

A quiet afternoon in Newtown. Five policeman with a dog screech to a halt (one car, one motorcycle) IV style, outside a building site to arrest three youths playing there. A local resident who asked why handcuffs were used was told that a policeman had recently been stabbed by a 15-year old. So, if you're 15, or look as if you might be, the message is: watch out! (What the Chief Constable said on the phone later was that they had checked the boy's name and address on the police computer and found that he was a "runner" before deciding to handcuff him!)

POLICE NEWS 11

Someone else was visited by two plain-clothes policemen after he had been to hospital with a broken toe. They were looking for someone with a similar complaint but decided it was someone else. How had they found out about his toe? From hospital records, supposedly confidential? Oh no. "Pub gossip," they said....

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RED RAG

A GLIMPSE INTO THE SECRET
LIFE OF THE ANDALUSIAN
TREE SLOTH - RED RAG INVESTIGATES

The surest way to get hold of us is to write to Red Rag, c/o Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St, Reading. We are always short of funds (there can't be many newspapers around that haven't sold a copy in four years), we have a collection tin at Acorn or you can send cheques (to "Red Rag") or postal orders or even standing orders to our treasurer at Flat 7, 66 Wokingham Rd. Some of us are on the phone. Ring:-

666324 if interested in helping with the next Rag
666324 or 666681 with news
581222 ext 423 ask for Helen with gigs & such
666681 with more "political" events
666681 to get this delivered free to your door

The aim of Red Rag is to provide a decent alternative coverage of local news and issues from a radical, non-aligned position; to promote subversive and creative initiatives; to provide a forum for unorthodox views; to allow for some sort of co-existence between a huge variety of interests. It is not a student publication.

A lot of the material here comes from people who have nothing to do with the production process. These pieces are almost always signed in some way. The collective, as a whole, does not originate them or stand by them: it is our policy to print anything provided that it is not objectionable to the point that we can't bear to type it or boring to the point of tedium. It is very rare for anything to be edited, ie. cut. If this does happen it is for reasons of space and, if at all possible, the author's permission.

The collective mentioned above is open to anyone (readers, writers, distributors,...). Watch the Events page for meetings (approx. monthly). Most decisions however are made on the spot by the people doing the work, or at "editorial meetings" two days before production. (There are no editors.) About thirty people are periodically involved in some stage of producing and distributing the Rag.

June 26

READING'S ONLY NEWSPAPER

HEALTH WATCH

"BLOWING THE WHISTLE" ON HEALTH CUTS

Reading Health Watch is calling on workers in the Health Service, patients, members of voluntary organisations and the public generally to "blow the whistle" on the Health Service to force the Health Authority's spending cuts and their effects into public debate.

Despite Government assurances that spending on the NHS is increasing, that certainly isn't the experience in West Berkshire. The Authority is pushing ahead with the closure of the Royal Court Holiday Home for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped (which Reading Health Watch has referred to the Health Ombudsman, complaining that alternative holidays have not been found for all the patients and that the decision to close the Home was made and staff given redundancy notices before public consultation was even started). The Authority is now trying to close the Henley War Memorial Hospital, and says in its own consultation paper that "In the present financial climate the Authority is not obliged to show that the services provided by a unit which is being considered for closure could be accommodated elsewhere. Reductions therefore in the level of service should not be regarded as unacceptable, and a decision for or against closure should be based on the priorities for the use of scarce resources". Attempts to close Prospect Park and Haggrave Hospitals in Reading are expected soon.

But what the whistle blowing is about is the decisions that don't come out for public consultation, however belated. The decisions not to hold materials and equipment on hospital wards, to reduce the number of doctors, nurses or technicians in a particular hospital unit, to stop providing hospital transport in certain cases, to reduce the availability of specialised services and so on. The sort of decisions that hit individual patients who are by then often not in a position to complain, and that can impede their recovery and very much affect the quality of their lives.

If whistle-blowers don't want to talk to the press direct, Reading Health Watch will undertake to do this for them. They can be contacted c/o VSC, 38 Caversham Road, Reading or on Reading 54123.

Reading Health Watch meets monthly on the day of the District Health Authority, and the next meeting will be at the Centre for the Unemployed at 7.30p.m. on Tuesday July 19th. We've got a big job to do, and would do it better for your help, so please come. It is, still, your Health Service.

Pete

**MEMORIES ARE
MADE OF THIS**

Students at Reading University are hardly the most radical in the country, but we're not all wallowing in apathy, and on Wed 22nd June a few of us finally blotted the copy-book with a successful occupation of one of the offices in the Union. So what happened to finally stir us from sleep?

An amendment to the Union's constitution had been proposed advocating a radical re-structuring of the internal organisation and power structures in the Union. The amendment had been debated and rejected at a General Meeting the previous week and was now being put to referendum, on 24th and 25th June.

Each week, the executive produces 'Matrix' described in the Constitution as an 'information sheet'. The edition published on 22nd June contained a report of the General Meeting compiled by the Union's Secretary, Nigel Fusedale, who, it should be noted, just happens to be one of the most ardent supporters of the amendment. Such reports are

supposed to offer a full, accurate and unbiased summary of proceedings. However the report which appeared concerning the debate on the amendment by no stretch of the imagination fitted that description. Unfortunately the Editor of Matrix had been unable to attend the meeting, and acting in good faith which turned out to be totally misplaced, trusted that the report was a fair and just representation of what had happened at the meeting. Those of us who had opposed the amendment were able to demonstrate that it was not. Only 33 lines were devoted to the arguments against with 72 to the arguments for. The President of the Union in proposing the amendment spoke for approximately one minute of the entire debate which was very long and protracted, yet the arguments he presented were detailed in 36 lines! Several points crucial to the opposition's arguments were conspicuous by their absence and I myself who condemned the proposed changes uncompromisingly was described as having 'doubted' the amendment. About 3 or 400 students had turned up to the General Meeting but 2000 copies of Matrix were to be distributed before the referendum had taken place. We felt that a great many students would therefore be exposed to an unjust and wholly inadequate picture of the issues involved and that the report had the potential to sway the vote in favour of the amendment. There is supposed to be strict control on the amount of propaganda that can be produced by either side in the Union, and we interpreted the report as effectively additional pro-amendment publicity. We argued that Matrix should either not be sent out at all, or only after the report had been ripped out. (We had already torn it from several copies as a token gesture of how strongly we felt). An executive meeting was called at which our arguments were rejected on the grounds that it would not be unconstitutional to distribute the magazine regardless of what the report said, and that the amendment was probably going to be defeated anyway.

