

# SOCIALIST REVIEW

(formerly Socialist Revolution)

Number 39 (Vol 8, No. 3)

May-June 1978

SOCIALIST REVIEW (publication number 947780) is published bimonthly by Agenda Publishing Co., 4228 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, California 94609. Subscription: \$12.00 for six issues (\$13.00 foreign); libraries and institutions \$24.00 per volume (six issues; \$25.00 foreign). Single copies \$2.50. Copyright 1978 by Agenda Publishing Co. Second class postage paid at Oakland, California, and additional mailing offices.

SAN FRANCISCO COLLECTIVE: Tomás Almaguer, Fred Block, Nancy Chodorow, Harry Chotiner, Bruce Dancis, Barbara Easton, Diane Ehrensaft, Candace Falk, Carol Hatch, Candy Howes, Michael Omi, David Plotke, Michael Reich, Michael Rotkin, Jim Shoch.

BOSTON COLLECTIVE: Paul Joseph, Joel Krieger, Bill Lazonick, Elizabeth Long, Sonya Michel, Larry Miller, Peggy Somers, David Stark, Kathy Stone, Rosemary Taylor, Bob Wood.

ASSOCIATES: Robert Allen, Julie Burton, Mina Davis Caulfield, Daniel Ellsberg, Richard Lichtman, Colleen McGrath, Jim Mellen, Rhea Wilson, Eli Zaretsky (S.F. Bay Area); Carl Boggs, Barbara Zheutlin (Los Angeles); Lou Ferleger, Karl Klare (Boston); Herb Gintis, Peter Herman, Persis Hunt, Louis Menashe (New York); Richard Healey, John Judis, James Weinstein (Chicago); Leonard Helfgott (Bellingham, Wash.); Martin Murray (Binghamton, N.Y.); Barbara Stuckey (Starnberg, Germany).

## Cover from The City, by Frans Masereel

Regular articles should be sent to the San Francisco Collective. Reviews of books, films, music, TV, etc. should be sent to the Boston Collective at SR East, 30 Carver St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Please send three copies of all manuscripts.

We would like to make contact with individuals and groups who share our political perspective. We want comments on articles and on the direction of the journal. We would like people to visit us when they are in the San Francisco Bay Area. Drop us a note.



## CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Feminism and the Contemporary Family	11
<i>Barbara Easton</i>	
Political Parties and Class Conflict in the United States	37
<i>Michael Reich and Richard Edwards</i>	
Safety Pins and Class Struggle: Punk Rock and the Left	58
<i>Bruce Dancis</i>	
Making the Connections: Ideology, Consciousness, and the Left in Israel	84
<i>David Mandel</i>	
Terrorism in West Germany: Interview with Horst Mahler	118
Reviews:	
New Perspectives on Social History	124
<i>Mary Nolan</i>	
Hard Times in the Seventies	136
<i>David Noble</i>	

## SAFETY PINS AND CLASS STRUGGLE: PUNK ROCK AND THE LEFT

*Bruce Dancis*

*They offered me the office offered me the shop  
They said I'd better take anything they got  
"Do you wanna make tea at the BBC?"  
"Do you wanna be do you really wanna be a cop?"  
Career opportunities the ones that never knock  
Every job they offer you is to keep you out the dock  
Career opportunities the ones that never knock.<sup>1</sup>*

—The Clash, "Career Opportunities"

*LSD, golly gee,  
DDT, wowee!  
Daddy's broke  
Holy smoke  
My future's bleak  
Ain't it neat?<sup>2</sup>*

—The Ramones, "I Wanna Be Well"

ANYONE WHO READS mass circulation magazines like *People* or *Time*, or pays attention to fashion trends, or watches feature stories on TV news shows, or looks at periodicals like *Rolling Stone*

*Thanks to Harry Chotiner for his comments and Robert Christgau and Greil Marcus for their inspiration. —B.D.*

that cater to the under-forty set, or has heard of Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols, knows that a strange new "movement" known as "punk rock" has emerged in popular music. Not since the arrival of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones on a somnolent music scene almost fifteen years ago has such an enormous amount of public attention—not to mention apprehension and misunderstanding—been focused on rock-and-roll.

Punk rock, or "New Wave," as it is known to those who like their movements less aggressively named, is basically high-energy hard rock. It is an angry music. The names of groups are intended to shock and to express outrage—the Damned, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, the Buzzcocks, Slaughter and the Dogs, to name a few. In Great Britain this has been coupled with occasional violence, cursing on TV, the banning of concerts and censoring of records, and, in what may well have been the most auspicious timing in the history of rock music, the release of the Sex Pistols' scathingly sarcastic "God Save the Queen" in the middle of the queen's Silver Jubilee celebration. Punk rock bands and their followers often wear torn clothes, safety pins, and razor blades, and some have dyed hair. Although the punk rock scene in the United States is still small and has yet to make much of an impact on American popular culture, it is growing steadily.

Robbie Robertson of the Band once said that "music should never be harmless."<sup>3</sup> That's about the only thing on which observers of punk rock would agree—punk certainly isn't harmless. At its best, punk rock represents not only an energetic aesthetic attack on the dominant trends within popular music, but also a working-class protest against youthful unemployment, poverty, government censorship, authoritarianism, racism, fascism, the record industry, the star system, and the traditional performer/audience relationship. At its worst, punk is a manifestation of cultural despair and decadence, featuring nihilism, sexism, a glorification of violence and fascist imagery, sado-masochism, and musical incompetence.

### THE LEFT'S RESPONSE

NOT SURPRISINGLY, punk rock has stimulated a vigorous debate among rock fans and others. The debate has extended into the ranks of the left, particularly in Great Britain. Arguments about punk rock dominated a "Music for Socialism" conference held in London this past June.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most bitter attack on punk rock has come from the

Progressive Cultural Association (PCA), a Maoist organization associated with the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist). The PCA believes that punk is fascist, a trend that has been "carefully nurtured and promoted" by the mass media to indoctrinate youth with reactionary ideology. The goal of punk is to encourage dissent between generations as a way of diverting attention from deteriorating social conditions. The PCA explains the banning of punk records by the BBC and local radio stations as a ploy intended to build up punk's image as anti-establishment. Furthermore, says the PCA, this use of rock music by the ruling class is not a new occurrence:

This is part of the entire process that has developed over the last two decades, when pop music has been used as part of an attempt to pacify and disarm the revolutionary sentiment of the youth. In the '60's there was a growing world-wide anti-imperialist sentiment. . . . It was no accident that the bourgeoisie at this time promoted rock music and through it such trends as "Flower Power" and the "Hippy" movement with their cult of "peace and love."<sup>5</sup>\*

No doubt the PCA's dislike for punk is related to the friendly attitude of rival left groups towards the new music. The main rock critic for the Communist Party of Great Britain, Anthony Wall, praised the more political punk bands like the Clash that "use their music to protest against the frustrations and conditions that afflict working class youth" and "attack enemies that rock has rarely dealt with previously." Wall also applauded punk's honesty, energy, and rebelliousness. In addition, punk bands like Sham 69 have played at Young Communist festivals, along with reggae bands.<sup>6</sup>

The strongest supporter of punk rock on the British left has been the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), formerly the International Socialists. Their overall position is similar to the CP's—punk is progressive, working-class music—but their involvement with punk is more active. They organized a group called Rock Against Racism (RAR) whose goal is to fight the influences of racism and fascism in rock music. The SWP has taken a leading role in organizing demonstrations against the right-wing National Front, a neo-fascist organization that has attempted to blame black and Asian immigrants for

\*Interestingly, Maoists take the same position on punk rock as do the Soviets. Consider the following from the USSR's Young Communist League: "The music and lyrics of punk rock provoke among the young fits of aimless rage, vandalism and the urge to destroy everything they get in their hands. No matter how carefully they try to clean it up, it will remain the most reactionary offspring of the bourgeois mass culture." Quoted in *Rolling Stone*, 20 October 1977, p. 49.

