

BANNED! CENSORSHIP OF POPULAR MUSIC IN BRITAIN; 1967-1992.

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis details the censorship of popular music in Britain between the years of 1967 and 1992. It reveals a hidden part of the history of the most vibrant cultural form in Britain today. It examines the way that form has been censored from the point of production, through retailers, to courts, broadcasters, local authorities and the police. It also examines the arguments of some of the music's most vociferous opponents.

The thesis brings together for the first time many disparate sources and aims to provide a research resource for years to come. It also sets out not merely to illustrate the obvious fact that censorship of popular music **has** occurred, but to begin the debate over what type of censorship it has been, continues to be and will be in the future.

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DEDICATION:
TO ME NAN.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AOR: Adult Orientated Rock.
- BBFC: British Board of Film Classification (British Board of Film Censors from 1912 until 1985).
- BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation.
- BPI: British Phonographic Industry.
- BSC: Broadcasting Standards Council.
- CAP: Campaign Against Pornography.
- CFG: Conservative Family Group.
- CSA: Community Standards Association.
- DPP: Director of Public Prosecutions.
- DTI: Department of Trade and Industry.
- FWS: Festival Welfare Services.
- FYC: Family and Youth Concern.
- GLC: Greater London Council.
- GWF: Great Western Festivals.
- IASPM: International Association for the Study of Popular Music.
- IBA: Independent Broadcasting Authority.
- ICA: Institute of Contemporary Arts.
- ILR: Independent Local Radio.
- IOC: Index On Censorship
- ITC: Independent Television Commission.
- ITV: Independent Television.
- MM: Melody Maker.
- MOR: Middle of the Road.
- MRA: Moral Rearmament Army.

MU: Musician's Union.

NCCL: National Council for Civil Liberties (Liberty).

NCROPA: National Campaign for the Reform of The Obscene
Publications Acts.

NFU: National Farmers' Union.

NME: New Musical Express.

NOTW: News of The World.

NVALA: National Viewers and Listeners Association.

PFF: People's Free Festivals.

PPL: Phonographic Performance Limited.

RAH: Royal Albert Hall.

RAR: Rock Against Racism.

RIAA: Record Industry Association of America.

RM: Record Mirror.

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VOLUME ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to reveal a hidden part of the history of popular music in Britain. It concerns an as yet under-researched and ignored aspect of this history(1) - that of the various attempts that have been made to censor, stifle and control the dissemination of popular music. It is the story of how a particular society, or at least sections of it, reacted to a cultural phenomenon and how that phenomenon has antagonised and annoyed elements (and often powerful ones) within it. It is a story of cultural struggle.

As a researcher I was soon struck by the fact that books on pop usually only fleetingly mention censorship and books on censorship rarely mention pop(2). But examples of pop censorship are scattered throughout its history and one aim of this thesis is to bring these examples together for the first time. So a wide range of examples is included here, for reasons both of historical documentation and in order to give insights into the way in which pop is censored and those seeking to censor it.

The history is one which very quickly calls upon the reader to take sides - to back the censors or the censored. It is one that needs to be written if the impact of arguably **the** most important mass culture of the last forty years upon Britain is to be fully comprehended. In this sense it is an attempt to redress the balance and to concentrate not on the songs and gigs that got played and heard, but upon those that **didn't**.

Having noted that one is soon forced to take sides in this debate, it is as well to make my own position clear immediately. It is the apparently contradictory one of being a socialist who defends the often puerile and offensive products of a major, multinational, industry. How can this be justified? It can be done simply by stressing the importance of those products to those who consume them. The left has yet to articulate a politics of fun, and until it does it I feel duty-bound to defend the fun being had by pop's audience. This need not entail indifference to pop's alleged effects, but it does entail a commitment to pop's message - however unpleasant that message may be. I am undecided as to whether Adorno's thesis that popular music serves only false needs is correct(3), but I do know that the pleasure pop gives is genuine enough.

I shall deal below with the notion of the pop audience as a totally malleable one, but it is worth noting here that this is an analysis I reject. The pop audience is **not** passive, but active(4). The importance of this is that defending a right to consume then becomes the defence of genuine pleasure, not the defence of a false taste catered for by a cynical industry. Pop is worth defending because its pleasures contrast so markedly to the routine of life under capitalism. One does not have to believe that rock is revolutionary to see that the pleasures it already gives under the existing system of exploitation and class struggle are worth preserving and defending. This may be a romantic view of pop, but without such romance there can be neither worthwhile pop, nor life.

Moreover, it is also the case that the pop which has been most seriously censored, both in Britain - for example with Crass(5) - and in America - for example with the Dead Kennedys(6) - has often been the product not of vast multinationals, but of small independent companies putting forward counter-hegemonic views on a shoestring budget. It would be too simplistic to say that "political" groups are more likely to be censored, but the empirical evidence does suggest this to be the case. Such bands may, of course, tend to be more "provocative" than other bands but as a consequence they also tend to form a disproportionate percentage of those who suffer censorship(7).

The case for defending rock and pop becomes all the more valid when one considers the type of opponents it attracts. Whilst the left is not immune from calls to censor rock(8) and Wells is wrong to classify all censors as conservative(9), it is generally the case that those who would censor rock are also those who would keep women in the kitchen, censor **all** media to fit it with their religious convictions and tend to adhere to a classical aesthetic which sees all mass culture as, at best, intrinsically worthless and, at worst, positively harmful.

The outlook I shall carry through the thesis is, then, that of a committed pop fan, one also looking to have fun under capitalism and so defending pop's excesses **not** because I **necessarily** deem them worthy of defence in their own right (although I often do), but because I value the pleasure they give. As Frith notes, the story of pop is that of the class struggle for

fun(10) and in that struggle censorship has been a weapon. This thesis carries on the work of Frith et al(11) in taking a sociological, as opposed to musicological, approach and hopes to expose and to counteract that weapon.

The basic format is that of a critical history of the censorship of popular music in Britain in the years from 1967 to 1992. I do not intend to develop a grand theory about the censorship of pop - partly because pop censorship in Britain is so sporadic and uncoordinated that it defies neat categorisation. Rather, I shall illustrate some common features and show how they link to censorship within other media, as well as illustrating how the censorship of pop takes the general debate on censorship into unchartered waters(12).

