reading CND's policies are, through their own actions, diminishing the chances of Reading becoming nuclear free. I do, in fact refer to the Ecology Party who are fielding candidates in four wards, thus ensuring that the anti-nuclear vote will be split. Hence one can only conclude that the entry of Eco into the local elections is either motivated by political opportunism or naivety. Knowing the sincerity of many people involved in the Ecology Party and having considerable respect for many of their principles, I believe it must be the latter.

No doubt some Tory candidates in marginal wards feel more secure now they see their opposition is divided. However those in the anti-nuclear movement cannot afford the 'luxury' of division, every vote cast for the Ecology Party diminishes the chances of Reading joining the 192 local authorities which already have declared themselves nuclear free.

We do not have time to play games or indulge in political fantasies - our task is to do everything in our power to effectively oppose the politicians who support the nuclear arms race.

Division is the first stage on the road to defeat - those responsible carry a heavy burden.

Brian Revell.

.....AND YET MORE

LETTERS



Dear Red Rag,

As you didn't come to the press conference which launched the Labour Party's Manifesto for the Borough elections on May 5th perhaps I as an irregular contributor to Rag could highlight some of our policies for your readers!

Nuclear Free Zone: The Labour Party is in full support of this proposal (which the Liberals and Tories combined to throw out at the last Council meeting) and is fully committed to opposing Cruise at Greenham and all other manifestations of nuclear dementia.

Rights: The Labour Party is demanding that equal opportunity for ethnic minorities, women and the disabled be made a reality both in Council employment and in Council services (the Liberals and Tories have no policy on this but have been trying to close down the Borough's Multi-Racial Areas Working Party just as - because? - it was getting to grips with some of the discrimination issues).

Homes not Offices: When we say we want to give priority to housing we mean it. We want to build 400 Council houses a year (last year the Liberal-Tory Alliance built eight). We won't sell off building land (as the Liberals and Tories have done). We intend to use all our powers to control the excesses of private landlords and we want to ration office development strictly on an annual basis (as the Liberals and Tories have refused to do). With over 3000 families on the Council waiting list Reading has a real housing crisis that demands determined action.

Jobs: We intend to follow the example of many other local authorities and set up an Employment Committee and appoint an Industrial Development Officer to prevent jobs being lost and to create new ones - for example by establishing a science park in co-operation with the University and by encouraging co-operatives (the Tories' only policy is to bribe more multinationals to relocate to Reading).

The Buses: We will cancel the latest fare increase and freeze fares at that level till April 1985 (the Liberals and Tories have virtually trebled fares with eight increases in four years and passenger figures are beginning to spiral downwards).

Youth and Community: Labour will expect the Hexagon to help fill the gap left by the closure of Top Mark, wants to see youth and community facilities throughout the town, and supports the continuation of the Reading Rock Festival (all of which have been opposed by the Liberal-Tory Alliance).

These policies are part of perhaps the most thorough, radical and progressive Manifesto ever put before the people of Reading, and I am sure will be supported by many of your readers. We very much hope not only for your votes on May 5th but also for your help in ensuring a Labour victory so that these policies can be carried out.

Yours fraternally,

Pete Ruhemann
(Secretary, Reading District Labour Party)
(Labour Candidate, Kentwood)

Dear Red Rag,

Democracy day? Huh! If I went to the poll I would break the pencil and burn the paper. Politicians are like spots - they'll never go away if you keep on picking them.

Disgusted of Newtown.