Britain's deteriorating economic position. RAR was formed after rock star Eric Clapton came out in support of Enoch Powell, a leading anti-immigration politician.

Together with another organization in which the SWP plays a major role—Right to Work—RAR is an attempt to organize black and white working-class youth. Its slogans are "Reggae, Soul, Rock 'n' Roll, Jazz, Funk, Punk—Our Music," "Love Music—Hate Racism," and, of course, "Rock Against Racism." RAR puts out a newspaper called *Temporary Hoarding* that features interviews with leading punk bands such as the Sex Pistols and the Clash and reggae groups like Aswad and Carol Grimes. One of RAR's major activities is sponsoring concerts that bring together reggae and punk bands and their supporters.<sup>7</sup>

The debate over punk rock is just beginning in the United States, and so far takes the form of differing assessments by individual writers who are leftists. The leading left defender of punk is Robert Christgau of the *Village Voice*. Christgau has for years been in love with what he now calls "avant-punk," a rock music ally of avant-garde movements in poetry, the visual arts, and music. He sees the antecedents of punk rock in defunct groups such as the Velvet Underground, the MC5, and the New York Dolls.<sup>8</sup> I see roots of punk also in the "wall-of-sound" style of hard rock, as practiced in 1965–68 by groups such as the Who, the early Kinks ("You Really Got Me" and "All Day and All of the Night"), and especially the Rolling Stones in their 1966–67 amphetamine period ("19th Nervous Breakdown," "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadow?" and almost the entire *Got Live If You Want It!* album).

For Christgau, avant-punk has a social base that is an important factor in distancing it from mainstream rock currents:

Put young, relatively unskilled white musicians from an industrial city together with some electric guitars, grant them aesthetic acuteness by nature or nurture, and eventually it's bound to happen: rock and roll that differentiates itself from its (fundamentally black and rural) sources by taking on the crude, ugly, perhaps brutal facts of the (white and urban) prevailing culture, rather than hiding behind its bland façade. The underlying idea of this rock and roll will be to harness late industrial capitalism in a love-hate relationship whose difficulties are acknowledged, and sometimes disarmed, by means of ironic aesthetic strategies: formal rigidity, role-playing, humor.<sup>9</sup>

Although neither Christgau nor *In These Times*'s John Judis, another recent left defender of punk, ignore the sexism or the

quasi-fascism that often exist within the genre, they do attempt to rebut some of the accusations made against punk rock, at least in the case of the "fascist" charge. Both believe that punk represents, in Judis's words, "an authentic, unfiltered expression of the fears, anxieties, sexual needs, and anger that rumble down the corridors of high schools, colleges, factories, and offices." The main problem they see is in the differences between British punk, which is predominantly working class, reflects the existence of often intense class struggle in British society, and is influenced by the left, and American punk, which in the absence of a viable left and the same degree of class antagonism, according to Christgau "is likely to issue in molten-metal torrents of boredom and misogyny that lack even the justification of metaphorical license."<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, Tim Patterson of the *Guardian* takes a vehemently anti-punk, anti-avant-garde position. \* Charging that punk rock is a "social disease," the "cruellest cultural hoax in decades," and (horror of horrors) "a quintessentially petit-bourgeois phenomenon," Patterson sees the new music as being viciously and hopelessly reactionary. He also doesn't like the musical style of punk: "as music, punk rock is downright boring."<sup>11</sup>

Part of the problem in analyzing punk rock is that everyone has a different understanding of who's a punk rocker; many bands are being identified as punk or New Wave that shouldn't be. The problem is particularly thorny in the United States, where punk is often played by people who are long past their teens.

Four groups among the best in the influential New York rock scene are especially problematic: Talking Heads, Television, Mink DeVille, and Patti Smith. The first two have virtually nothing in common with punk rock, except that they became famous at New York's CBGB's club, a New Wave haven. In appearance, musical style (more "art rock," with complex changes and jazz overtones), lyrical content (among the most intellectual in rock), and musical back-

\*That some on the left would be hostile to new directions in popular music shouldn't come as a surprise to veteran readers of left cultural criticism. Consider the following response to Bob Dylan's shocking decision in 1965 to plug in his guitar: "Bob Dylan has become a pawn in his own game. He has ceased his Quest for a Universal Sound and has settled for a liaison with the music trade's Top Forty Hit Parade. . . . Currently, the Charts require him to write rock-and-roll; and he does. . . . Next year, he'll be writing rhythm-and-blues songs when they get high on the charts. The following year, the Polish polka will make it, and he'll write them, too. By then, he'll be so mired in the popularity charts that he'll be safe enough for the State Department to have them send him to entertain troops at whatever battlefield we're on at the time." Israel Young, "Frets and Frails," *Sing Out!* vol. 15, no. 5 (November 1965), p. 87.

ground, they are light years away from punk. Both bands dissociate themselves from punk rock in interviews.<sup>12</sup> Mink DeVille's leader, Willy DeVille, has also made clear his distance from punk rock, and his band plays an updated form of rhythm and blues, rather than fast-paced punk.<sup>13</sup> Patti Smith presents additional difficulties, because she identifies with the punk movement. But her music is especially un-punkish, featuring long songs (whereas most punk songs are less than three minutes) and poetry with musical background. Her finest song, "Free Money," begins with a classical-sounding piano and turns into a classic 1960s rocker.<sup>14</sup>

The best definition of punk rock is by Caroline Coon, a British rock critic and an early supporter of punk. She defines punk as "bands who usually play frantically fast, minimal, aggressive rock with the emphasis on brevity, an all-in sound rather than individual solos and an arrogance calculated to shock."<sup>15</sup> There are still problems, however, since there is continual argument on the punk rock scene about who is a "poser," a band that has adopted a punk image and sound because it has become marketable, rather than because they believe in what they're doing.

ALTHOUGH BOTH CHRISTGAU and Judis recognize that there are important differences between punk in Great Britain and the United States, they still write as if there were one category called punk rock. Yet any such trans-Atlantic category is problematic. British punk often concerns working-class themes, particularly youthful unemployment and the lack of opportunity, that come out of the life experiences of the musicians. In the United States punk rock has little of this class dimension, and the social protest it does contain often seems postured.

In its musical rebellion against mainstream rock currents on both sides of the Atlantic, punk is a welcome return to a rock music with real feeling and movement. Putting aside the pink hair, whose popularity among punks has been exaggerated by the media, punk is a reaction against the show-biz tendencies that have become increasingly prominent in the 1970s. Torn tee-shirts and a simple music which is relatively easy to learn to play replace smoke bombs, costumes, props, and a heavily orchestrated sound.