The discussion falls into five parts. The first part, contextualisation, gives some background to the project. Chapter one sets the scene by explaining why the thesis begins in 1967 and ends in 1992. In chapter two I examine the history of censorship in Britain and chapter three outlines the philosophic and historical characteristics of censorship and finishes with consideration of the particular problems that surround the censoring of pop. Thus a number of themes are introduced which recur throughout the thesis.

Parts two to four consist of a number of case studies. Part two (Chapters four to six) considers the industry and the law. Chapter four looks at pop in its recorded (and visual) form, beginning at the point of production with the censorial role of record companies (chapter four). The problem of self-censorship

arises here, along with the thin line between record company "advice" and overt censorship. Self-censorship by artists is a common occurrence, but will be somewhat underplayed here because of its almost intangible nature(13). Chapter five moves pop on to the market, when I look at the attitude of retailers over the years before going on, in chapter six, to look at attempts, successful and otherwise, at imposing the ultimate sanction - that of declaring records to be illegal.

A bridge between recorded music and live music is provided by broadcasting, which forms part three. Chapter seven deals with censorship on the radio and eight with television and video censorship.

Live music is dealt with in the three chapters which form part four. Chapter nine deals with indoor gigs, and with the censorial role of the local state and the police in this area. Outdoor concerts and festivals are dealt with in chapter ten, whilst chapter eleven closes the case studies by looking at raves.

Thus far the thesis deals with the outcome of censorship and those who censor as part of their jobs, whilst in the fifth part I turn to those who, for whatever reason and duration, have participated in campaigns to censor pop. These campaigners can be further divided into two camps - those who campaign on a permanent, or at least regular, basis and those whose censorial activity is more intermittent. In the first category chapters twelve and thirteen look at various pressure groups who have the mass media in their sights, firstly focussing on the work of Mary Whitehouse's

National Viewers and Listeners Association (NVALA) and then on other moralist pressure groups. Often these groups only express views about pop and campaign against it intermittently, but the mass media is constantly in their sights and pop, as part of that media is often viewed with suspicion. Chapter fourteen details another group of "permanent" campaigners against pop - the various anti-rock clerics and churches.

The more intermittent censors I look at are the press and MPs, in chapters fifteen and sixteen respectively. The first case sees a body who can pick up on issues within pop and create censorship via moral panics and a feeling that "something must be done" to stop the latest pop outrage. MPs are in the corridors of power and I shall look at their role both as individuals and as part of governments who help to mould the framework within which pop operates in Britain. I shall also look at censorship by the left in this chapter.

I conclude by bringing the various strands together and analysing the evidence gathered here before making some tentative suggestions about future prospects and research.

Before continuing some notes of caution are necessary. The first concerns source material. With one or two exceptions, such as The Sex Pistols and the breaking up of the Windsor festival in 1974, censorship of pop attracts little attention in the "quality" press. The researcher is thus forced to use the established weekly music press as his or her main resource. In my case I used the Melody Maker (MM) as my main source for material from 1967 to 1974

and the New Musical Express (NME) from 1975 to 1992. The validity of the sources has often be questioned(14), but unfortunately they are the only regular source for such a history. I have also used anecdotal evidences in places. Wherever possible I have tried to authenticate cases of censorship by getting more than one source, but this has not always been possible. The reader will have to decide in each particular case the plausibility of the evidence offered here.

Secondly, matters here are further complicated by the fact that bands' publicists often plant stories in the music press about their charges getting censored in order to court a rebellious image(15). Bands may also set out to provoke a deliberate censorial backlash in order to court that image. Such "scams"(16) are part and parcel of the day to day pop process and, whilst often met with yawns by those involved in the pop business, at a minimum they serve to remind observers that limits are in place.

The third factor is the need to retain a sense of perspective. As Jeremy Silver, the BPI's press officer in 1991, pointed out to me, most pop, once released, passes by unimpeded by any censor(17). Similarly, each week hundreds, if not thousands, of gigs take place without censorial problems. However, this simply makes those records and events that do get censored all the more interesting. Moreover, censorship of books is still less frequent than that of pop - yet is both more written about and more reviled by British intellectuals. That it has taken this long to produce a work on the censorship of pop in Britain reflects not a lack of

censorship, but a lack of attention. This in turn reflects the elitism which popular music studies have to contend with and to which I shall allude again later(18). I am also aware that Britain does not exist in isolation and that censorship elsewhere (particularly in the United States) often has implications for Britain and I will allude to such cases as and when necessary. Indeed I shall argue that such cases have become increasingly important to the British climate. But let us now turn our attention to the year of 1967.

Notes

(1) The main work thus far is Martin and Segrave's Anti-Rock. This is useful for cataloguing cases of censorship, but flawed in that it attributes censorial actions to generational malice. The truth is somewhat more complicated than this. For other examples see the work of Wells in NME from 1985 onwards referred to in the bibliography and, for the situation in America, see articles by S.Jones, 1991 and McDonald, 1988, Denselow, 1989, Chapter 10 and F.Hoffman, 1989, pp120-123, 136/7, 197-205.

(2) For example, Frith, 1983, and Street, 1986, contain a few passing notes on censorship, whilst O'Higgins, 1972, mentions pop only on page 133. The last government committee on obscenity did not see fit to address the issue of pop. See Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship (The Williams Report), 1979.

(3) See Adorno, 1990.

(4) For examples of audience autonomy see groups who failed in

Chapple and Garofolo, 1977 and Stratton, 1983, p300. For more on audience autonomy see pp53/54 below. See also Economist 21/6/86 p 98 for more on the power of the audience.

(5) See pp133, 136, 152-6, 306 and 586/7 below for Crass' problems. Gilliam, 1991, also saw it as significant that Crass were singled out for prosecution.

(6) See Denselow, 1989, pp269-271 for more on the Dead Kennedys case.

(7) See pp152-158 below for the legal problems "political" bands have faced.

(8) For more on the left and censorship see pp596-8 below.

(9) See Wells, 1990a, p19.

(10) See Frith, 1983, p272.

(11) For the tradition I am following, which might be described as "left populism", see Denselow, 1989, Frith, 1983 and Street, 1986. For a more pessimistic approach from the left see Harker, 1980.

(12) See pp60-67 for how pop fits into the censorship debate.