We agreed unanimously that there was no way we were prepared to see Matrix go out in its present form and two of us occupied the office where it was being stored in order to prevent its distribution. The office was too small to fit all of us in without damaging its contents so we planned to occupy in shifts with everyone else blockading the door. We allowed the President through to discuss the situation. He threatened to call the Police to witness our forcible removal and implied our action may have unpleasant consequences for us. We decided to call his bluff and refused to leave the office. He then suggested that the executive might possibly compromise if we were prepared to personally edit the 2000 copies of the offending magazine, but we refused seeing no reason why we should spend our valuable campaigning time correcting the results of Nigel Fusedale's abuse of his executive power. However, we said that we would agree to the postponement of distribution until after the referendum. This proposal was unacceptable to the Executive, but one member sympathetic with our arguments volunteered to take on the task of editing out the report himself. We agreed to this solution, and having signed a written agreement with the President on the course of action to be pursued, ended our occupation after about two hours. In the event we did help with the editing or one person would have been at it all night.

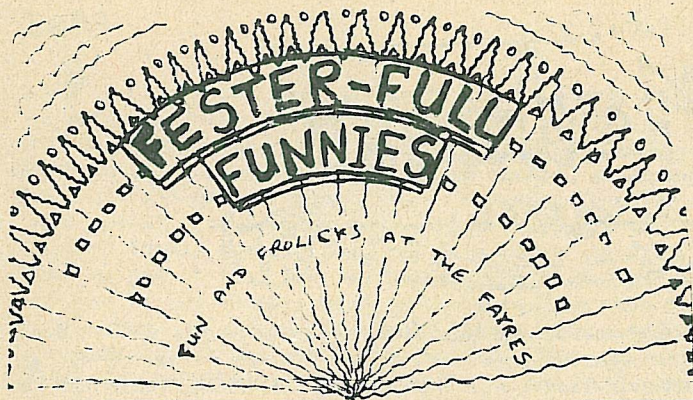
The President asked us to keep this all very hush-hush (we don't want to mar our reputation do we?) so we decided to go for maximum publicity. We feel that students should know about the attitudes and conduct of those they have elected to office. The behaviour of the Secretary who at no stage in the talks would agree to any compromise was, I am told, not technically unconstitutional, but I regard it as a gross abuse of office to produce a report like that, and utterly contemptible.

Clare

WE CAN'T DRAW EITHER!

This is an appeal for photos, drawings, cartoons, anything that could help brighten up your Rag. Also free Letraset if you happen to have any lying about. Drop it into Acorn in Chatham Street. Ta!

Summer Issues There will probably be one issue of Red Rag in August instead of two i.e. 14th instead of 7th and 21st. this leaves two three-week gaps (I think). Make sure you catch the copy-dates.



LIVING IN THE HETEROSEXUAL DRUG MARKET

Being one young queen's impressions of Glastonbury and Stonehenge Festivals. I didn't enjoy them.

Most people complained about the entrance fee to Glastonbury (£14 for 3 days). I found it too crowded and too commercial, too much happening and my ability to concentrate and enjoy anything quickly disappeared (this no doubt aided by the liberal dosing of drugs).

I found myself wandering around in a daze. I saw friends and just like the worst parties I looked, smiled, looked away, exchanged glances, and shook heads in agreement that any sort of meaningful conversation would be impossible and walked on our separate paths to nowhere.

I found joy in a few isolated moments, in the arms of a lover, listening and watching King Sunny Ade, chanting and dancing with the beautiful and happy Hare Krishna Band. They had the best dance music and atmosphere on site but let me warn you to dance and chant and "Live simply" is all you hear publicly. Once they separate you off from your friends I'm sure other commands are introduced.

These few moments of fun were all that broke the unbelievable frustration, boredom and squalor. It was crowded, commercial, dirty and inescapable. Ever wanted to be alone in the middle of a few square miles of wandering humanity? Imagine Reading Market spreading over the entire town centre. There were even people selling Socialist Worker.

And afterwards - like Reading Market only more squalid - beer cans, bottles, plastics of all types and shapes, the odd sleeping bag, assorted pipes, burnt out Tesco trolleys, dazed and sunburnt bodies - happy solstice - war is over. A Friends of the Earth night mare.

We left for Stonehenge. It was cheaper, less crowded, cleaner and easier to get out of, but only just. People said they felt: unwelcome, bored, waiting for something to happen, (and this from someone who usually makes things happen). The drugs had little effect - how could they - there was little to effect, my consciousness being fragmented and subdued, drugs and hyper-commercialism don't

mix. Every two to three yards was a salesperson; selling drugs, food, makeup, earrings, haircuts, sex, herpes, suntan lotion. Everyone hassling.

A story: - friend up on hill looking at campsite - sun and drugs haze - up comes smiling 'ickle boy, "do you want to be hit with my big stick?" he enquires sweetly. "No thanks" says friend. "Well give us 10p!" roars this seething monster, blows to friends head are administered by this budding racketeer.

Distant memory: - arriving at a small festival five years ago. Finding the people's tipi (a communal tent for whoever has nowhere to sleep), sitting around being shy. Slowly being drawn into the activities of preparing food for the free food kitchen. Being hassled for cigarettes and giving them but there was always tobacco to smoke all the time I was there. Feeling dazed but secure, relaxed and happy. Developing a feeling of how the site should react to police. It was peaceful.

What happened?

As far as I can see, two things. One: - this type of summer holiday has become popular. Two: - Five years ago I saw one or two shops, comparable to the village post office. Last week every other tent was a sales pitch.

The problems of overcrowding can be alleviated - as any town planner can tell you - to do this successfully it needs full participation of the community but drugs and hip capitalism effectively stop all communication except that involved in the exchange of money and goods.