Just as the Beatles and the Stones rendered obsolete the sugar-coated drivel that had gained ascendancy in the late 1950s and early 1960s, punk rock contributes to a genuine rock revival in the late 1970s. Linda Ronstadt's music is not as vapid as Connie Francis's, and the punk view that the James Taylors and the Eagles are the

enemy is wrong, but their laid-back consciousnesses could use a little razing.

It is as a social phenomenon that punk rock has provoked the greatest fears. Some believe that the social and political situation of contemporary Great Britain and the United States is so volatile that the anger expressed by punk rockers could be channeled into reaction.

There is much to worry about in the political direction of the two countries. The growth of neo-nationalist movements in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and the general decline of Britain's world position leaves the not-so-United Kingdom in a state where a crude jingoism with its dominant racism could receive a responsive reception in England. What Tom Nairn has described as Britain's "rapidly accelerating backwardness, economic stagnation, social decay, and cultural despair" offers the right, as well as the left, an opportunity to build a mass movement.<sup>16</sup> In the United States we are witnessing the emergence of a New Right that might become broader than America's traditional right wing.

Yet it would be a serious mistake to exaggerate these dangers. Analogies between present-day Great Britain and 1928-1933 Germany are not useful. Youthful unemployment and an insecure social-democratic leadership notwithstanding, Britain has not experienced anything approaching the poverty and depredation of a defeated and occupied Germany.

In neither Britain nor the United States is there the disdain for liberal democracy that characterized much of the politics of the Weimar Republic. If Britain and the United States *do* move to the right as a result of Labour and Democratic inability to respond to the current crisis, it will likely take the form of victories for the Conservative and Republican parties. Such an occurrence would certainly mean a worsening of the quality of life for women, minorities, and the working class, but it would hardly bring about a drastic change in the social order.

It is entirely speculative to suggest that punk rockers would be more susceptible to the appeals of the right than any other sector of the rock audience, or for that matter any other sector of the populace. This fear seems to be based on the Italian and German experiences, where the fascist movements were successful in channeling youthful anger in a political direction. But surely the rise of generational hostilities throughout the advanced capitalist world in the 1960s demonstrated that youth protest could move in a left-wing direction as well.

There are no inherent tendencies within punk rock that make it prone to reaction. In Great Britain punk has thus far been closer to the organized left than to the right. And if in the United States punk has not been aligned with any social or political movements, it is difficult to imagine Anita Bryant warming up to Richard Hell, or vice versa.

## PUNK ROCK AND THE MUSIC BUSINESS

ALTHOUGH THE RAMONES, New York's most prominent punk band, started puttering away around 1974, it was England's Sex Pistols that made punk an international musical style.

A brief history of the Sex Pistols reveals the limitations of civil liberties in a country like Great Britain.<sup>17</sup> The band was formed late in 1975 and had already achieved a cult following by the next spring. As new punk bands formed and interest expanded, concerts were increasingly marked by violence among spectators. Punk rock proved to be a boon to the sharply competitive British press, as they continually played up every disturbance and controversy.

The Sex Pistols signed a contract with EMI, one of the world's largest record companies, in the fall of 1976; their first single, "Anarchy in the U.K.," came out in December. If the lyrics ("I am an Antichrist, I am an Anarchist, Don't know what I want but I know where to get it") weren't enough to provoke a national scandal, an appearance by the band on a TV talk show during a promotional tour certainly was. Goaded by the host to "say something outrageous," the Pistols replied, "You dirty bastard," "You dirty fucker," and "What a fucking rotter."<sup>18</sup> Radio stations across the country immediately banned "Anarchy." Local town councils throughout England and Scotland barred the Pistols and other punk bands from town halls (major venues for rock concerts). Workers at EMI staged a wildcat strike and stopped shipment of the record in protest over the TV appearance. Sir John Read, chairman of EMI, said that his company would "seek to discourage records which are likely to cause offence."<sup>19</sup> In early January 1977 the band was involved in an incident at Heathrow airport in which one of them allegedly vomited on an old woman. Within a month, EMI terminated the group's contract.

In March the Pistols signed a new contract with A & M Records; for reasons that are not clear, the record company backed out of the contract nine days later. Although sales of punk records were

growing, the Pistols and other bands found it increasingly difficult to secure halls for concerts.

With their third record company in six months (Virgin Records), the Pistols released "God Save the Queen" during the queen's Silver Jubilee. A powerful song with a bitter vocal by Johnny Rotten and strong guitar work by Steve Jones, "God Save the Queen" includes a haunting chorus in which the band repeatedly sings "No future"; but it will be remembered for the following lines:

*God save the Queen  
The fascist regime  
Made you a moron  
Potential H-bomb  
God Save the Queen  
She ain't no human being  
There is no future  
And England's screaming*<sup>20</sup>

Of course, Britain isn't fascist. But the furor over the song showed how easily free expression could be circumscribed. "God Save the Queen" was banned by the BBC and the independent Radio Luxembourg. The three major record retail chains in the country refused to handle the record. The Independent Broadcasting Authority, the governing body for Britain's commercial TV and radio stations, advised all stations not to play the song and to refuse advertisements for it: "Nothing should be broadcast which offends good taste and decency."<sup>21</sup> The backlash against the Pistols spread to all punk rock bands. Even the Jam, a punk group that had offered to play three free Silver Jubilee concerts, was barred from using concert halls in Leeds and Chelsea. Whether the ban hurt or helped sales, "God Save the Queen" quickly moved to the top of the record charts. The publicity was worldwide, and in the United States punk expanded from a cult in New York to a national phenomenon.

PUNK ROCK IS A frontal assault on the leading aesthetic and commercial tendencies in rock music. AM radio in the United States and Great Britain is dominated by emotionless, computerized disco music and the sickly sweet Donnie and Maries, Bay City Rollers, and ABBAs. In this country many FM stations devoted to rock music have appeared in response to the sorry state of AM, and this has brought some improvements. But even FM is now devoted primarily to either L.A.-style soft rock (Linda Ronstadt, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac) with its emphasis on an antiseptic, detached, tech-

nically advanced, melodically pleasant sound, or the remaining practitioners of the heavy-metal, extended-solo style that came to the fore in the late 1960s (Led Zeppelin, etc.). In the words of Tommy of the Ramones: "Everything became too *slick*. The excitement was gone."<sup>22</sup>

But the punk rockers are most angry at rock superstars like the Rolling Stones or Rod Stewart who have lost touch with the British working class and live out their jet-setting life styles in tax exile. Perhaps growing up in the midst of economic depression explains the bitter sense of betrayal the punks express towards the rock rebels of the 1960s. As Paul Weller of the Jam said about the Stones: "What they once fought against they've now become part of." Or, says the Clash's Joe Strummer, "I don't want to end up in a villa on the South of France watching colour TV."<sup>23</sup>\*

Not surprisingly considering their history, the Sex Pistols are extremely hostile towards record companies, whom they see as trying to turn bands into "factory fodder."<sup>24</sup> They have recorded a song, "E.M.I.," that denounces their first record company. The Clash has gone so far as to release a single called "Complete Control" that attacks their *current* company, CBS, for deceiving them about the degree of artistic freedom the band would have. Members of the Clash recognize that just as the record company becomes a tool for the band to get its message across, so does the company try to use them. Says Joe Strummer: "It wants . . . to get the best years of yer life, such you dry and then spit you out the back end. . . . Nuffing we can do about it."<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the most articulate punks like Johnny Rotten disparage the parasitic role of rock journalists, who are "always wizzing off on free tickets and limosines." Rotten denounces rock bands that "hold press conferences every two weeks and pay for some far out binge for the social elite and grovel around or fly every other reporter in the music press to New York on a private plane."<sup>26</sup>

The punks have an alternative to the current state of affairs in rock music, but it is full of contradictions. In contrast to the ultra-professionalism of many rock bands, punks play about the simplest music imaginable, utilizing few chords and a limited melodic range

\*Ironically, Mick Jagger of the Stones likes punk rock and agrees with much of the punks' criticisms of contemporary rock music, if not their attacks on him and his band: "They've got lots of *energy*, and that's what rock & roll needs. And I would prefer to hear these bands than a lot of shit that goes on the Hollywood rock awards." Cher Flipppo, "Hot Stuff from Mick and Keith," *Rolling Stone*, 3 November 1977, p. 18.