(13) For more on the problems of self censorship see McEwan, 1989 and Scammell, 1988, pp17/18..

(14) For example Dave Haslam in Redhead, 1990, p37 accuses NME of doing pop a dis-service via its factual inaccuracies, Terry Christian in NME of 22/2/92 noted its inaccuracies and Danny Baker in NME of 9/5/92 admitted making up quotes from Paul Weller for NME which were repeated later in various books on The Jam. In its edition of 18/5/91 it wrongly described Birmingham councillor Alan Blumenthal as an MP. But also see the inaccuracies of the "quality"

press on p433 below.

(15) One example of such a planted story was Malcolm McLaren's false claim that A&M artists were involved in a campaign to sack the Sex Pistols in March 1977. See Savage, 1991a, p339.

(16) "Scams" are attempts to promote publicity either by planting false press stories or staging gratuitous stunts. See A.Hart, 1991, pp208/9.

(17) Silver, 1991.

(18) See notes on aesthetics, pp56-58, for various examples of elitist attitudes to pop.

PART ONE: CONTEXTUALISATION

CHAPTER ONE

WHY 1967 and 1992?

There are several reasons for starting this thesis in 1967. Most importantly it is a landmark year for pop. Any claims about the year's importance in record terms would centre on the release of the Beatles' "Sergeant Pepper" album on 1 July 1967. It is this album above all others that begins pop's slow climb out of something of a cultural ghetto. Whilst some classical music critics, such as Mann, had been praising The Beatles' work for some time(1), it is "Pepper" which sees many critics seriously examine pop as a musical form for the first time(2).

1967 also sees pop embroiled in a web of controversy. At government level, this year saw the closing down of the pirate radio stations on 15 August, seen by many as a highly censorial act(3) and the launching of the BBC's first avowedly pop station - Radio One - on 30 September. Henceforth any discussion of the state of British pop would be incomplete without reference to One. Its censorial policy became, effectively, the official banning policy of British pop. If One didn't play it, it was "dead" and the debate over what it would and wouldn't play raged throughout the next twenty five years(4).

1967 was also the "summer of love" and saw "swinging London" at it height, although that had earlier roots(5). The links between London's swinging and pop's tempo have been well documented(6). But 1967 was also the beginning of something of backlash against the

permissiveness which appeared to have pop at its epicentre. It was the year of police moves against the underground, the publication of Mary Whitehouse's first book, Cleaning Up TV, and the Private Places of Entertainments Act, which gave local authorities more power to control the activities of clubs in their areas(7).

Pop hit the headlines in a number of ways. MM's first front page of 1967 carried the headline: "Don't Knock The Pop"(8). Containing comments such as: 'War has been declared on pop'(9), the article was essentially a plea for pop to be given more access to the media. At this time the only regular television show for pop was BBC 1's Top of The Pops, while radio pop consisted of limited amounts of the BBC's Light Programme, Radio Luxembourg at night and the doomed pirates. Here MM was hinting at censorship by exclusion, a common occurrence throughout the period under consideration. By its 14 October edition the magazine was complaining about the closing of many London "beat" clubs, the arrests of various Rolling Stones on drugs charges and the arrest of Mama Cass on a bogus theft charge(10). The following week its main writer, Chris Welch, wrote an article called "Stop Picking On Pop"(11). In retrospect we might view this as mid-60s paranoia, but that pop was seen as a legitimate target for some censors seems evident enough.

The focus of such a target was often the perceived links between the pop world and recreational drug-usage. For Hall et al 1967 was 'the year of the great English (moral) "panic" about drug use'(12) and evidence of this can be seen in the fact that regional drug squads were set up in March(13). Meanwhile the popular press

was implicating pop as a danger to society via its association with drugs. The News of The World began a five week expose of drugs in the pop world on January 28. The newspaper was also implicated in the police raid on Rolling Stone Keith Richards' Sussex home, Redlands, on 12 February(14). In the resultant court case, for possession of various drugs, Mick Jagger and Richards were briefly imprisoned before the case was effectively dismissed in the Court of Appeal.

July saw a Legalise Pot rally at Speakers' Corner and, on the 24th, The Times printed an advertisement, endorsed by several celebrities, including The Beatles, which proclaimed that: 'The law against marijuana is immoral in principle and unworkable in practice.'(15) Nevertheless the Dangerous Drugs Act, which received Royal Assent in October, was a measure which strengthened, rather than liberalised, Britain's drug laws(16). For many in the Underground, which was intertwined with the pop world, the jailing of the magazine International Times' (IT) part-owner John Hopkins for six months for allowing his flat to be used for cannabis smoking signalled an attempt to hit the movement, as did the continual raids on IT(17).

Pop festivals, which were to see many censorial battles, also began to proliferate in 1967. Many were organised around IT activities(18) and the highlight of these was arguably the Technicolour Dream at London's Alexander Palace in April, although the three day Festival of The Flower Children at Woburn Abbey in August was also a landmark. Internationally, June's Monterrey

festival raised festivals into global importance. The year also saw the closure of one of London's leading clubs, UFO, after various problems following a News of The World "orgy" story(19).

Although Times editor William Rees Mogg's "Who Breaks A Butterfly on A Wheel" editorial in defence of Jagger and Richards on 1 July showed that some establishment figures were more tolerant of pop's excesses, only two months later the paper was using drug imagery to tell its readers that: 'The world of pop has its own freakish laws of economy and success.'(20) Meanwhile prime minister Harold Wilson sued The Move in October for using an unflattering image of him in an advertisement(21). MM commented that, with regard to pop: 'The love year of 1967 has brought more hate, violence and intolerance than any other.'(22)

So 1967 is an ideal place to start an examination of censorship in pop. It sees pop under suspicion and its stars in conflict with the law and, should conspiracy theorists be right, being set-up by a leading national newspaper. It is also appropriate to start in the 1960s because by 1992 60s' imagery was again being used in pop and the whole legacy of the decade came under scrutiny(23). But why take the story into the 1990s?

Why 1992?

To avoid problems concerning continual cross-referencing and reader memory, this thesis runs thematically rather than chronologically. But it is still necessary to explain why I have

chosen to end it in 1992. Partly this is purely pragmatic - it was the last complete year of my research. But it is also appropriate in a number of other ways.