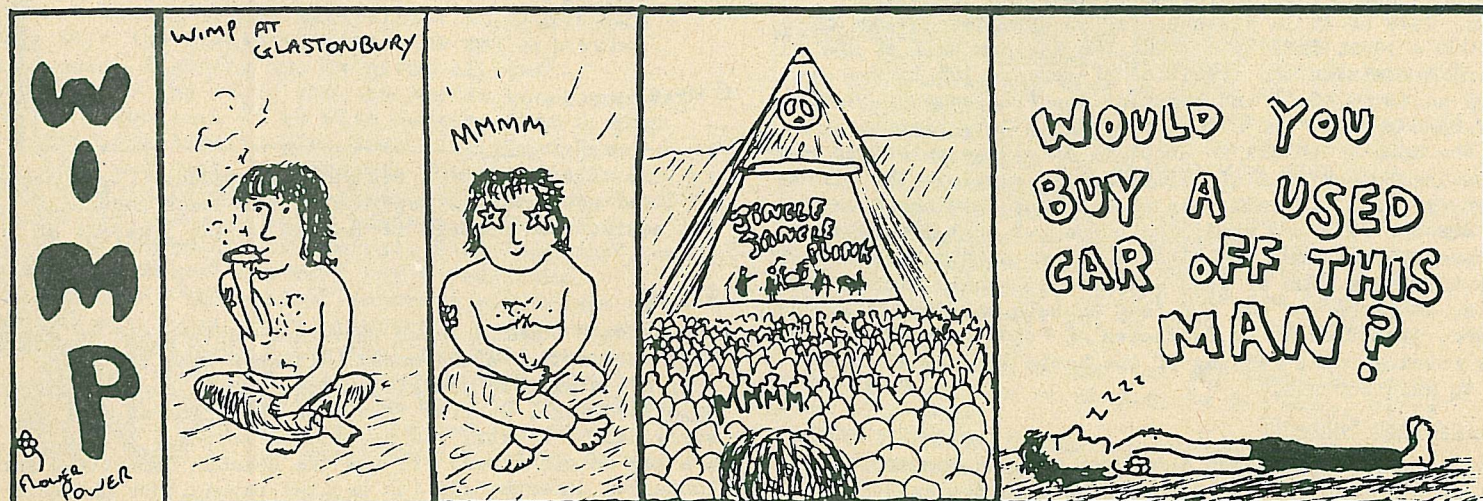
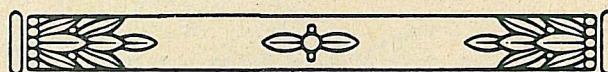
This article may seem a bit of a rant, why am I writing it? Because when I got back I felt timid about admitting to misery - other people said they enjoyed themselves, but soon I found people agreeing and some were also ashamed of, and under attack for our lack of joy (we just didn't "switch into the vibe.") So I'd like to open up a bit of discussion on the diversity of experiences we had on our summer hols.

..... Tentative conclusions: those who enjoyed themselves are independent individuals or stable couples or groups. Recuperation (the ability of the Spectacle to hijack or absorb a real demand, threat or aspiration, make it safe and then sell its shadow back to us) is here today, recuperation is here to stay (sha la la la)

Book references: Spectacular Times no. 11 More of the Shame - a nice little rant on CND merchandising and more. A Series of Short Shock Slogans and Mindless Token Tantrums - containing a vision of what Stonehenge Free Festival should be and what happened when Crass played there.

Incidentally, if you're wondering about the title of this article, I only saw One-Gay-Man-In-Drag the whole time - and that was me.

Our very good friend.



Borough Council gets into ---- Midsummer Madness

by Diogenes

BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The first thing to strike one about Council Committee Meetings, as opposed to full Council Meetings, is the power of the chairman, perched like a demi-god on the central dais apart from his (they're all men) party. So much apart that Ron Jewitt could speak of "your group" to one Tory Housing member, or, on being told that some item of spending he wanted to shelve was actually in the Tory manifesto, reply airily, "Oh, I never read things like that". The chairman owes more allegiance to the officers who run his department who flank him in the centre. The Tories are just there to vote things through (apart from a small "front-bench" minority of highly articulate politicians they are mainly backwoods nonentities). The main actors are the chairman and the rather bedraggled opposition: four Labour and two Liberal in each committee. Some measure of "open government" may have prevailed before the May elections, when the Tories depended on Liberal support - but not any more. For the more "political" committees (i.e. those which have money to spend: Transportation and Housing, as opposed to Leisure and Environment, of the ones I've been to), the Tories have decided to exercise a ruthless control. The chief object is to avoid debate and cut the public meeting down to ratifying decisions made behind the scenes. This is only sensible - the only object of "debate" is to score points in the local press.

Applauded

Thus, the two most controversial items at the Housing meeting were not even on the agenda, but sprung on the opposition out of the blue by chairman Ron Jewitt. These were: that as from now new applicants to the Housing List won't be given any points for a whole year, as opposed to six months hitherto. (To Labour pleas that "need is need" he merely replied, "It's a balanced argument... I think it's gone too far in the direction of need.") And then, that all applicants living outside the Borough will simply be removed from the List. With the exception of HM Forces, of course. (Since the opposition makes such a fuss about the Housing List, let's cut the Housing List!) "I suspect I shall be applauded for this, frankly," Councillor Jewitt admitted. "I think I'm more right than you are... I'm sorry, I'm going to cut discussion on this because it's political and we're not going to agree. Those in favour... This is a new regime. You will learn." It would be quite funny if it wasn't so childish.

Tradition

At the Transportation meeting some "alterations to services" to approve. (That means bus cuts, rather as 'fare revisions' means fare increases in Reading Transport-speak.) Cuts of 4% in mileage, for an expected saving of £100,000 a year. This by cutting the Eastern half of the 18 (and "retaining the tradition of service 18" by re-naming no.40 as 18a!) and reducing the frequency of 17, 5,6,7,8,10 and 11. (If £100,000 sounds a lot, remember that the County Council is about to subsidise motorists in Reading to the tune of £23million to complete the Whooshway.) The Liberals pointed out that cutting services doesn't fill the remaining buses but just loses passengers, and Labour complained rather mildly about "cuts under the name of good management", while Simon Coombs, chairman but not for long as he's now MP for Swindon, justified it by fantasies of "thousands of buses running round Reading if the Socialists were ever to gain control."

Techno-cra-tic Pobb-off

The other main discussions here were both on cycling. First on arrangements for discussions with the Reading Cycle Campaign. Simon Coombs said he thought they had

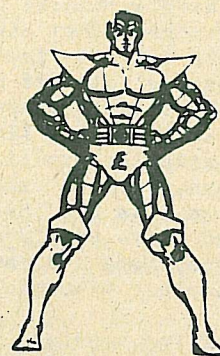
"a very useful and positive contribution to make". When Labour spokesman Tony Price hoped there would be no "bureaucratic Pobb-off" he was reassured: "there are no bureaucrats in the Transportation Department, only technocrats." (!) Then again, on the Kennetside Cycleway plans, we heard of the "strong commitment" of the Tory group to cyclists. (At the Leisure meeting even Ron Jewitt came out as an ex-cyclist, who "never gave up

RED RAG'S GUIDE TO....

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN



HOUSING



POLICY



LEISURE



ENVIRONMENT



TRANSPORTATION

my bike till I was 34 - for obvious reasons - as a member of local government I hope never to be made redundant"). But again, such concern is dwarfed by the prospect of the IDR.