—a style known as “minimalism.” A democratic ideology has surrounded punk rock, as the simplicity of the music encourages others to form their own bands. Nuclear Valdez of San Jose, California, advertise themselves as “Three Great Guys, Three Great Chords.” Consider the humor and thoughtfulness in some of the verses of “One Chord Wonders,” by the Adverts, a leading British band:

*I wonder what we'll play for you tonight  
Something heavy, something light  
Something to set your soul alive  
I wonder how we'll answer when you say,  
“We don't like you, go away,  
Come back when you've learned to play.”  
I wonder what we'll do when things go wrong  
When we're halfway through our favourite song  
We look up and the audience is gone<sup>27</sup>*

There have been many critical responses to punk rock, usually along the order of the humorous put-down: “They play all three of their chords badly.” Unfortunately for supporters of punk, much of the music produced by punk bands is mediocre, some incompetent. A great deal of punk rock lacks rhythmic subtlety or memorable melodies and becomes monotonous. In addition, despite the disdain in which older rock bands are held by many punk rockers, punk songs are often far more derivative than their players would like to admit. The Sex Pistols’ “Submission,” for example, rips off almost note-for-note the main riff of the Doors’ “Hello, I Love You,” which was a copy of the Kinks’ “All Day and All of the Night.” Punk is probably no worse in this regard than most rock music, but such debts should be acknowledged rather than ignored.<sup>28</sup>

ONE OF THE MORE interesting business sides of punk rock is that it has spawned the formation of new, independent record companies. Some companies, like New Hormone Records, were formed solely to produce the songs of a single band, while other new companies, such as Step Forward Records, produce a number of punk groups. This has permitted the quick dissemination of a lot of punk singles and has left creative control in the hands of the musicians.

Because of inexperience and lack of proper facilities, recordings on these new labels are often of poor quality. Although the new record companies help break down the hegemony of the giant

corporations that dominate the recording industry, they end up performing what could be called research and development functions for the big companies. Rather than having to risk capital on a new and untested band, the giants can wait for a group to put out its own single and then sign up the most promising new bands. The most successful new record companies become prime targets for takeovers by the large corporations. Sire Records of New York, the home for a number of punk bands, was absorbed recently by Warner Brothers Records, itself a part of the entertainment conglomerate Warner Communications. Most American punk bands have yet to release any records, as the large record companies are waiting to see if the punk phenomenon will become large enough to warrant their investment in it. The commercial success or failure of the punk albums released by Sire Records will probably determine whether other companies will follow the lead of Warner Brothers. Though there have been few new record companies formed thus far in this country, some groups, such as the Dils with their production of “I Hate the Rich” on their own What Records?, are trying to follow the British example.

What will happen to the rebelliousness of the punks when and if they themselves become rock stars? Johnny Rotten, for one, says: “I don’t want the star trip, because I don’t think it’s very real.” He says he wouldn’t mind making a lot of money, “but I wouldn’t sell my soul to get it.” Joe Strummer is even more adamant about keeping his roots and his principles: “I’m not going to suddenly turn into Rod Stewart just because I got £25 a week.”<sup>29</sup> Still, the problem is a real one and punk rock has yet to face it.

## PUNK POLITICS

CRITICS OF PUNK too often seize upon every odious statement in a song or an interview and fail to see contradictions, ironies, and satire. Johnny Rotten has described his putting-on of rock journalists: “I just slagged off everyone I could think of just for a laugh and they fall for it.”<sup>30</sup> Or critics take things too literally. A good example of this is a British punk band known as the Police. Some critic might immediately conclude that they were one more punk rock group that flirted with violent, reactionary images. But upon closer examination we find that the Police’s single, “Fall Out,” was released on Illegal Records and says about education: “I said my education it was my indoctrination just to be another cog in



a machine."<sup>31</sup> First appearances—in this case, a band's name—can be deceiving.

But the problem is deeper. Many leftists hate the form and content of all rock-and-roll, and their put-downs of punk smack of a universal rejection of rock music. If Christgau's criticism of "lib-rad goody-goodies [who] compare rock concerts to Nuremberg rallies and dismiss all electric guitarists as phallic narcissists" is exaggerated, it is also to the point.<sup>32</sup>

We should not suspend our political judgments when analyzing punk rock, but we do have to use criteria that distinguish between political tracts and popular music. The present section will discuss punk in relation to class, authoritarianism, violence, sexism, and racism, where the progressive and reactionary aspects of punk and the differences between punk in Great Britain and the United States become clearest.

### The Politics of Class and Generation

STEVE JONES of the Sex Pistols claims that "I don't even know the name of the Prime Minister, so I don't really see how anyone could describe us as a political band." On the other hand, The Clash's Joe Strummer says, "We're anti-fascist, we're anti-violence, we're anti-racist, and we're pro-creative. We're against ignorance."<sup>33</sup>

The Clash is the leading radical punk band in Britain. They claim that their inspiration comes from social realities: "Career Opportunities" reflects their time on the dole queue; "White Riot" came out of their being caught between charging police and black youths during the 1976 riots in Notting Hill, and includes the line "All the power is in the hands of the people rich enough to buy it"; and "Remote Control" denounces, among other things, the House of Lords. The group is also anti-imperialist: in "Career Opportunities" they sing "I hate the army and I hate the RAF, You won't find me fighting in the tropical heat," and in an interview Paul Simonon protested against the possibility of being drafted and "sent down to South Africa or Rhodesia to protect white capital interest[s]."<sup>34</sup>

Unemployment figures in the songs of other bands as well. The Boomtown Rats sing about standing in the dole queue in the rain, but their individualist response is reflected in the title of their song "Lookin' after No. 1." On the other hand, Chelsea adopted the Socialist Workers Party's anti-unemployment slogan "Right to

Work" for the title of their song about poverty and the rights of the working class.