Firstly it sees the twenty-fifth anniversary of Radio One and so a quarter of a century of its censorial, and other, policy can be documented. The year also saw much debate over the future of the BBC and the possibility of pop once more becoming marginalised within it(24). The first attempts to establish a fifth television station in Britain were refused in 1992 and plans were laid for Britain's first national commercial pop station(25). It also saw the death of Radio Luxembourg(26).

The general election of 1992 does not seem immediately important in pop terms, but it meant that a new parliament sat for the first time and thus meant the usual round of Private Members Bills went into a ballot. With censorship and "obscenity" a perennial Conservative concern, the return of another government of that party meant more attempts to strengthen existing obscenity legislation. Another feature of the year was attacks on "new age travellers", who often used pop as recreation, by Prime Minister John Major at the Conservative Party Conference(27). Meanwhile in the USA Albert Gore, whose wife Tipper was a leading member of the censorial Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC)(28), was elected Vice President and within weeks of his taking office rapper Ice T's label, Warner Brothers, had dropped him in a censorship dispute(29).

Of course there are numerous differences between both Britain

as a whole, and its pop scene in particular, between 1967 and 1992(30). The country had witnessed further economic decline and an unprecedented period of Conservative rule. There was less talk of permissiveness and much more of responsibility, especially in the wake of AIDS. In pop dance now dominated where The Beatles and The Rolling Stones once had. The industry itself had centralised(31) and was more concerned with expanding into computer games, which posed a threat to industry profits, than it was in investing in new talent. If 1967 saw the beginning of rock as art, 1992 saw rock as nostalgia with cover-versions and songs linked to films vying with dance for chart domination.

But the similarities are also striking. Both years saw moral panics over drug usage. In 1967 this was primarily concern over stars' drug habits influencing their fans. In 1992 raves, with their connections with ecstasy-usage, re-appeared in the public domain as one of the nation's major problems. Sixties imagery was everywhere with items like tie-dye t-shirts, Doors paraphernalia and Jimi Hendrix box sets. Partly this reflected the desire of an industry to promote back catalogues on the new CD format, partly it reflected a new found hedonism, built not, as it was in the 1960s, on affluence, but upon despair as dole queues lengthened. LSD vied with ecstasy as the fashionable drug and The Independent was able to headline with: 'Sixties hippie drug makes a comeback'(32).

So, inevitably, elements of 1967's culture were carried forward into 1992(33). By ending with that year I am able to study a period which is long enough to give tangible conclusions, but

close enough, in terms of time and some spirit, to warrant analogies. In order to further contextualise the thesis I now need to look in more depth at Britain's censorial heritage and methodology.

Notes

- (1) See Mann, 1963. See Thomson and Gutman, 1987 for more. See also MM 10/6/67 p8 for an article by Bob Dawbarn on whether pop is art.
- (2) See Fowler, 1972, p17 for 1967 as the year of the divide between rock and pop. See Gannon, 1967, for more on the pop scene in 1967.
- (3) See Hewison, 1986, p130.
- (4) See pp202-204 for more on Radio One's playlist.
- (5) For the origins of the "Summer of Love" see Record Hunter supplement to Vox magazine August 1991.
- (6) For example, in BBC2 programme on the Oz trial on 9/11/91 Richard Neville, its former editor, claimed that the whole "Swinging London" scene was entirely due to the Beatles and The Rolling Stones.
- (7) See Redhead, 1991, for more on this act. See also MM of 25/5/67 for complaints over police raids on Nottingham clubs.
- (8) MM 7/1/67.
- (9) ibid
- (10) See MM 14/10/67.
- (11) MM 21/10/67.
- (12) Hall et al, 1978, p239.

- (13) Muncie, 1984, p11. For MM and the drugs debates see editions of 11, 18 and 25/3/67 , 1, 8 and 22/4/67, 1/7/67 and 23/12/67.
- (14) See p551 below for more on the News of the World's series and its involvement in the Redlands raid.
- (15) See Record Hunter, August 1991.
- (16) See ibid for a note on this law. For more see Hewison, 1986, p169.
- (17) See Record Hunter, August 1991.
- (18) See ibid.
- (19) See p308 for more on the closure of UFO. See MM 28/10/67 for reaction to the closure.
- (20) Jassell, 1967.
- (21) See Denselow, 1989, p100.
- (22) MM 26/8/67.
- (23) For example see The Guardian 17/3/93 for a discussion of the legacy of the 1960s.
- (24) For the future of the BBC see National Heritage Department, 1992, and BBC, 1992.
- (25) See Guardian, Independent and Times 19/12/92 for the refusal of a licence for the fifth television channel, see pp180, 235, 244 and 261 below for the setting up of Virgin Radio.
- (26) See Independent 27/12/92 and Guardian 31/12/92.
- (27) See Conservative Newline November 1992 p11.
- (28) For PMRC see Cosgrove, 1985 and 1986, Denselow, 1989, pp265-9 and Wells, 1986, 1990a and 1991
- (29) Tipper Gore subsequently left the PMRC, see NME 27/3/93. For

more on the Ice T case and its influence see pp109-111 below.

(30) See Q November 1992 and Independent on Sunday 16/12/92 for the state of British pop in 1992.

(31) See Kay, 1993.

(32) Independent 25/5/92.

(33) Toop, 1991, commented that 'rock and pop are as much twins today as 25 years ago'.

CHAPTER TWO

A CONCISE HISTORY OF BRITISH CENSORSHIP

Like any nation state, Britain has its own history of censorship and such censorship has included music. In order to contextualise the rest of the thesis, here I shall outline some of the major censorial actions and debates in Britain over the last five hundred or so years - with particular emphasis on the changing censorial climate of the years between from 1967 to 1992.

British censorship and control of popular recreations take a somewhat haphazard and local form until well into the onset of capitalism in the nineteenth century. Even since then, the British state has generally seen fit to leave censorial and regulative duties to a series of mediators, such as local authorities, the police and "quangos" like the British Board of Film Classification(1). Williams describes the resulting situation: 'we do not have a censor in this country. Instead, in the true spirit of bourgeois democracy, we have groups and individuals competing for the position.'(2) This is true of all media in Britain, where the nod and the wink and the prompting of the police to raid have often taken the place of any official censor. Nevertheless the state has increasingly intervened in recent years.