Gibber

The Borough Council seems perversely determined to wither away rather than spend money (although even the Govt. they are trying to placate is now alarmed about Councils underspending). Earlier this year the argument was: put everything off until the new financial year, to see whether we can afford it; now the Leisure Committee, for instance, deferred all its capital expenditure projects

until the September meeting, apart from the Orts Road Playscheme and the Fumbus. This includes the Indian Community Centre and the E. Reading Adventure Playground which the Council had recommended to central government for Urban Aid grants! Much fatuous nonsense from the Tories about good housekeeping: "In principle I don't think we should spend a penny of this money etc etc." Even Ron Jewitt lost his temper here ("I do not gibber, chairman"); but on the whole the Leisure Committee is so good-humoured and "non-political" that a mild buffoon like John Oliver can get to be chairman. The longest debate was on precisely how to split up the £1370 available for repairs to community halls! Weekly discos for "youngsters" at the Old Town Hall were approved, as was siting a track for BMX ("this bicycle moto cross thing," as Town Clerk Harry Tee called it at the Environment meeting, with great distaste) in South Whitley. One of the Liberals was reading her Red Rag, trying to make sense of the defective recipe.*

Hypocrisy

Environment was mostly rather boring. George Robinson (the ex-mayor) hit the headlines for attacking the "unfairness" and "hypocrisy" of proposed regulations for "sex establishments" in Reading. The whole debate was at so many removes from reality it's a bit hard to report: how can anybody defend "sex shops" on the grounds that sex should be joyous? How can it be thought that strict licensing makes such places acceptable? Since they exist to prey on, and promote, repression and inhibition, and "sex" as an illicit commodity, they presumably thrive on restrictions. "As for the argument that they are a danger to women," concluded Councillor Robinson, "I think these places are more likely to improve the lot of women." (Laughter from the sex shop proprietor in the public gallery.) Brian Fowles, the chairman of this Committee, is distinctly genial. When the opposition parties tried to get onto the appeals tribunal for the sex shops regulations, he merely reflected that "that would have the disadvantage that the ruling group wouldn't have a majority." When riverside safety came up, he mused, "They didn't have railings along the Kennet when I was a kid. You just fell in."

Diogenes

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X
Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Dear Red Rag,

The letter from Greg, the naive socialist, in the last Red Rag deserves a reply.

I personally don't take elections seriously: I think the government system in this country is a sick joke, which very successfully denies all of us power over our lives by distracting us with a poor imitation. Voting is no more than a ritual, which, incidentally, 25% of the population don't bother participating in.

Not voting is not neutrality: it is recognising that the electoral system is not a battleground worth fighting on. It gives all the advantages to the state and the status quo's supporters. It leaves each of us with no more than a vote: the right/privilege to give some "legitimacy" to their laws and their government. The alternative, if one sees it in terms of class struggle, is to create a battleground which renders useless the state's paraphernalia of control. Read "Anarchy", or "Freedom" "workers' Control" for a few ideas.

The label "Anarchism" covers a wide range of ideas and practices, many of which I would reject. Others make such good sense that the only reason I can see for their not being more widely accepted is the lack of faith most people have in themselves, and each other. Only the insecure need Government.

Let's build up our confidence and free ourselves!

Misplaced Pseudonym

Dear Red Rag,

Greetings! Herewith a fiver donation.

PAGE 5

May I most strongly urge two suggestions on you: 1) Please put who cheques are to be made payable to and where they are to be sent under your perennial plea "Money is desperate; please send some soon." I had to ring up for these details.

2) Your "Events Diary" and "Going Out Guide" are a great idea - I regularly find something in them that I wouldn't have found elsewhere. But why are they separate? I know the first list is worthy and the second, fun, but the separation makes them unnecessarily difficult to use. In my neck of the woods your diary column is highly regarded. It's possible that you may be underestimating the value of the information you provide. Keep up the good work. Spend my £5 on your diary feature - or whatever.

Your truly,
John Hart.

Dear BAN-C-Notes Red Rag,

Now that a week or so has passed we can all soberly reflect on the result of the General Election. The reasons for Labour's defeat are many and varied but I'm bound to say that a major factor was the reticence of the leaders to make Unilateral Disarmament its main electoral platform, alongside unemployment.

Equally to blame however are CND who locally and nationally had a pitifully weak impact on the electorate.

.... It was tragic the way in which CND especially hid away from the opportunity to stand alongside the Labour Party on the issue that unites them. They let a golden opportunity slip through their fingers... CND, or at least BANC, should have adopted the same position as single issue groups on the Right by issuing an independent leaflet advising against voting Tory because their policies will eventually lead us to nuclear war. Don't forget, the last time there was mass unemployment in this country the Tories solved it by going to war...

I'm frankly disgusted with BANC in particular who must have the largest sleeping membership of any political (yes you are political) organisation in the country. I guess this is the trouble with "popular frontist" politics. I'm unhappy about associating myself with such an impotent organisation.... If their performance during the Election campaign is the sort of stuff we can expect from now on then I'm clearly right in withdrawing my monthly donation, requesting not to have their dreary newspaper delivered any more, and pledging my money and energies 100% behind the Labour Party to fight for Peace through Unilateral disarmament from an unashamed political position.

Pete Stevenson

ACORN'S BIT 

OPEN MEETING. we had one last Wednesday and it was quite a success. Seven men (why no women?) came with ideas and time to offer and we feel quite good about it all. If you're interested in being involved in any way, let us know. We also now have some herbs for sale in the shop as a result of the meeting.

One specific idea is for different local groups to mount displays or "mini-exhibitions" in the shop fortnightly or monthly to advertise their ideas and activities. If you like the idea come and talk to us about it. We want to start this Straightaway.

Local bands are being very coy about bringing in their tapes for us to play in the shop. We're bored with ours!

ACORN BOOKSHOP, 17, CHATHAM STREET (under the multi storey car park) Open Tues - Sat 10 - 6.

RED RAG'S EXPERIMENTAL

& IMPENETRABLE (Infamous) EVENTS Diary

PAGE
6

NEW! UNREADABLE FORMAT!

AAAAAAA-- ONE-OFF MEETINGS

- Mon 27 BANC Women's Group - preparing for the Greenham Blockade. 8pm, 142 Basingstoke Road. Contact phone no. Reinhold on 662873.
- Tue 5 "Christianity and Disarmament" - "Public Forum" at the Corn Exchange, Newbury, 7.30pm.
- Wed 6 WEA Industrial Branch - meeting to discuss autumn programme, future development, and the branch's role in adult education. 7.30, Reading Centre for the Jobfree, East St.
- Thu 7 East Reading Rights - all interested in the group welcome (ring Elizabeth 665589 for details) at 8pm Wycliffe Church, Cemetery Junction. (They do a weekly Sat stall - see section D.)
- Fri 8 Ecology Party - introductory meeting for new members and others interested. The party's organisation and plans. 8pm, St Mary's Centre, Chain St. See section B for regular meetings.
- Sat 9 World Disarmament Campaign - regional meeting at Wycombe Town Hall, 7.30pm.
- Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Berks branch - "Major County Conference". "Distinguished speakers will be looking at the development of the county over the years ahead and examining how the demand for new industries, housing and roads can be reconciled with the preservation of the countryside..." Tickets are £7.50 (!!) from Pickfords (!), 21 St Mary's Butts, or ring 597474. 10.30am - 4.30pm, Great Hall, the University, London Rd site.
- Wed 13 Friends of the Earth - pub meeting. Ring John/Anne on 868260 for details.
- Herbal Medicine - public meeting. Talk with slides by local osteopath David Potterton. 8pm, St Mary's Centre, Chain St.