Considering that there were 1,622,000 unemployed people in Great Britain in July 1977, 313,000 of whom were under eighteen and 708,000 under twenty-five, it isn't surprising that the Clash is not the only band to sing about the lack of opportunities facing British youth. And the punk critique of the economic situation also contains an attack on the quality of life and work. Here are the Drones:

*I used to be an office boy, in my civvies  
I worked 9 till 5, very conventional  
I'd comb my hair and wash my face, oh such a clean boy  
Mummy was proud of me, Oh! what a pity*

*Thought I had a good life—I just fooled myself  
Didn't want to know about, Things I do  
I just used to be a city drone, sad so sad  
Gotta think forward, don't ever look back.<sup>35</sup>*

In this country, there is little overt political protest in punk rock songs. A mediocre California group called the Dils has a single entitled "I Hate the Rich," but it isn't representative. Social satire is more common, a form that the Ramones have practiced over three albums. The Ramones, four young men from Queens, New York, parody the family, drugs, parents, and Subject A of rock music—love: "I met her at the Burger King, We fell in love by the soda machine."<sup>36</sup> They are probably at their best while satirizing the "treatment" of mental disorders in songs such as "Teenage Lobotomy" and "Gimme Gimme Shock Treatment":

*I was feeling sick  
I was losing my mind  
I heard about these treatments  
From a good friend of mine  
He was always happy  
Smile on his face  
He said he had a great time at the place.  
Gimme gimme shock treatment.  
Peace and love is here to stay  
And now I can wake up and face the day  
Happy happy happy all the time  
Shock treatment, I'm doing fine.<sup>37</sup>*

Some aspects of the politics of class in punk rock were alluded to



earlier in the discussion of punk and the music business. But there are other non-lyrical manifestations of punk's progressive politics. Punk rock reasserts that rock music is a collective endeavor. Punk is based on *the band*, the group of instrumentalists and vocalists who actually make the music we hear on records and see at concerts. The Sex Pistols have gone as far as to list each band member as the co-author of every song on their album. This counters a tendency of rock in the 1970s to exalt individual superstars (backed up by anonymous studio musicians) over groups.

The production of rock records has become an excessively lengthy and costly task. Major rock performers now spend dozens, even hundreds, of hours in studios utilizing numerous overdubs, tracks, and electronic gimmicks in pursuit of a flawless sound. The punk critique is based not only on a rejection of the music that is produced in this manner; it also implicitly attacks the expense of these productions—and hence the exclusion of those without wealth. Similarly, ticket prices for rock concerts have grown steadily in recent years and are now out of the reach of many working-class fans. One of the attractive features of punk rock concerts in both the United States and Great Britain is that they are generally much less expensive than the concerts of the mainstream rock acts. It is too early to tell if successful punk rockers will simply follow in the costly paths of other rock stars, but at least at the present time some punk groups have both an awareness of the class dimensions of the rock music business and a determination to maintain their class ties.

The highly publicized punk mode of dress can also be seen as a form of class protest, though in a decidedly bohemian manner. Torn tee-shirts and ripped jeans express a punk distaste for both the gaudy fashions that became part of rock with the coming of glitter rock in the early 1970s and the obsolescent clothing pushed by fashion moguls. In their creative reclamation of "old" clothing, punk fashions make a strong statement of working-class anger, one that is far removed from double knits, leisure suits, and brown shirts.

**T**HE PROTEST IN PUNK ROCK often takes the form of the conflict between generations. Sometimes it is the young against the old; the Jam telling elders "You better listen now you said your bit." At other times the enemy is the generation of the 1960s, whom punk rockers see as being escapist and irrelevant: as in the Dead Boys' threat to "beat up the next hippie I see" or Generation X

calling its song "Your Generation," a direct reply to the Who's hit of the 1960s, "My Generation."<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Joe Strummer believes that the concept of a "generation gap" was a media creation "designed to take the steam out of youth . . . they tried to direct it against old people as a group and I think it should be directed at the people who are ruling you."<sup>39</sup>

Still, the predominant punk view of itself as part of a generation whose life options are limited and boring is expressed by Johnny Rotten sneering "no future for you" on "God Save the Queen" and Richard Hell and the Voidoids' "Blank Generation" ("I belong to the blank generation and I can take it or leave it each time").

This kind of attitude easily passes into a nihilism linked to the dismissal of older rock music and rock bands, and to the style of dress intended to shock and outrage. The Dead Boys express this outlook clearly:

*I don't need anyone  
Don't need no mom and dad  
Don't need no good advice  
Don't need no human race  
I got some news for you  
Don't even need you too*<sup>41</sup>

The centrality of this nihilism to punk rock should not be evaded by its supporters. It is common on both sides of the Atlantic, and cannot be attributed solely to the state of class struggle or the absence of a viable left in the United States.

Even the extreme forms of punk generational hostility are related to the youth protests that have always been part of rock music. The flaunting of conventions was central to the appeal of the finest and most popular rock bands of the 1960s. Who can forget the famous censored Beatles cover for "Yesterday and Today," which Capitol Records refused to distribute because it featured broken, dismembered dolls, hunks of meat, and the boys in butcher aprons covered with blood? And, of course, the Rolling Stones were the supreme youth rebels whose life style, as well as music, symbolized the rebellion of the young in the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> The parallels between their behavior and that of the punks has certainly not been lost on the Stones. Commenting on the incident at Heathrow airport involving the Sex Pistols, Keith Richards recalled an earlier episode involving the Rolling Stones: "It's a real feeling of *déjà vu*. . . . They puked at the London airport; we pissed in the filling station."<sup>43</sup>

This is not the place to discuss the positive and negative role of rock music in the rise and fall of the new left and a radical youth

consciousness in the 1960s. But the revival of similar themes of generational revolt in punk suggests that the movement could be relatively short-lived. In both Britain and the United States, punk rock's self-limitations based on age could prevent it from having a broader cultural impact.

The difficulty in arriving at a political analysis of punk rock is made even harder by a group such as the Jam. All three band members are working-class youth from Woking, in Surrey. Musically, they are probably the finest band to have emerged so far in punk rock. Their songs are extremely politically aware—they criticize urban renewal and the rise of repressive violence on the part of the state ("killers roam the streets in numbers dressed in blue"), and repeatedly denounce authoritarianism. The problem is that the Jam are politically conservative. At the time of the furor over "God Save the Queen" they said they supported her Royal Highness, and that they were Tories as well. This revelation explains a previously cryptic reference to "Uncle Jimmy" (Callaghan): "You're just another red balloon with a lot of hot gas, why don't you fuck off!" and turns another line, "What ever happened to the Great Empire?" into a jingoist's lament.<sup>44</sup>

However, rather than writing off the Jam and other punk rockers for being either conservative, nihilistic, or apolitical, we should understand that in its anti-authoritarianism and reintroduction of social themes into rock music, punk rock represents an important expression of youthful anger and rebellion. As such, it is a progressive move away from complacency and escapism, despite the varying political conclusions bands may draw for themselves.

### Violence and Sexism

FOR MANY, punk rock conjures up images of *Clockwork Orange*. In part this is based on a feeling that punk rock concerts inevitably result in fights among the audience. There are numerous examples of this occurring (at least in Britain). But it is doubtful that punk rock audiences are any more violent than, say, spectators at a British soccer match.

The music itself strikes others as being violent—it is loud, driving, aggressive. But, again, punk rock is probably no different from much of the rock-and-roll of the 1950s and 1960s in its forcefulness, and the fears it inspires because of its style—that young people will turn into hooligans upon listening to the music—are remarkably similar to the unfounded fears of previous decades.