The first instance of censorship to note came in the 1410s when Henry V issued an edict that: 'No ditties shall be made or sung by minstrels or others.'(3) This was cancelled in 1422. In 1533, during the Reformation and at a time of social discontent, a

Royal Proclamation suppressed 'ballads and rimes and other lewd treatises in the English tongue', whilst a 1543 edict banned all printed ballads for worry that they might 'subtily and craftily instruct the kings' people and especially the youth of the realm'(4). Note here the concern with effect on children, a concentration on lyrics rather than music and the link between censorship and contemporary events - features which have characterised various attempts to censor pop. This ban was lifted by Edward VI, reinstated by Mary, and finally lifted by Elizabeth I(5).

By this time, writes Pearson, 'the argument was already well known that "popular songs too often presented criminals as heroes".'(6) In 1551 theatre censorship was introduced, blasphemy became an offence in 1617(7), whilst swearing was banned six years later(8). In 1642 Pryme's Histrionatrix successfully called for the closing of playhouses because of lewd plays(9). 1644 saw the publication of John Milton's Areopagitica - the first major anti-censorship treatise of the English language. Here Milton called for 'the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience above all liberties.'(10) Locke's 1666 Letter on Toleration is a milestone in calling for religious toleration.

Meanwhile the Puritans had set about clamping down on playhouses(11) and the law was soon tightened. In 1663 Sir Charles Sedley was prosecuted for blaspheming, stripping and urinating in the street - an event which eventually gave birth to charges of obscenity and conspiracy to corrupt public morals(12). By the end

of the century ballads were again being censored for being too lewd(13).

Obscenity became a crime in 1727 when an erotic book, Venus In The Cloister, was held to contravene common law by weakening the bonds of 'civil society, virtue and morality'(14). In 1737 the Lord Chamberlain was given the task of censoring plays. This role was confirmed by the Theatres Act of 1843 which gave him power to ban any play if he felt doing so served the public good. This power lasted until the Theatres Act of 1968 abolished the post(15).

As capitalism engendered new relations of production, leisure was brought under ever-tighter regulation. I deal with the law as it effects pop elsewhere(16), but the story of censorship in Britain is bound up with legal developments and some mention must also be made here. 1824 and 1838 saw Vagrancy Acts which forbade the display of obscene material. The 1847 Town Clauses Act forbade the dissemination of profane or indecent literature and 'the singing of obscene songs' or using obscene language in such a way as to annoy other members of the public(17). In 1857 came an Obscene Publications Act which gave the authorities the power to destroy, but not prosecute, "suspicious" books(18). 1859 saw the publication of Mill's On Liberty, the definitive statement of the liberal position that the only reason to stop the words and actions of people was if they caused harm to others. What actually constitutes such "harm" remains highly contested.

Chief Justice Cockburn's judgement in the R v Hicklin case of 1868 defined "obscenity" in British law for the next 91 years. It

determined the test of obscenity to be 'whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall.'⁽¹⁹⁾ The Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 allowed Customs to seize any obscene articles.

1911 saw a new Official Secrets Act, which was supplemented in 1933. In 1912 D Notices were introduced, and were subsequently used to silence the press. This year also saw the authorities grappling with popular culture's latest technological breakthrough as the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) was instituted. It recommended certificates for films, but local authorities could then choose to adhere to or to ignore such recommendations. Many continued their own censorship⁽²⁰⁾ - again an instance of how censorship in Britain often varies locally⁽²¹⁾. This was a typically British approach. The BBFC was advisory, not statutory (it became statutory with regard to videos in 1985, when the last word of its title became "Classification").

During the first world war songs were carefully vetted in music halls⁽²²⁾. In 1915 DH Lawrence's The Rainbow was prosecuted under the 1868 provisions, as was Radclyffe Hall's The Well of Loneliness in 1928, copies of both books being destroyed⁽²³⁾. If novels were one problem for the authorities, so was popular culture in general. Pearson notes, amongst other recreations, 'dance halls, **popular songs**, street betting and speed tracks were all attacked in the inter war years for their demoralising influence, **particularly on the young**.'⁽²⁴⁾ During the Second World War morale was kept up

by making sure only the right sort of music was played by the BBC. Forces' networks ensured nothing was broadcast that made soldiers homesick and Wagner was effectively banned(25). The works of Dr Alan Bush, the Marxist composer, were banned for a time in 1941(26), when the Communist Daily Worker newspaper was also suppressed(27).

By the 1950s much censorial concern focussed on materialism and worries over the Americanisation of British culture(28), particularly after the introduction of commercial television in 1954. Since then, notes Davies, Parliament 'has imposed as many new forms of censorship on the writer as it has weakened or abolished existing restrictions.'(29) A moral panic around American comics saw the 1955 Children and Young Persons Harmful Publications Act, which prevented the printing or dissemination of certain books and magazines likely to fall into the hands of young people(30).

At the end of the 1950s it was clear that Parliament was keen to protect literature, whilst at the same time clamping down on pornography. The Obscene Publications Act of 1959 defined obscenity as that which would be likely to deprave and corrupt those who came into contact with it. Like much legislation in the moral arena it came via a Private Members' Bill, here introduced by Roy Jenkins. It is still in force in 1993.

Its first test was the unsuccessful attempt to prosecute DH Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover in 1961(31). The book was cleared under the Act's "public good" defence, which allowed expert witnesses to attest to the relevant work's social worth. At

the same time Frederick Snow was jailed for publishing a Ladies' Directory(32), so the law seemed to be doing its job of preserving art, whilst punishing filth. The rest of the 1960s saw moral legislation and changing social mores, the legacy of which is still highly contested(33). But, whilst a certain amount of liberalisation occurred, the 1960s were by no means the free-for-all their detractors would have us believe. Censorial moves continued. Control was relaxed, not abolished.

In 1964 the Obscene Publications Act was extended(34) and in 1965 the BBC banned the dramatisation of a nuclear bombing, *The War Game* from British screens. 1965 also saw the Race Relations Act, which, whatever its aims, had the effect of lessening the scope of free expression.