BBBBBBB-- REGULAR MEETINGS

- Anarchists - every Monday, 8pm. Write to Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St for details.
- Ecology Party - two Mondays per month, 8pm. Venue for July 14 is 25 de Beauvoir Road. Ring Maria 662195 for details
- BANC Women's Group (that's Berks Anti-Nuclear Campaign/Reading CND) - first Monday of Month from August. 8pm, Women's Centre, Abbey St.
- Reading Organisation for Animal Rights - first Tuesday of the month (eg July 5th) 8pm, the Crown, Crown Street.
- Socialist Workers' Party - every Wednesday, 8pm, Red Lion, bottom of Southampton St.
- City Farm - organisational meeting (no farming involved) every Wednesday. 7.30pm, Ashmead School, Northumberland Avenue. Open day July 17th.
- Amnesty - second Tuesday of the month (eg July 14th). 8pm, St Mary's Centre, by the church in the Butts.
- Women's Centre - "First of the Month" meeting (eg Friday July 1st). 8pm, open to all women interested. Women's Centre, basement of Old Shir3 Hall, Abbey St.

CCCCCCC-- ONE-OFF EVENTS

- Wed 29 Open garden - The Old Rectory, Burghfield. 11am - 4pm. 40p (kids 10p)
- Thu 30 Music workshop - Centre for the Jobfree 6pm. For details ring Laura 599639 (daytime Mon - Wed)
- Sat 2 Midsummer Picnic - 10 mile along Kennet towpath towards Sonning from the gasworks. Bring food, instruments, games, drink, boats, etc. Starts when the Dove closes. You are invited!
- Sun 3 Demo at Sharpness Docks (Glouce) against sea dumping of radioactive waste. Rally, speakers. Ring Bristol 22821 for details.
- Mon 4 International blockade at Greenham. Till Friday. Details elsewhere this issue.
- Wed 6 Welsh Dragon visiting Burghfield and Reading.
- Thu 7 Details elsewhere this issue.
- Sat 1 Feminist Writers' Conference - in Edinburgh (also Sunday) Women only. We have some details (ring 666681). Or phone 031-556-0079 if you've got the pennies.
- Sat 9 Woodcote Veteran Transport Rally - Wards Farm, Woodcote. 8m north of Reading on A4074. £1.50 for adults.
- Sun 10 Open garden - wild garden with nature trail and observation beehive. Herbs stall, bric-a-brac and raffle. Hopefully raspberry teas and honey and scones. "Ashdown", Basingstoke Road, Spencer's Wood. (Berks Bucks & Oxon Naturalists' Trust)

DDDDDDD-- REGULAR THINGS

Women's Centre - new opening times from July:-

Tuesday 10.30 - 2.00	drop
Wednesday 10.30 - 2.00	in
Saturday 12.00 - 4.00	times

Also: Free pregnancy testing - Tuesday 7-9pm. Bring urine sample from first pee of the day.

Girls' Club - every third Saturday (eg July 9th) 2.30 - 4.30. Disco and activities for ages 9-12

Music Club - every second Sat (eg July 2nd) 11am till noon.

The Women's Centre is in Abbey St, near the Arch. All women are very welcome to use it.

Reading Gay Switchboard - ring 597269 between 7 and 9pm Tuesdays and Fridays.

Women's Institute Market - handicraft, fruit, veg, flowers, plants, cakes etc. Every Thursday, 9am - 1pm, St Mary's Church House, St Mary's Butts. Recommended.

Your Rights... - East Reading Rights Group stall outside the church on the Junction, every Sat, 11am - 1pm.

S.W.A.G. ('Save waste and gain' charity paper collection) Skips at Superkey, Palmer Park, Northumberland Avenue, St Martin's Precinct, Recreation Rd and Great Knollys St. 8.30am - 12.30pm. Every first Saturday of the month.

THE Next Page ↗
CONTAINS MORE STUFF LIKE THIS

MORE EVENTS TO STIR YOU!

EEEEEE-- RED RAG

Picnic - Sunday 3rd, 3pm, East Reading Cemetery, retreat to 24 Norwood Road if wet.

"Reading between the Lines" - dinner and getting-it-together meeting. Wed 6th, 8pm, ring 666681 for venue or to put yourself down to be fed (vegan meal). This guide to our fair town will come out in Aug or Sept. If you'd like to help (or think you might), this evening is a good chance to suss out other people who'll be involved. No experience in Rag matters necessary!

Next issue - again, anyone is welcome to drop in and lend a hand, no experience necessary etc. A good place to start is the planning meeting (same day as the copy deadline) at 8pm on Thursday 7th. The Rag is typed that evening and on Friday and pasted together on Saturday 9th. We print it at Acorn Bookshop that night, and finally we fold it and label it and get it to the distributors on Sunday 10. (This last bit is dead easy even on a hangover, and extra people are much appreciated, if only for an hour or so). Ring 666324 to find out where it's all happening next time. Ta very much.

FFFFFF is for FESTIVALS

July 1-3 Norwich Peaceful Green Festival, University Village and Farm, Earlham Rd, Norwich.

July 1-31ish Last year the Peace Convoy moved together from Stonehenge to Greenham Common for the Cosmic Counter-Cruise Carnival. Some want to return to the same area this year. Others are strongly against the idea. Some want to take peace, freedom and their whole anarchic bundle of drugs and music to the New Forest....

July 2 GLC Free Festival, Crystal Palace, London.

July 2-3 Radlett Free Festival, Radlett, Hertfordshire.

July 9 Peter Gabriel. Selhurst Park, Crystal Palace £9.50.

July 10 Afro-Caribbean Festival, Angel Park, Brixton, London.

July 26-31 Glastonbury Green Gathering. Lambert's Hill Farm, Shepton Mallet. Tickets £7.50 from 5 Tor Park Rd, Paignton, Devon before end June. Details at Acorn. Children and eco orientated.

July 29-31 Elephant Fayre, St Germans, Cornwall.

July 29-31 Diss Kids' Fayre, Diss, Norfolk.