Dear Red Rag,

I think there should be elections at least every week. Everybody should vote twice for all the Labour candidates, and this should be made compulsory by law,

Yours hopefully,
Psephoballistes xxx

Dear Red Rag,

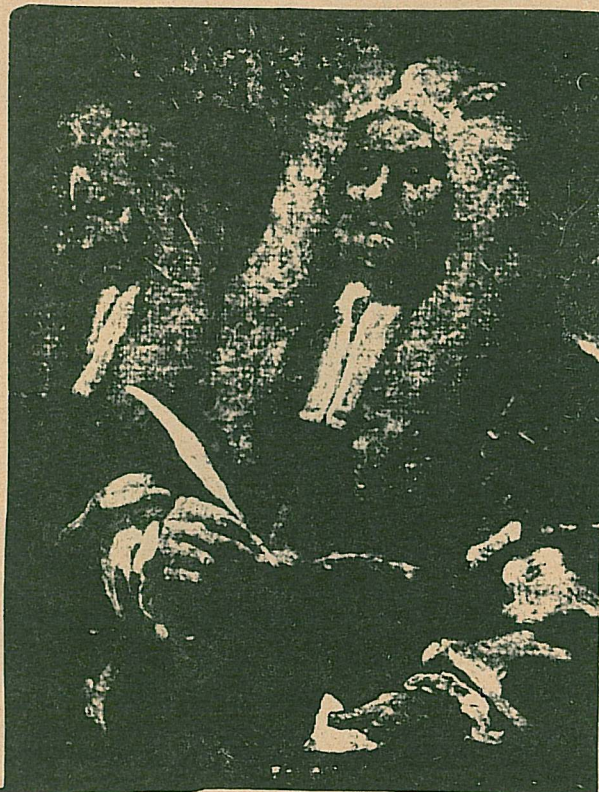
We are writing to question the RR editorial policy of refusing contributions thought 'supportive of oppressive religion.' We take the point that other channels are available for such ideas; but who decides where to draw the line?

As Anarcho-Christians we are concerned that this editorial policy may have been designed to exclude Christian views. Yet to write us all off as oppressive is particularly unfair. Historically Christianity has been sometimes reactionary, sometimes progressive. In the 1970's when disarmament was not trendy enough for the lefties, Christians helped keep CND alive. Christians are to the fore in Latin American revolutionary movements. While socialists sell their papers or raise money to fight elections, Christians collect for self-help schemes in the third world.

If Christianity has often been used to justify oppression, then socialism is no better. Mugabe's Zimbabwe is just the latest in a long line of socialist dreams turned sour. The anti-Christians of the left use the old trick of comparing socialism's ideals with Christianity's track record. But reverse the equation and you have a very different picture.

So we hope that Red Rag readers will take a more enlightened view of religion. In God we find perfect peace and perfect love.

Yours in the spirit,
Pauline Pope
for Reading Anarcho-Christians.



Diogenes - wasn't allowed into the last Borough Council meeting on the grounds that there wasn't any room (even the magic words "press gallery" and "Red Rag" fell on deaf ears - would the same thing ever happen to the Evening Post reporter?). So no report. Sorry.

BANC Committee meetings are now also very difficult to get into, except for "members". Mr Revell feels that some "control" must be maintained at the present critical time. Cooperation with other parts of the peace movement is no longer a priority, it appears.

THEATRE TH

R

Bridges Hall, Bulmershe College,
Woodlands Ave, Earley: Macbeth
2.15 & 7.30. £2.20/£3.50 presented
by National Theatre Workshop so
Should be good.

Bull Hotel, Nettlebed-Folk Club
8ish £?
SHP-The Taming of the Shrew 7.30
£1.90 & conc (C)

Tuesday 10th

Fives-Drowning by Drowning. 8ish ^{free} 5
Univ: Viscious Pink Phenomena "£?"
Tudor Arms: Gay Disco 8ish free
Bridges Hall, B'mershe-Triad Stage
Alliances & 7 Faces of Sinbad 7.30
£1.50/2 (dance)
SHP-7.30: PrettyBaby £1.90 & conc (C)
also 11th
-8pm Lenny Best Quartet £1.90/2.10
(MJ)

Wednesday 11th

Hex-Shock Treatment. 7.30 £2-3 (dance?
Schlock is probably more apt)
RFT-36 Chowringhee Lane 8pm £1/1.50 (C)
Grosvenor Hse, C'sham-Jazz 8ish free
Watermill Theatre, Bagnor, Newbury-
Romeo & Juliet 7.30 £2.75-6.50 &
conc till 28th (TH)
St Nicholas Church, Newbury-
English Chamber Orch & Tallis
Chamber Orch 7.30 £3.50-6.80