Important moral legislation was introduced in 1967. The Sexual Offences Act legalised homosexual acts between consenting males in private, but simultaneously clamped down on such acts between men under 21. The net result was an increase in the amount of homosexuals prosecuted(35). The Abortion Act allowed abortion, but only at the discretion of a doctor, not on demand. The Divorce Act liberalised the law on the dissolution of marriage. Again many of these changes were instigated by Private Members Bills, which became, and remain, a vital tool of moral reform. Their use was also a reflection of the major parties' reluctance to officially sanction such reform. Political parties were not jumping on the permissive bandwagon. Meanwhile MM was reporting a backlash on the Underground(36).

1968 brought the Theatres Act I alluded to above(37) and the prosecution and fining of a Brighton avant-garde bookshop for selling obscene prose and poetry(38). The Wootton Committee recommended the liberalisation of the drug laws and the legalisation of cannabis, but instead the 1970 Misuse of Drugs Act imposed further penalties(19). An Arts Council report of 1969 which urged liberalisation of obscenity laws was similarly ignored(40).

In the 1970s a string of obscenity cases occurred. Although heralded by some, such as Whitehouse, as the start of a moral backlash, Newburn has convincingly argued that what actually occurred was a series of continuing shifts between permission and regulation(41). But Underground magazines did seem to be disproportionately targeted. In November 1970 IT, a keen promoter of pop festivals, was found guilty and fined for conspiring to corrupt public morals and to outrage public decency for publishing advertisements soliciting males for homosexual acts(42). Seemingly the acts themselves had been legalised, but advertising for them had not.

The longest and most famous case was the prosecution of the Oz magazine in 1971(43). Its editors were eventually found guilty under the 1959 Act and jailed, but won appeals after the Appeal Court noted a misdirection in the original trial. Significantly the trial concerned the "Schoolkids" edition of the magazine and there was much emphasis in the trial on attempts to corrupt youth, despite the fact far from being an issue produced by adults and aimed at "schoolkids", the "schoolkids" had written the magazine

themselves. More ominously the prosecutor in the case, Brian Leary, had noted darkly that the magazine's philosophy was that of: 'dope, **rock 'n' roll** and fucking in the street.'⁽⁴⁴⁾ Oz was at that time covering a pop scene the BBC was all but ignoring⁽⁴⁵⁾. One of the editors accused the prosecution of believing that 'rock 'n' roll is a coded plea for fucking in the streets'⁽⁴⁶⁾. I argue elsewhere that whatever pop is, it isn't simply music⁽⁴⁷⁾ and the prosecutions of IT and Oz should be seen as an attempt to silence pop **culture**, if not pop **music**.

At the same time as the Oz trial the Little Red Schoolbook was found guilty under the 1959 Act and its publisher fined. Various appeals, including one to the European Court of Human Rights, failed to change the decision. Once again opponents picked up on the fact that the book was aimed at children, although Newburn suggests that this was a smokescreen to hide those opponents' objections to its political content⁽⁴⁸⁾. September 1972 saw the publication of the Longford Commission's Report on pornography which, although much debated, was ignored by legislators⁽⁴⁹⁾.

But attempts to censor continued. In 1973 an unsuccessful attempt was made to prosecute the Nasty Tales magazine. The magazine won but folded soon after as a result of legal costs. A temporary injunction allowed Norris McWhirter of the National Association of Freedom to prevent the showing of a television film on Andy Warhol. It was shown later in the year. In 1976 the acquittal of Inside Linda Lovelace seemed to have put an end to the

prosecution of literary works for which any merit could be shown. But in 1977 Gay News was found guilty, and fined, for blasphemous libel over its publication of James Kirkup's "The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name"(50). This case was important for re-establishing the crime of blasphemy which had been thought of as something of a dead letter. A man was later fined for sending the poem through the post(51) and the Law Lords rejected Gay News's appeal.

1977 also saw the Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, exclude Danish film maker Jens Jorgen Thorsen from the country on the grounds that 'his presence in the country is not conducive to the public good.'(52) Thorsen planned to make a film about Christ's sex-life and demonstrations were feared(53). Film came under the auspices of the Obscene Publications Act in this year. In 1978 the plays "Scum" and "Willie" were banned by the BBC and an IBA ban was placed on an Amnesty International programme on the mistreatment of prisoners in Northern Ireland.

But an entire new world of censorship opened up with the election of a Conservative government in 1979. Pop was by no means exempt from this and it may be no coincidence that the first attempts to prosecute pop under the Obscene Publications began in this period(54).

In 1979 the BBC banned films of an IRA roadblock under the terms of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Williams Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship was published(55). It recommended liberalisation of the obscenity laws, with its Section 2.29 headlined: 'The chaos of the present law'(56). But, having

been commissioned by a Labour government, its advice - based on what a "reasonable" person might find offensive - was ignored by the Conservative administration which effectively shelved it.

Television was a major victim of the new censorial climate. In 1981 the BBC banned an Open University programme on the arms race and the Index on Censorship (IOC) reported that Britons were becoming more accommodating to censorship(57). 1982 saw various forms of censorship and control of information during the Falklands/Malvinas War and in March 1983 the Theatre Directors Guild of Britain was formed to protect entertainment industry workers' rights and to 'fight against artistic, commercial and political censorship and interference'(58).

This era's moral panic concerned "video nasties". In November 1983 Luton South MP Graham Bright introduced a Private Members Bill - the Video Recordings Bill - which sought to set up an official body to licence videos and fines for the dissemination of unclassified videos. This Bill received government support of a type not normally associated with a Private Members Bill. Despite much protest about its potentially draconian nature and the fact that what little evidence MPs were given appeared to be heavily loaded(59) the Bill passed into law in 1985(60). Inverting traditional liberal attitudes to censorship, it made censorship in the home (a private place) stricter than that in a cinema (a public place) as the BBFC often made further cuts to films once they were being transferred on to video. Changes to broadcasting law also occurred at this time and I deal with them elsewhere(61).

In 1984 censorial attention turned to bookshops. Various raids were made on bookshops selling drug-related literature which magistrates were increasingly willing to see as coming under the ambit of the Obscene Publications Act(62). London's Gay's The Word bookshop was subjected to a number of police raids and an unsuccessful attempt to prosecute it for importing obscene material. It was nevertheless effectively censored and lost a great deal of money both in defending itself and having stock impounded for nearly two years.