Still, there are disturbingly violent aspects of punk rock. Most troubling is the dance punk has brought forth—the pogo. In the pogo, a person jumps up and down rapidly in time to the music. It can be danced alone, but is often done by two people who hold each other around the neck or shoulders and jump together, shaking each other's head as they jump. The result is to make one exhausted and somewhat disoriented. When many people on a crowded dance floor jump up and down wildly, there are inevitable collisions. The pogo is a sharp contrast to most rock dancing, which is fluid and sensual.<sup>45</sup>

Some punk bands (or their press agents) consciously try to cultivate a violent image. The following Sire Records press release about Cleveland's Dead Boys is perhaps publicity-gathering puffery, but it illustrates an indefensible aspect of the punk rock scene:

Onstage the Dead Boys are an adrenaline rush of violent power. [Stiv] Bators taunts his audience, spews beer on them, spits on them, slides head first into the first row and creates an excitement that hasn't been seen on the rock and roll stage since Iggy Pop first entered the scene as front-man for the notorious Stooges. . . . Drummer Johnny Blitz, the youngest member of the Dead Boys, is quiet and sulky. The skull tatoo on his arm dripping blood tells all you need to know about him.<sup>46</sup>

Violence and sexism have existed in punk rock from the beginning. A sado-masochistic appeal was central to the aura of the Velvet Underground and the New York Dolls, key punk progenitors. Sado-masochism continues to be a theme in rock music, both in punk bands like San Francisco's the Avengers, whose lead singer Penelope goes through a series of demeaning motions in their stage act, and in rock bands on the periphery of punk, such as the Vibrators and Patti Smith.

As rock critic Charles Young points out, there is a "long line of rock misogynists that began with Elvis calling some girl a hound dog."<sup>47</sup> Christgau notes that much of rock-and-roll "flirts with sexism simply by exploring the music's traditional subject matter," but concludes that punk rock "is certainly no better place for women than any other rock scene, and in crucial instances [is] worse."<sup>48</sup>

At its worst, punk rock releases the often repressed hostility of men towards women and sanctions violent, sexist behavior. The Dead Boys' album *Young, Loud and Snotty* includes at least six songs whose main purpose seems to be to attack women. While such themes seem to be more prevalent in the United States than in Britain, they aren't exclusively American. Consider the Cortinas, a

group of British sixteen-year-olds. Their single "Fascist Dictator" is not about the Nazis or the National Front, but has a lot to say about their sexual politics:

*I don't want love cause I'm hard and cruel  
I don't want love cause I'm no fool  
I don't want love in any case  
All I want to do is smash your face  
Cause I'm a fascist dictator  
That's what I am  
I'm a fascist dictator  
I ain't like no other man*<sup>49</sup>

The number of women in punk rock is similar to the number of women in rock as a whole: there aren't very many. There are some all-women or predominantly-women bands, such as the Slits and the Erasers, and bands in which women have prominent parts, such as the Nuns and the Adverts (named after bassist Gay Advert), but generally the function of the women is to be sex objects. Probably the most well-known women in punk is Debbie Harry, the lead singer, songwriter, and namesake of New York's Blondie. Her image parodies the "blonde bombshell" and her costumes during concerts range from bridal gowns to hooker's fishnets. Although her posture would seem to be intentionally satirical, such ironies may be lost on listeners who take the vicious attack on "Miss Groupie Supreme" in her song "Rip Her to Shreds" literally.

An analysis of punk rock's sexism must compare it with the sexism that has always existed in rock music. Has punk rock in general moved from traditional rock sexism ("She did me wrong and I'm so sad") to a new, virulent misogyny ("She did me wrong and I'm going to beat her up")? My impression is that at this time it has not and that groups like the Dead Boys and the Cortinas are a clear minority.

Yet there has been an increase in the encouragement of violence against women on the part of groups encompassing the entire spectrum of rock music. In their album covers, songs, advertising, and/or performances, bands as different as the Ohio Players (disco soul), Ted Nugent (heavy metal), Kiss (macho glitter rock), and the Stranglers (new British hard rock) represent a vile turn for the worse in rock sexism. Punk rock certainly does little to counter this development.

### Fascism and Racism

ALTHOUGH MANY SOCIALISTS have almost become inured to the sexism in rock music, fascist overtones still come as a shock. In the United States the punk flirtation with fascism generally appears as sick humor—as in the Ramones' "Blitzkrieg Bop," or the Dictators' (!) "Master Race Rock." But it can also take an extremely anti-Semitic form, such as in "Decadent Jew" by the Nuns:

*I own all the projects  
On 101st Avenue  
I hate the niggers  
And the Puerto Ricans too  
'Cause I'm a decadent Jew.  
Hey you Israelites,  
I ain't about to fight  
Screw you  
'Cause I'm a decadent Jew.*<sup>50</sup>

What could be called "swastika chic" is even more prevalent in Great Britain. Yet the meaning of young people wearing Nazi paraphernalia is unclear. I know of no punk rock band in Britain that equates wearing a swastika on a shirt with a commitment to the ideology of National Socialism. Brian James of the Damned is probably representative of punks when he says that he wears Nazi stuff "just because I like the look of it. It means absolutely nothing to me."<sup>52</sup> Johnny Rotten wears a swastika tee-shirt, but denounces the "fascist regime" in "God Save the Queen"; Mick Jones of the Clash, an explicitly anti-fascist band, once played in a group called the London SS. Thus, if swastikas are as odious as ever to us, they no longer necessarily mean support for fascism on the part of the person wearing them.

In Britain the problem of using Nazi symbols is exacerbated by the existence of an active, growing neo-fascist movement in the form of the National Front. As was mentioned above, Eric Clapton has publicly endorsed Enoch Powell's racist anti-immigration efforts. In addition, David Bowie was widely quoted as saying that Britain needed another Hitler. However, in a recent interview Bowie has tried to clarify his statement:

What I said was Britain was ready for another Hitler, which is quite a different thing to saying it needs another Hitler. I'm closer to communism than fascism—that at least has some saving graces. Besides, I'm half-Jewish. But I stand by that opinion. . . . There are in Britain

right now parallels with the rise of the Nazi party in pre-war Germany. A demoralized nation whose empire has disintegrated. . . . All the National Front needs right now is a leader.<sup>52</sup>

As I indicated earlier, I believe that Bowie and leftists who share his view have exaggerated these dangers. Despite Britain's very real social and political crisis, the social strain that exists today is hardly comparable to the social chaos that prevailed throughout virtually the entire existence of the Weimar Republic. Perhaps most importantly, the British polity has not suffered the disillusionment that precedes major social upheavals.

It was feared by many in Britain that the punk rock movement could become an ally to the neo-fascists and other politicians trying to exacerbate racial tensions. It would be silly to suggest that this is inconceivable in the future, for a truly massive fascist movement would be expected to attract adherents from many diverse sub-cultures. But I don't believe that there are currently grounds to suggest that punk rockers would be represented in greater proportions in such a hypothetical mass movement than rugby supporters, university students, or Rod Stewart fans.