Thursday 12th

Hex-Black Theatre of Prague 7.30
£3-4 & conc to 14th meant to
be good. (C) ←
RFT-The Aviator's Wife. 8pm. £1/1.50
Horse & Barge-Sheila March & Alison
Muir 8ish £?
Target, the Butts-Saracen 8ish £1 H/M
SHP-7.30 Little Darlings £1.90 &
conc also 13th. (C)
-8pm El Tabarro & Gianni Schicchi
£1.75-2.50 to 14th (Puccini operas)
Central Studio, B'stoke-Recital 7.45
£1 & conc.
Englefield Hse, Theale-London Classical
Players £7.50 inc wine (cor)
Arts Workshop, Northcroft Lane, Newbury-
The Artist as Explorer 7.30 50p lecture

Friday 13th (watch out!)

Caribbean Club P.L.O. 10.30ish £1.50
Tudor Arms-Gay Disco 8ish free
SHP-The Great Rock & Roll Swindle
£1.90 & conc also 14th (C)
Central Studio, B'stoke -Twelfth Night
7.45 £2 & conc
Art Workshop, Newbury-The Medieval
Players present "Gargantua" 8pm £2.50
also tomorrow
St Nicholas Ch, Newbury-Organ Recital
1pm. £1

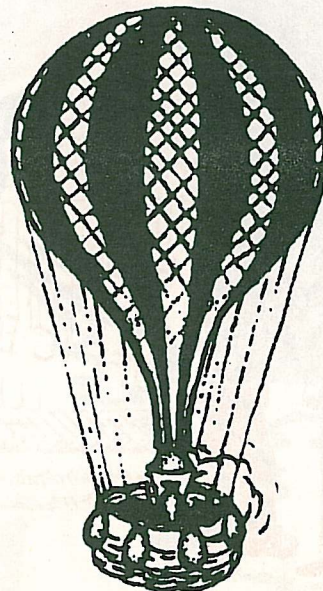
Woolley Park, Wantage-The Albio Ensemble
Ensemble 8pm £10 inc wine (cor again)
Norland College, Denford Park, Hunger-
ford-Alastair MacKerra's Chamber Orch
8pm £3.

Saturday 14th

Hex- Keith James 12.15pm free
St Giles Ch, Southampton St-Reading
Bach Choir. 8pm £?
Bulmershe College-Rags Ball with
Neil Innes & Streets Ahead 8-late
£3.50, buy tickets in advance or you
can't get into the bar.
SHP-7.30 Scrubbers £1.90 & conc 7 15th
-8pm Sam Stephens & Ann Lennox
Martin £1.20/1.50 (f)
Watermill, Newbury-Brian Cants Fun Book
11am & 1.30pm £1.15-2.25 (4-10 yrs)
Oval Room, Sandford Priory-Renaiss-
ance Lute Recital 11.30am £2.
St Nicholas Ch, Newbury-Royal Phil-
harmonic Orch 7.30 £3.50-6.80.
Caribbean Club-Caribbean Ass. Dance
with Hurricane Force Steel Band 8-
late £2/2.50 on door.

Sunday 15th

Hex-Bernard d'Ascoli 7.30 £2.50-3.50
Fives-Bitter-End lunchtime free
Allied Arms-Folk Club 8ish free
Silks, Thatcham-Hollow Expressions
8ish £?
SHP-The adventures of Hal 5 & shorts
& cereal 12.15 75p (Kids' C)
Watermill, Newbury-12noon Wayland
Smithy £2 (F)- 8pm Acker Bilk
£3.75-7; populist.
Shaw Hse School, Newbury-Sun Life
Band 8pm £2.50
St Mary's Ch, Kintbury-London Harp-
sichord Ensemble 8pm £3. That's it.



STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Joan Ruddock, it has been reported to us, objects to Whitehall gold being spent on certain items in the "Scrounger". She is on the Management Committee of Reading's Centre for the Unemployed, you see. All jokes (?) about shoplifting courses may have to be funded by the Kremlin in future.

PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP
Thanks to the ex-Minister of Consumed Affairs.

RED RAG

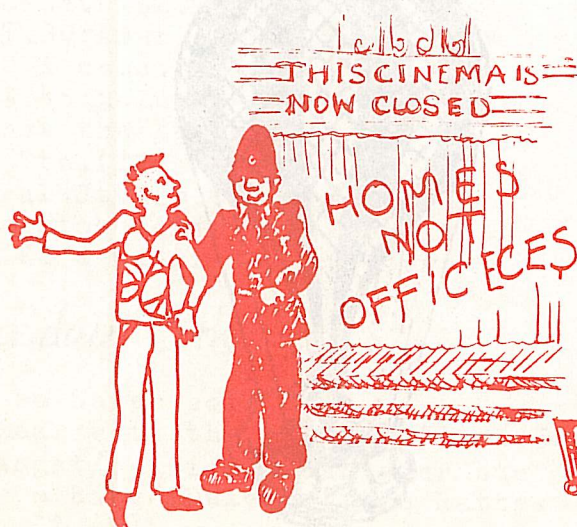
EDITORIAL □

RED RAG is Reading's only newspaper. It's free and has appeared fortnightly since 1979. 1,240 copies of this issue were printed, more than half of which go to the outlets. (Others are delivered straight to the front door by hand). It is financed entirely by donations. It is produced collectively, and has no links with any political party, group or line. We print anything subject to approval by the collective editorial meeting, normally held one evening before an issue is produced. As a guide, we do not print articles we consider 'racist, sexist or supportive of oppressive religions'. We try not to edit articles without the writer's agreement, and prefer to hold them over to the next issue if we can't get in touch. So it helps if people can give a contact number with any material they submit. If typed, it should be single spaced and 12cm wide (which we photo-reduce to 10cm).

The Vernon Paxford saga: we've acquired yet more about this one. Watch this space, folks.

FAMOUS READING GRAFFITI NO.1

The Cinema on the Junction



"NO! IT WASN'T ME OFFICER"

NEWS

A half-brick was found in the Conservative Party offices window early on Sunday morning. (Ho Ho) There was also a Cruise missile (?) with the words "No Cruise" written on it. The police hassled the nearby residents, but seem to have got no further with their enquiries.

Unreliable sources wonder if this was an attempt to discredit CND or an attempt by CND to appear the subject of a discrediting campaign...

RED RAG PARAPHERNALIA

Badges selling out quick. Still four different designs available.
(STOP PRESS still three different designs left)
T-shirts, contact Clive, 64545, with your design before everyone's wearing them.
Posters. Cold off the press. Will probably sell out at Mayday, but try Clive, 64545. Very nice, so Clive says. (We're not allowed to see them till unveiling day.)

OUTLETS

Red Rag is available from:---

Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St

Pop Records, 172 King's Rd

Lazer Records, Butts Centre

Central Club, bottom of London St

Ken's Shop, Students' Union, Whiteknights

Unemployment Centre, East St

Our Price Records, Butts Centre

The Emporium, Merchants' Place (off Friar St)

Mace Grocer, 2 Crown Colonnade, Cemetery Junction

Johal Cash & Carry, 14 Cholmeley Rd

Bridge Stores, 6 Bridge St, Caversham

Elephant Off-Licence, 1 Derby St

Fine Food Stores, 168 Oxford Rd

Small Ads

Wanted - Cheap basic bike. I am prepared to take one that needs some work doing on it. Phone Ian, 584425 (daytimes)

Wanted - Cheap vacuum cleaner, preferably working. Phone Liz, 967955, or leave message at Acorn Bookshop.

Wanted - Lady's bike (anything considered) Will pay up to £30. Contact Nina 669694.

Small industrial vacuum-cleaner, with attachments, £10. Contact Luke, 106 London Road.