1985 saw the setting up of the censorially-motivated PMRC in America and in Britain the government returned to the censorial fore in 1986 with a much-ridiculed, expensive and ultimately doomed attempt to keep Peter Wright's spy memoirs, Spycatcher, out of the country. In the same year an unsuccessful attempt was made by Tory MP Winston Churchill to extend the Obscene Publications Act to cover television and broadcasting.

In 1987 a BBC film on the Zircon missile project was banned from its Secret Society series. A raid by the police on the BBC's Glasgow offices precipitated an unprecedented strike by BBC journalists over government interference in editorial freedom. In January BBC Director General Alistair Milne had resigned, officially for "personal reasons", but it was widely reported that BBC Chairman Marmaduke Hussey had asked Milne to go after repeated criticism of him at the 1986 Conservative Party Conference(63). An independent survey by members of Nottingham University cleared the BBC of allegations of bias. In December a Channel 4 reconstruction

of the Birmingham pub bombings of 1973 was banned and the government successfully applied for an injunction against a Radio 4 series, "My Country Right or Wrong" which included interviews with former security service staff(64). Tory MP Gerald Howarth made a failed attempt to extend the 1959 Act and pop seemed to suffer a surge in censorship(65).

Censorial activity by the government intensified in 1988. In February it attempted to prevent the publication of extracts from Inside Intelligence by former MI6 officer Michael Cavendish and Channel 4 cancelled the showing of "Fireraiser" - a film about the saturation bombing of Dresden in the Second World War. This was also the year of the homophobic Clause 28, a part of local government legislation, which forbade local councils from "promoting" homosexuality and teaching it as "normal" in schools. It followed tabloid "outrages" over one or two Labour councils giving small grants to Gay and Lesbian centres and over a book called Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin(66). It became part of the 1988 Local Government Act and thus enshrined homophobia in law, making it difficult for councils to use money for gigs, or other projects, by overtly gay performers.

An attempt to stifle terrorism which had little effect in that area, but a great deal in the field of freedom of expression, also came in 1988. It also directly hit pop music. This was the ban on statements that gave support to terrorist groups being broadcast by radio or television. Amongst other things this led to the banning of The Pogues' "Birmingham Six" track by the IBA(67). It

was widely felt that any songs dealing with Ireland would also be unlikely to get an airing and meant that Sinn Fein, a legal political party, was banned from the airwaves(68). The ban, which is still in place, has done little to undermine IRA activity but much to undermine free speech.

The Rushdie affair came to the fore in 1989. Salman Rushdie, author of The Satanic Verses, was forced into hiding after a fatwah (death sentence) was passed against him by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. British Muslims demonstrated against the book and the government failed to stand up for its much-vaunted belief in free speech(69). Booksellers' reactions varied. WH Smith stopped stocking the book, whilst Collets in London was firebombed for continuing to stock it. (In 1993 Rushdie is still in hiding and the printed word is still far from the freedom envisaged after Lovelace).

Indeed a new type of religious intolerance appears to be on the rise. In the wake of the Rushdie case came calls to bring Islam under the protection of British blasphemy law, which at present only protects the Christian faith. The alternative way of treating religions equally, by abolishing all blasphemy laws was never seriously considered and another chance to extend freedom of expression was spurned. Instead in December 1989 the BBFC refused a certificate for the film "Visions of Ecstasy" - which dealt with a 16th Century Spanish Nun, St.Teresa, and included scenes of her erotically caressing Christ. This was the first time a film had ever been refused a certificate on grounds of blasphemy(70).

1990 saw new broadcasting legislation which I deal with elsewhere(71), part of which saw the setting up of a new watchdog body, the Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC). The Sunday Times and Independent had fines imposed for publishing extracts of Spycatcher dropped, but were still held to have been in contempt of court for publishing them. It also brought Bright's moves against raves via the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act(72).

In 1991 much debate surrounded denial of information to the media in the Gulf War. The BBC was again accused of bias, with chief reporter John Simpson complaining that attempts at objectivity were being treated as treason(73). In the run up to the war Mark Elder, conductor at the Last Night of the Proms, was sacked for suggesting he might not play "Land of Hope and Glory" and "Rule Britannia" if the war had started by the time of the Proms(74).

By this time the BSC was publishing its third annual report and the BBC had decided not to show the highly acclaimed film, "The Last Temptation of Christ", following pressure from clerics and MPs. A spokesman for the record industry's umbrella organisation also said in this year that censorship was not a major issue for the industry(75).

1992 saw controversy over plans to publish the Maquis de Sade's Juliette. Publication went ahead, but many bookshops refused to stock it. A documentary on the economy, which was potentially damaging for the government, was dropped by the BBC on its scheduled day of broadcast, 9 March, the eve of the last Budget

before the general election. The BBC denied that this was a political decision. It was shown two months later. Whilst the ban on Sinn Fein was lifted during the general election, the BBC censored the words of Northern Irish civil rights campaigner Bernadette McAliskey from a television interview in September(76). The destruction of literature returned when Manchester's Savoy bookshop had copies of a magazine called Mengs and Ecker destroyed on the grounds of obscenity(77). The year ended with a debate on restricting the press following concern over its treatment of the royal family and general invasions of privacy.

Bringing It All Back Home

It has been important to outline the history of British censorship in order to contextualise the censoring of pop. Several other factors need to be borne in mind. Pop has an important place in British culture. Britain buys more singles per head of population than any other country(78). A 1990 book reported that 87% of 20-24 year olds listened to records and tapes, 92% of them listened to the radio and 38% of 11-25 year olds went to discos(79). In 1992 76% of people listened to records or tapes - up from 62% in 1977(80). Britain also spends more on entertainments than any other country in Europe(81) and is a country where pop is a passion(82). Interfering with it therefore impedes the pleasures of a substantial part of the population. But pop is also part of a leisure culture which, notes Redhead, is ever-more regulated(83).

Britain is also a country which has often been condemned for its over-secretive government machinery(84). It has no written constitution and its parliament and courts, bodies whose composition is highly skewed in favour of white middle class males - a minority of the population as a whole - are the guardians of civil rights abuses(85). In 1972 O'Higgins noted that British censorial practice was seldom open to scrutiny for social justification(86) and twenty years later this remained the case. British censorship is often arrived at on the nod and the wink, rather than under a spotlight. It is one of the aims of this thesis to raise the issue of whether censorship of pop in this country has thus far proved to be "socially justified".