Furthermore, the current relationship between punk rockers and neo-fascists suggests the possibility of a far different outcome. In Britain, the National Front has attempted to link its cause with punk, but without success. In Sweden and France, on the other hand, gangs of neo-fascists disrupted concerts by the Damned and the Jam, and attempted to beat up band members and smash their instruments. I am unaware of any reaction to punk rock on the part of the New Right in the United States, but one would expect them to echo the view taken by the right towards 1960s rock, that it is "subversive."<sup>53</sup>

In fact, leading punk rockers in Britain have been outspoken in their denunciations of the National Front and its racist policies, and stand in marked contrast to the indifference of the rock scene as a whole. It's not surprising that the Clash would be anti-Front, but the vehemence of the Sex Pistols is a little startling. Steve Jones says, "I hate them . . . I'm Irish . . . and if they took over I'd be on the next boat back."<sup>54</sup> In a interview in Rock Against Racism's *Temporary Hoarding*, Johnny Rotten was asked what he thought of the Front. He said:

I despise them. No one should have the right to tell anyone they can't live here because of the colour of their skin or their religion or whatever. . . . how could anyone vote for something so ridiculously inhumane?<sup>54</sup>

The response of punk bands to the upsurge in racism in Great Britain could well be punk rock's finest hour. A number of important bands, including the Adverts, the Tom Robinson Band, the Drones, and the Jolt, have performed at Rock Against Racism concerts in England and Scotland. The Clash were outspoken in defense of black rioters in Notting Hill and looters in New York City, and Johnny Rotten has said that he feels a real solidarity with London's black youth.

The commonality of punks and blacks in Britain is best symbolized in the affinity of punk rock and reggae music. On their album the Clash performed a version of Junior Murvin's reggae hit "Police and Thieves," and their most recent single, "Complete Control," was produced by a leading Jamaican reggae producer, Lee Perry. Evidently, the compliment will be returned shortly, as Bob Marley has recorded a reggae/punk "unity" song called "Punky Reggae Party."<sup>56</sup>

In this country there is virtually no relation between punk rock and black music, and reggae has yet to make a significant impact on either blacks or whites.<sup>57</sup> Yet this racial separation is common throughout most popular music. About the only exception, ironically, is disco, which is popular among both blacks and whites and is performed by all-black, all-white, and racially integrated bands.

## CONCLUSION

A REGGAE/PUNK ALLIANCE in Great Britain would be an immensely important development towards multiracial solidarity among young people. Reggae is a powerful call for the ending of the racial and economic oppression of black people throughout the world, and a strong assertion of black pride and solidarity; punk rock expresses the anger on the dole queues and the disillusionment of youth with modern society.

Yet the lack of a meaningful vision of a different world also links punk and reggae. Reggae, it should be remembered, comes out of the Rastafarian cult, a religious revival movement that deifies the late Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, makes Marcus Garvey his prophet, and promises African Redemption (the exodus of oppressed blacks in the West back to Africa) and the violent destruction of Babylon (Jamaica in particular, and white civilization as a whole). Punk has no equivalent Promised Land, but shares an apocalyptic vision (if it has any vision at all) that is no less delusory. Both movements

not only fail to include the oppression of women in their protests, but exacerbate the sexual inhumanity that is already a part of popular music.

But we can't fall into the purist trap of applying the standards and principles we demand of our socialist organizations to a popular cultural form. If we did that there would be little for us to do except go to an occasional documentary or see *Salt of the Earth* for the eighth time; if we paid any attention at all to popular culture it would be to continually write the same review in our minds, dismissing every new and unworthy offering.

Such a view is related to what Simon Frith has criticized as the tendency of people on the left "to be both crude and contemptuous in [their] treatment of mass culture," seeing it largely as a means of manipulation."<sup>58</sup> Approaches to punk rock that focus only on its negative aspects, and fail to comprehend its contradictions and different strains, do little to advance our analysis of a significant trend in rock music.

Punk ideologists have rightly aimed their barbs at the dominant forces—both the record companies and the stars—in rock music. One needn't have a rose-colored view of the 1960s or naïvely believe that rock was "revolutionary" until the corporations took it over to see that there *has* been an aesthetic and political retreat in the rock music of the 1970s. Even in the United States, where punk rock lacks much of the class bite it has in Great Britain, it has reintroduced social protest to rock music, though in an ambiguous fashion.

We are in the midst of a rejuvenation of rock music on both sides of the Atlantic. Punk rock—together with groups like Graham Parker and the Rumour, Elvis Costello, Mink DeVille, and even the Rolling Stones in their new album *Love You Live*—has helped make rock vibrant again, something that can actually be played before people rather than the studio creations of technicians manipulating synthesizers and strings.

### POSTSCRIPT

THERE HAVE BEEN a number of important developments affecting the Sex Pistols and, as a result, punk rock in general, since this article was completed in mid-November 1977. In December, the various bans against the Pistols performing live were lifted in Britain, and, after initial rejections, the band was issued visas for an American concert tour. Despite a generally hostile and conde-

scending media reaction, the Pistols played before large and enthusiastic crowds and generated much new interest in punk rock.

Yet at the end of the tour, Johnny Rotten surprisingly announced that he was leaving the Sex Pistols, apparently because of differences with other band members over how to respond to their increasing commercial success. One cannot predict what impact the split-up of the group that symbolized punk rock will have (if indeed it actually occurs), but clearly the movement is too large to be severely damaged. The musical and social conditions that fostered the birth of punk rock have not changed, and the vitality of the music and the movement should keep it around for some time.

### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Clash*, CBS Records (London).
- <sup>2</sup> *Rocket to Russia*, Sire Records.
- <sup>3</sup> Quoted in Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), p. 5.
- <sup>4</sup> Simon Frith, "Beyond the Dole Queue: The Politics of Punk," *Village Voice*, 24 October 1977, p. 77.
- <sup>5</sup> Excerpts and a summary of the PCA statement are reprinted in *New Musical Express* (London) (hereafter *NME*), 10 September 1977, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>6</sup> Anthony Wall, "Punk," *Comment—Communist Fortnightly Review* (London), vol. 15, no. 5 (5 March 1977), p. 74; Wall, "Rock," *Morning Star* (London), 3 June 1977, p. 3; *Morning Star*, 8 September 1977, p. 5.
- <sup>7</sup> For an account of the SWP's anti-Front demonstrations, see Charles Leinenweber, "Street Fight Pits Leftists against Rightwing Front," *In These Times*, 7 September 1977, p. 9; Phil McNeill has an interesting, though not particularly sympathetic account of RAR and Right to Work activities in *NME*, 10 September 1977, p. 7. I wish to thank Vale from the San Francisco punk rock paper *Search & Destroy* for sharing with me a rare copy of *Temporary Hoarding* (London) (n.d., but probably late summer 1977).
- <sup>8</sup> See Robert Christgau, "A Cult Explodes—and a Movement Is Born," *Village Voice*, 24 October 1977, pp. 57, 68; Christgau, "In Love with the New York Dolls," in *Any Old Way You Choose It: Rock and Other Pop Music, 1967-1973* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 303-8.
- <sup>9</sup> Christgau, "Cult Explodes," p. 57.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 68-70, 74; John Judis, "Punk 'n' Roll Is Here to Stay," *In These Times*, 2 November 1977, p. 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Tim Patterson, "'Punk Rock' Reflects Cultural Decay," *Guardian*, 19 October 1977, p. 19.
- <sup>12</sup> See Tom Carson, "Talking Heads," *New York Rocker*, vol. 1, no. 9 (September-October 1977), pp. 20-21; John Rockwell, "The Artistic Success of Talking Heads," *New York Times*, 11 September 1977; David Koepp, "Television," *Punk Rock*, vol. 1, no. 1 (December 1977), p. 54.
- <sup>13</sup> Howard Klein, "Mink DeVille: Slick Fur Fury," *Creem*, vol. 9, no. 5 (October 1977), pp. 28-29, 65-66; Merrill Shindler, "Mink DeVille: The Street Smell of Success," *Rolling Stone* (hereafter *RS*), 8 September 1977, pp. 17-19.
- <sup>14</sup> Parti Smith, *Horses*, Arista Records; also see Robert Christgau, "Save This Rock & Roll Hero," *Village Voice*, 17 January 1977, pp. 14-16.