OOOOOPS-- we missed these ones out...

Tue 12 The Campus and the Local Economy - one-day conference. Topics include: the state of Berkshire, the changing rural environment, housing in an area of growth, economic development and the private sector, and community based local economic development. Cost £6! Full programme from Joint Centre for land development Studies, the University.

"Take Steps to Sizewell B" - Dragon Power for Safe Power Huge inflatable dragon leaves Tynmawr Colliery June 30, and passes through Burghfield on July 6 and Reading on July 7 on its way to the London Sizewell inquiry on July 12. (Welsh Anti-Nuclear Alliance) "To draw attention to the moral implications of embarking on a massive nuclear power programme." "Sizewell Public Inquiry is in danger of obscuring the vital issue with a torrent of technical details." More details from Acorn nearer the time.

To get your events listed here - it's free - give us a ring on 666681 and tell us all about them.

ARMS ARE FOR LINKING!

On July 4th-8th there will be an International Women's Blockade at Greenham Common. We are calling on women from all over Britain, Europe and the World to come to Greenham to blockade and disrupt the preparations for these weapons of fear and destruction. Cruise Missiles are a dangerous escalation of the arms race and increase the probability of a nuclear war in Europe.

A week's blockade will involve thousands of women so we have suggested it be divided into regional areas, with South East England on Thursday 7th. We are hoping that women from the region will commit themselves to joining the blockade for 24 hours, more if they can (especially Monday). No doubt the weekend will be celebratory!

We ask that all women come as self sufficient as possible. Here are a few ideas that spring to mind:

* Prepare yourselves in Non-Violent-Direct-Action training as much as possible beforehand in local groups.

* Please bring protective clothing (long sleeves/trousers for blockading), warm night clothes, rain gear, toilet paper, rubbish bags, pens and paper for legal observing, food, a tent if possible, sleeping bags, firewood and water carriers. Also instruments, songs, theatre, balloons, kites, flowers to plant,...

* We'll provide general information and maps, limited NVDA training, medical and legal support, walkie-talkies, toilet facilities.

* We need lots of help now, also cars, vans, bikes, horses (!) at each gate. We need funds (to Greenham Office, 5 Leonard St, London EC2. Cheques payable to "Greenham - July 4th")

* Men can support us by respecting that this is an all women's blockade. We ask that men look after children, leaving mothers free to come and blockade.

We need 3000 women per day, please tell every woman you know

Local contact (possible way to organise transport): Reinhild 662873.

With love and peace, the London Greenham Women. (Edited leaflet)

THE HEXAGON LEAFLET IS A PAID ADVERTISEMENT

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



SECRETARY

Intermediate Technology, a third world development charity requires experienced secretary for its Agriculture and Water Development Programme.

Applicants should have fast and accurate typing, shorthand/audio and be experienced in handling correspondence and editing written material. They should be able to work on their own initiative. Previous experience in working with development or voluntary organisation(s) would be desirable.

The person will be solely responsible for the secretarial, clerical and office administration work of the Programme.

Salary: c. £6000

For further information about this vacancy please telephone Cheryl Joy (a.m.) or Sandra Conn (p.m.) on Reading 868169.

Letters of application with accompanying C.V.'s by July 1st to:

ITDC, Applied Research Section, Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 9BE.

SQUARE PEG. New gay magazine, first issue out now. Articles on Greenham Common/Camden Palace, Pornography, Paris, Drag, pictures by Norman of Peckham. 35p at Acorn.

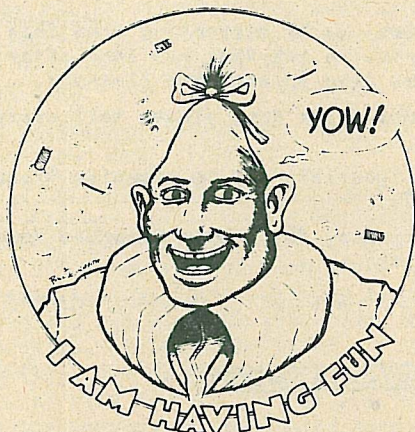
WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO DO, FAMOUS WHO'S WHO IN BOFFING BERKSHIRE.

RED RAG'S GOING OUT GUIDE

NEW EXCITING ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING DRUGS AND STAYING UP LATE

mon 27 Hexagon Curtis Mayfield. 7.30 £3 - £3.50
 june Art Gallery Blagrove Street. German expressionist drawings and graphics. 10.30am-5.30pm. free to 9th July.
University Gallery London Road Site. work by Peter Startup. 10.00 - 5pm. free to 2nd July.
Forbury Gardens Reading Pipe Band, and St. Andrews Scottish Dancers. 7pm free
Southill Park Bracknell. Frances (15) 7.30pm £1.00 + conc. 'til 30th.

tues 28 Hexagon Ted Rogers plus Legs and Co. 7.30 £3.50 - £4.50. (Host of awful quiz show meets awful dancers - sounds terrible)
 june Tudor Arms Gay Disco. Bish free
St. Peter's Church Marley. Choral concert 8pm free.
University Great Hall London Road site. end of session concert 7.30 free.
Central Studio Cliddesden Road Basingstoke. Isis String Quartet. 7.45. £1 + conc.



weds 29 Reading Film Theatre Whiteknights site. 'Hammett' 3pm £1 -£1.50.
 june Silks Hatcham. Hollow Expressions. Bish £ ?
S.H.P. New Orleans Night with George Chisholm etc. 7pm. £4/ .50.

thur 30 Hexagon Emllyn Williams as Charles Dickens 7.30. £2.50/3.50. also on the 1st July.
 june Target the Butts. Sam Mitchell Band. Bish £1
St. Michael's Church Meadway Fifehurst. Gloria (Vivaldi) 7.30pm 6p, kids + oap's 40p.
Meadway School Choir and Orchestra
Fives John Sinclair Roadshow. Disco Bish free.

frid 1 Tudor Arms Gay Disco. Bish free
 july Caribbean Club London St. Boys + l. 9.30 til late £1.50.
S.H.P. 9th Jazz Festival. Rip, Rig and Panic, Orchestra Jazira, plus Valdez. 7.30 £4.25-£5.25.
 Saturday and Sunday tickets £10.50-£13.00
 weekend £13.00-£17.50. kids £1/day.

sat 2 Midnight Picnic. You are invited to a picnic .
 july Starts when pubs close, venue - walk down Cholmeley Road, to the river, turn right, carry on past the gas works, until you reach open fields bring friends, drink, food etc. boats.

Hexagon 12.15, Sir Nigel Rollinstock's Soiree Ensemble. free.