- 15 Caroline Coon, "Punk Alphabet," *Melody Maker* (London) (hereafter MM), 27 November 1976, p. 33.
- 16 Tom Nairn, "The Twilight of the British State," *New Left Review* 101-102 (February-April 1977), p. 32.
- 17 Unless otherwise noted, this history is taken from *Melody Maker*.
- 18 Quoted in Mary Harron, "Punk Is Just Another Word for Nothin' Left to Lose," *Village Voice*, 28 March 1977, p. 56.
- 19 MM, 11 December 1976, p. 5.
- 20 Virgin Records (London).
- 21 MM, 11 June 1977, p. 5.
- 22 NME, 21 May 1977, p. 30. Emphasis in original.
- 23 Brian Harrigan, "Spreading the Jam," MM, 23 April 1977, p. 8; Caroline Coon, "Clash: Down and Out and Proud," MM, 13 November 1976, p. 33.
- 24 Kris Needs, "Sex Pistols Squirt" (interview with Johnny Rotten), *New York Rocker*, vol. 1, no. 8 (July-August 1977), p. 33.
- 25 Interview in *Temporary Hoarding*, n.p.
- 26 Ibid.; Allan Jones, "Rotten! Sex Pistols Talk to Allan Jones," MM, 4 June 1977, p. 52.
- 27 Stiff Records (London).
- 28 Not all punk rockers deny their influences. Consider the following from Bob Geldof of Dublin's Boomtown Rats, one of the best punk bands: "The Stones are geniuses, and I don't care what people say. The Beatles were geniuses, and the Kinks and Dylan and all of them gave so much and that's what we're picking up off. As much as they like to deny it, that's what the Pistols are picking up off, too. Those guys had so much to offer and they still do and I don't care what age they are." Harry Doherty, "Bats about the Rats," MM, 27 August 1977, p. 33.
- 29 John Rockwell, "The Sex Pistols—A Fired-Up Rock Band," *New York Times*, 7 August 1977, sec. 2, p. 16; Caroline Coon, "Clash Personality," MM, 23 April 1977, p. 48.
- 30 *Temporary Hoarding*, n.p.
- 31 Illegal Records (London).
- 32 Christgau, "Cult Explodes," p. 70.
- 33 Jones, p. 9; quoted in Mike Flood Page, "Rock's Next Generation?" *Creem*, vol. 9, no. 5 (October 1977), p. 34.
- 34 *The Clash*, CBS Records; Coon, "Clash: Down and Out," p. 33.
- 35 "Just Want to Be Myself," Valer Records (Manchester); unemployment statistics from Peter Townsend (not to be confused with the lead guitarist of the Who, Pete Townshend), "The Neglect of Mass Unemployment," *New Statesman*, 7 October 1977, p. 463.
- 36 "Oh, Oh I Love Her So," *Ramones Leave Home*, Sire Records.
- 37 "Gimme Gimme Shock Treatment," *ibid.*
- 38 The Jam, "In the City," *In the City*, Polydor Records; Dead Boys, "Ain't Nothin' to Do," *Young, Loud and Snotty*, Sire Records; Generation X, "Your Generation," Chrysalis Records (London).
- 39 *Temporary Hoarding*, n.p.
- 40 "Blank Generation," *Blank Generation*, Sire Records.
- 41 "Sonic Reducer," *Young, Loud and Snotty*, Sire Records.
- 42 Greil Marcus, "A Singer and a Rock and Roll Band," in Greil Marcus, ed., *Rock and Roll Will Stand* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 90-104.
- 43 RS, 3 November 1977, p. 19.
- 44 Various songs on *In the City*, Polydor Records.

- 45 See Neil Spencer, "Is This What We Ordered?" *NME*, 21 May 1977, pp. 7-8, for an illuminating discussion of this and other violent aspects of punk rock.
- 46 Press release, Sire Records.
- 47 Charles Young, review of Dead Boys album *Young, Loud and Snotty*, RS, 17 November 1977, p. 96.
- 48 Christgau, "Cult Explodes," p. 72.
- 49 Step Forward Records (London).
- 50 Quoted in Howard Klein, "Punkoid Sleaze Oozes West—S.F.: A Nun's Story," *New York Rocker*, vol. 1, no. 8 (July-August 1977), p. 17.
- 51 Interview in *Search & Destroy* 3 (1977), n.p.
- 52 Quoted in Tim Lott, "The Thin White Duke Has Gone. Here's the New David Bowie," *Record Mirror* (London), 24 September 1977, p. 21.
- 53 Gary Allen, "More Subversion Than Meets the Ear," *American Opinion* 12 (February 1969), pp. 49-62, reprinted in R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson, eds., *The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), pp. 151-66.
- 54 Jones, p. 52.
- 55 *Temporary Hoarding*, n.p.
- 56 Quoted in RS, 22 September 1977, p. 32.
- 57 For a discussion of reggae's prospects in the United States, see my "Revolution at Reggae's Roots," *East Bay Voice* (Oakland), October 1977, p. 15.
- 58 Simon Frith, "Rock and Popular Culture," *Socialist Revolution* 31, p. 110. Daniel Ben-Horin makes the same point about the left and television in "Television without Tears," *Socialist Revolution* 35.

## Theory Of Capital Reproduction And Accumulation

Shinzaburo Koshimura, Professor of Economics and President Emeritus,  
Yokohama National University.  
Edited by Jesse Schwartz



"Professor Koshimura had provided us with an ingenious and thorough formalization of Marx's economics."

—David Laibman, (Brooklyn College),  
*Journal of Economic Literature*.

duction schemes. For the student versed in modern linear algebra, the text is not difficult and contains useful numerical examples."

—David Evans, (University of Sussex),  
*Economic Journal*

"The central concerns of the book are to introduce modern mathematics into the discussion of Marx's law of value and its relation to reproduction schemes, to elaborate the treatment of the transformation problem under expanded reproduction and to incorporate the treatment of monopoly explicitly into the repro-

"An understanding of the inner physiology of capitalism, of the cycle of exchange, production, circulation and accumulation is crucial... Koshimura's book is probably one of the best accessible treatments of that part of Marxist theory."

—Jack Barbalet (University of Adelaide),  
*Arena Journal*

170 pages. \$9.95 paperback. Add postage: Canada — \$4.65.  
Elsewhere — \$8.00 per book surface mail.  
Make all cheques or money orders (Canadian currency please)  
payable to DPG Publishing Co.  
Send order with payment to:

**DPG Publishing Co.**  
97 Victoria St. N.  
Kitchener  
Ontario  
Canada