7.30. Emllyn Williams as Dylan Thomas £2.50 - £3.50.
Target Stealover. Bish free.
Central Club London street. Grand Summer Show and Dance. with Francis Campbell and the Sapphires Sir Scotty (sounds) from London 3 til late £3-£5 on the door.
Christchurch Gardens Christchurch Road. Trio Zafaran. 7.30 £?
S.H.P. Jazz Festival continues. lots of bands and artists, too many to mention. 12 noon to 11.30pm £6.00 - £7.00. programme from Hexagon Foyer.

sun 3 Fives Warm Snorkel. lunchtime free.
 july Forbury Gardens ? mystery event. no guarantee.
S.H.P. Jazz Fest Continues. African Jay + 12.30 - 10.30 £6 -£7.

mon 4 Hexagon Cowardice 7.30. £2-£4.50. weds matinee 2.30
 july £1.50. saturday 5 and 8pm. sat mat £3. Mon night 2 seats for 1. until 9th.
The Bull Nettlebed. Singers night with Devil's Advocate. 8pm free.

tues 5 Fives The Croquets. Bish free.
 july Tudor Arms Gay Disco. Bish free.
Woodley Playhouse Childrens Day (comedy) 7.45 £1.25 until the 9th. kids/oap's 65p.
Apollo Oxford. Lenny Henry 7.45. £4-£6.
S.H.P. Atomic Cafe + The Amazing Colossal Man. 7.30 £1.90 + conc. until 7th.

weds 6 S.H.P. Local Bands Night. 6pm. £1.50-£2
 july

thur 7 Target Here and Now Band £1.
 july Fives Disco Bish. free.

fri 8 Caribbean Club David Jenkins + band 10.00 til late £1.50.
 july Tudor Arms Gay Disco Bish free.
S.H.P. Folk Festival. too many bands to mention. 7 til late £3.75-£4.50. weekend ticket £10.50-£13.00 5-16 yr olds £1/day.

sat 9 Hexagon Flex a Muscle. 12.15, free.
 july Caribbean Club Grenada Association Dance, with the Volcanoes, 8 til late £2, £2.50 on door.
Fives IQ Bish free
S.H.P. Folk Festival. 12 til late £5.25 - £7.00.

sun 10 Hexagon Independence Day lunch, (because it's 6 days after amerikkan independence day), with Kennet Jazz Band. 12noon £5. tickets restricted. probably because Hash Brownies are on the menu.
Fives Positive Response. lunchtime free.
Forbury Gardens we still don't know what happens in the Forbury Gardens on sundays.
S.H.P. Folk Festival. 12 - 10.30. £5.25 - £7.

Have a nice time .

OK, we've got this Forbury thing sussed now. On Sun 3rd it's the Woodley Concert Band, on the 10th the Thames Youth Wind Ensemble. Both start at 3pm.

BITS FROM THE COLLECTIVE MEETING.

Message to DISTRIBUTORS: If you're going away at all can you make sure that Red Rag knows who to leave your bundle with? (It's recommended to find someone on your round who can do it for you) You could send us a post card too.

Person or persons needed to run around town with Red Rag every other Monday (to Lazer Records, Our Price, Emporium etc) Contact James on 666681.

People needed to learn how to do the Red Rag computerised labels. It's not difficult! Contact Mick on 666681 if interested or talk to Ian at Acorn.

WANTED: for new Asian Women's Centre:
everything to equip it - furniture,
cooker, fridge, all domestic equipment etc.
tel 587518(day), 586111 x 266(day)
662466(eve)

Does anybody know of, or own, an area of land
where a bus could be parked and lived in for a
reasonably long period (hopefully about a year)
Preferably close to Reading, and hopefully for
Free! If so, please contact mark on Reading
479749.

FOR SALE: 8 watt practice bass amp. - as new.
£25. Contact Liz on 584425/867955

Part-time help needed on organic herb farm in
Hambleton - contact Mike on Hambleton 598.
Small wage negotiable.

ACCOMMODATION: Double room available July 1st
in large modern detached house with double garage
garden etc. Share all facilities. Would suit young
couple. 4 miles from Reading town centre on bus
route. £14.29 each per week and bills. Phone
Pangbourne 4532 after 6.00pm.



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To:- (your bank's name and address)

Please pay to the account of RED RAG, Co-
operative Bank, Reading (08-90-16, a/c no.
50148637),

the sum of _____
(words), £ _____ (figures)
on _____ (date), and on the same
date every month/three months until further
notice.

Signed _____ Date _____

Your name _____

Your address _____

Your a/c no _____

Send this form to Sue Clarke, Flat 7, 66
Wokingham Road. NOT to your bank. 'ta.

IMPROVE YOUR KARMA! ONE SIMPLE LESSON!

OUTLETS

If you have difficulty finding a copy, try:-

Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St

Lazer Records, Butts Centre (downstairs)

Pop Records, 172 King's Rd

Central Club, bottom of London St.

Unemployment Centre, East St

Our Price Records, Butts Centre (downstairs)

The Emporium, Merchants' Place (off Friar St)

Mace Grocer, 2 Crown Colonnade, Cemetery Junction

Johal Cash and Carry, 14 Cholmeley Rd

Elephant Off-Licence, 1 Derry St

Ken's Shop, Students' Union, Whiteknights.

....or get it delivered to your door by ringing 666681

Snippet

Sewing mail-bags? This traditional prison labour
is still imposed on those who offend against
"discipline". But what they have to make these
days in Reading Gaol is - Harrod's shopping bags.

Dear Red Rag,

In your last issue there was a letter
from a reader named 'Greg' who asked for an explanation
of the Rag's anti-election stance over the past few
weeks. I can't speak for the Rag's Collective but I'm
happy to tell Greg why I didn't vote.

I didn't vote because no party or govern-
ment is willing, or indeed able, to help me get what I
want from life. If I had voted I might have helped to
elect an alternative government, but I'm not looking
for an alternative government - I'm looking for an
alternative to government. I look forward to a society
without a ruling class, but all an election offers is
the chance to elect another, possibly more magnanimous,
section of the ruling class. To be forced to submit to
rulers is bad enough; to be asked to choose them is
rubbing salt in the wound. I know it can be argued that
it is better to have a milder oppressor than a sterner
one, but surely that argument only makes sense to those
people who have resigned themselves to living on their
knees, and just want to be as comfortable as possible
under the circumstances.

No government is going to give me back
my life, no government is going to give me a real and
equal say in organizing my workplace or my neighbour-
hood. These things can't be obtained by voting for any
politician, we have to co-operate together and take
them for ourselves.

These reasons may make no sense to Greg.
If you can't feel the oppression, if you can't see the
bars, then any explanation I offer will seem without
meaning. I can only say in return that I find Greg's
reasons for voting equally difficult to understand.
One of Greg's defences (i.e. that thousands died or
were deported to give us the right to vote) is par-
ticularly fatuous. How can I possibly be held to
ransome by the sacrifices of people who never knew of
my existence? If they died for my benefit I can only
say that I didn't ask them to. If they died to give
me free choice, then fine. I have just exercised it.
I chose not to vote.

This argument by historical sacrifice
doesn't really hold water. Thousands died for the
right to worship a Christian god - does that mean that
I have to go to church every Sunday? During World War
Two thousands died fighting for fascism - does that
mean I have to embrace fascism as well?

I obviously accept that, as Greg says,
'universal suffrage has been made safe by the Estab-
lishment' - but how could it be otherwise? The ruling
class, even its elected members, are the Establishment
(bearing in mind that the Establishment also includes
its own spurious opposition). However, I disagree with
Greg when he says that this serves to hold the wide
gap between rulers and the ruled. In fact I believe
that the opposite is true. It is no longer possible
to destroy oppression by eliminating a dictator or a
small ruling junta because oppression has been intern-
alised, we live it and reproduce it in our daily lives.
Oppression is no longer centralized, it no longer has
to be, because oppression is everywhere - the army, the
police on your street, schoolteachers, managers, priests,
social workers and, if you haven't got to grips with
your sexism yet, the dominant male in the family to
keep that little microcosm of the state in line.

Neither can Greg tempt me to vote because
this election was one in which "class battlelines are
so sharply drawn". I am not interested in a class war -
I'm interested in abolishing classes.

Greg asks "where people are coming from"
who express such ideas in Red Rag. I would have thought
it unlikely that anyone could be involved in left
politics for very long without coming across Anarchism.
Anarchism is about freedom and autonomy. Anarchists are
the enemies of those who hold or seek power over others
(even if they purport to wield that power for the good
of the masses). Elections are about putting people in
power and that is why Anarchists don't vote. We want to
take back control of our own lives, to co-operate
freely without coercion, and a million other things -
no government is going to give us that. We, all of
us, have to take it ourselves.

Peter the Painter

ANOTHER LETTER

★
FREE
ISSUE 2 the

SCROUNGER

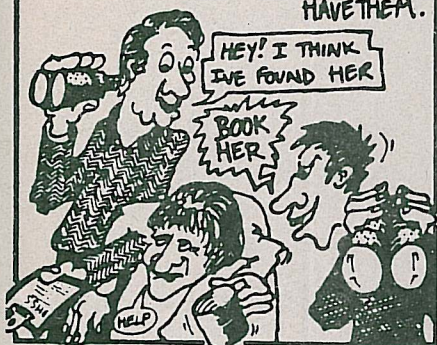
june july

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PRINTED AT ALORN BOOKSHOP 17 CHATHAM ST.

DUE TO A
DECISION
TAKEN BY
THE MANAGE-
MENT COMMITTEE
OF READING
CENTRE FOR
THE JOBFREE

did you know

... MORE MONEY IS SPENT ON ANTI-
SCROUNGING CAMPAIGNS THAN IS
SPENT ATTEMPTING TO GET STATE
BENEFITS TO THE THREE MILLION
WHO DON'T REALISE THEY SHOULD
HAVE THEM.



(THEY WANTED
UNACCEPTABLE
POWERS OF
CENSORSHIP)
THE SCROUNGER,
DESPITE ITS
POPULARITY,
IS NOW DEAD



NEVER MEET THE
S.C.C.U.M. ALONE !

SPECIALIST CLAIMS CONTROL UNIT

Watch out! Watch out! the DHSS super scroungers, the Specialist Claims Control Unit, may be coming to town. Rumours have been floating around since last November that Reading was high on their list for a visit. However, it would appear that the necessary official approval has not yet been granted.

The SCCU were set up in 1980 by Reg Prentice who declared "war on the scroungers" and claimed they would save £50 million. The SCCU work from DHSS regional offices in teams of four and are based for at least two months in each local office. They are of course in addition to the regular "fraud officers" who work permanently in local offices.

The SCCU have already won an unsavoury reputation all over the country through their methods of intimidation. They operate by targetting "likely" claimants and then keeping them under surveillance. Unlike the local fraud officers who only investigate cases where they have sufficient information to suspect fraud, the SCCU make random checks on individuals and, for example, work to a quota of 5% of the unemployed and single parents claimants. The quota can, indeed, be selected on such dubious grounds as that the claimant (wait for it!) maintains a suspiciously high level of living!

Women, who are single parents, are particularly at risk of an investigation especially if they are in debt or the children are "of an age which would enable the mother to take up work" or she refuses to take proceedings for maintenance, even though there is no obligation to work or to take proceedings. Indeed, there seems to be a deliberate policy of pursuing women rather than men. In one area the preliminary haul of cases for investigation by the SCCU was a list of nearly two hundred, three of whom were men. Single mothers are again likely to be targetted by virtue of investigative criteria such as whether a 'claim has been current for more than four months', while those who live in households with 'signs of a male presence' are also likely suspects.

Since fraud officers already operate within the DHSS the pressure is on SCCU's to bring a greater return on the Minister's investment leading to a stronger form of investigation and questioning. Cases in the West Midlands have high-lighted the use of intimidation and harassment with the wrongful detention

of people who they suspect of welfare fraud. In some cases this has led to legitimate claimants withdrawing their claim. The most common method used by the SCCU's is the 'non-prosecution interview' which may take place there there is insufficient evidence to justify interviewing under the administration of a caution. Essentially, in each interview claimants are told that if they withdraw their claim no further action will be taken against them. The strong tactics used by the SCCU staff have produced a series of false confessions. Why do they do this? Because they know that they cannot really save £50 million unless they force innocent claimants to stop claiming their benefits. Other methods that are used include checks on other departmental records, enquiries of employers, business associates or neighbours as well as observation, shadowing, liaison with police and the checking of vehicle numbers.

There are a number of points which cause some concern. First, the scope for malpractice by special investigators enables them to resort to threat and intimidation; The failure to caution or properly work to Judges Rules where applicable; the refusal to allow third party representation for claimants. Second, the absence of any system of public accountability, independent control, published code of practice, adequate complaints procedure or independent mechanism for investigation of the abuse of powers. Third, the operation of SCCU ought to make it evident to the DHSS by their own logic, that it is their responsibility to provide a preventative advice and guidance service. However, this should also assist in the classification of the complex and out-of-date (frequently sexist) regulations with a view to their simplification or removal, and the encouragement of benefit take-up where eligibility and entitlement is legitimate. We must take action against the SCCU by organising with the local unions within the DHSS who also oppose their methods, by making a visual protest when the SCCU arrive and ensuring that claimants never meet them alone.