O'Higgins paraphrased Donald Thomas as saying it is never a question of **if** a country is living under censorship but what **type** of censorship it is(87). When conducting my research I have often been asked if censorship of pop occurred in Britain. Not only do I hope to show that it **has** occurred, but also to demonstrate what **type** of censorship it is. O'Higgins recognised that books have borne the brunt of seizures under the Obscene Publications Act(88). This has continued to be the case, but pop has not only suffered under this law, it has, as I shall illustrate, been subject to various other attempts to silence it.

With regard to the legal position of censorship, Robertson and Nicol have described Britain as having a 'vague law and a swinging moral pendulum'(89). In 1992 this pendulum appeared to be swinging once again towards censorship. Pressure groups as diverse

as Muslim and Christian fundamentalists, feminists, Tory MPs and moralist pressure groups called for more censorship. In 1991 Jenkins wrote that liberals had gone wrong 'in underestimating public support for censorship'(90), but as, we shall see, interest in, and cases of, censorship ebb and flow.

In light of this it is somewhat premature to claim, as Smith does, that Britain's pop censors have now realised that 'censoring almost always backfires'(91). When a parliamentary question was asked about the possibility of tightening up the law in the light of a failed prosecution of NMA's "Efil4zaggin" album in 1991 it was rightly pointed out that such moral legislation was often done by Private Members Bills(92). This left the way open for a backbench MP of any party to tighten up Britain's obscenity law. The tendency of such legislation to follow moral panics (as in the cases of video "nasties" and raves) and the possibility of pop causing such a panic(93) means that pop is far from in the clear, as was evidenced in April 1993 when more moves to restrict raves were announced(94). Moreover, pop could also be the victim of an attempt to clamp down on another medium. In the debate on the current Obscene Publications Act pop was not mentioned - but that law **has** been used against it.

I noted that moralist pressure groups favour tightening up the law and I deal with them in depth below(95). They are countered by anti-censorship groups such as Article 19, the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, the Campaign Against Censorship, the National Campaign For Civil Liberties and

the Campaign For Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Debate here often takes place at a national level, but, as previously noted, censorship in Britain is locally mediated - for example by police and local government(96).

It appears that, with legislation like Clause 28, the Video Recordings Act and the Public Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act the liberals have been fighting a losing battle. Stories about censorship in the music press take up an ever increasing percentage of the reports. In 1984 Calder wrote that: 'We are now witnessing the reversal of the gains that were achieved from the late fifties to the early seventies.'(97) This continued and by 1988 Harding was writing that 'Britain is a far more censorious place than it was five years ago.'(98) .

So the picture is of increasing censorship from which pop has not been immune. British censorial practice has been characterised by local(99) and pressure group intervention. It has ebbed and flowed and has intervened with pop almost randomly. O'Higgins noted that much of British censorial practice was 'an extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense, of enlightenment and cruelty, of stupidity and absurdity...(and sometimes) wholly irrational.'(100) This has been as much the case with pop as it has in general. But why this is the case will become clearer once I have given an outline of the general characteristics of censorship and debates surrounding it.

Notes

- (1) Frith, 1983, p254 also notes the importance of local regulation and argues that this has been more important in Britain than outright repression.
- (2) N.Williams, 1984, p34.
- (3) Hillman, 1968, p15.
- (4) ibid
- (5) ibid
- (6) Pearson, 1984, pp96/97.
- (7) New Statesman, 1991, p9.
- (8) Hughes, 1991, p195.
- (9) See St.John-Stevas, 1965, p15.
- (10) Eccleshall, 1986, p69.
- (11) Wistrich, 1978, p80.
- (12) See Newburn, 1992, p72.
- (13) St.John Stevas, 1965, pp9/10.
- (14) Robertson, 1991, p18.
- (15) See Petley, 1991. For more see de Jongh, 1991a.
- (16) See pp145-178 and 179-183 below.
- (17) See O'Higgins, 1972, p301.
- (18) See Newburn, 1992, p72.
- (19) Robertson, 1991, p180.
- (20) Wistrich, 1978, p17.
- (21) See ibid for more on this.
- (22) For example see Cheshire, 1974, p54 for how the halls were used to whip up anti-German fervour.

- (23) Robertson, 1991, p181.
- (24) Pearson, 1983 p31. Emphasis mine.
- (25) See Abraham, 1983, p3.
- (26) O'Higgins, 1972, pp132/133.
- (27) Watkins, 1978, p176.
- (28) See Chambers, 1986, p23 and 38-40.
- (29) Davies, 1979, p9. For early reactions to rock and roll in Britain see Bradley, 1992, Rogers, 1982 and Whitcomb, 1982.
- (30) See Barker, 1984a and Berry, 1984.
- (31) See Sutherland, 1982, pp10-31.
- (32) See Newburn, 1992, pp88-90. See Sutherland, 1982 for more on 1960s and 70s cases concerning literature.
- (33) For debates on the merits of the 1960s see Guardian 17/3/93, Newburn, 1992 and almost anything by Whitehouse.
- (34) See Newburn, 1992 p95.
- (35) ibid p62.
- (36) See MM 7/1/67 and 14 and 21/10/67.
- (37) See reference 17 above.
- (38) Neville, 1971, p63.
- (39) See Newborn, 1992, p8 and Hewison, 1986, pp 131 and 169.
- (40) For details see The Obscenity Report pp219-250 and Newburn, 1992, p101.
- (41) Newburn, 1992, pp135ff.
- (42) See ibid pp115-118.
- (43) See Palmer, 1972. For a brief account see de Jongh, 1991b.
- (44) de Jongh, 1991b.

- (45) Palmer, 1972, p19.
- (46) ibid p224.
- (47) For example, see pp50 and 112 below.
- (48) See Newburn, 1992, p130 and IOC Vol 2 No2 Summer 1973 pp102-6.
- (49) For an account of Longford see Newburn, 1992, pp103-114 and IOC Vol 1 No3/4 Winter 1972 pp3-5.
- (50) For a somewhat emotional account of the Gay News trial see Lemon, 1992.
- (51) See IOC Vol17 No1 January 1978 p68.
- (52) IOC Vol16 No3 May/June 1977 p67.
- (53) Other people excluded from Britain include: Lenny Bruce (1963), Perry Douglas, exposé of CIA spies, (1977), Ramesh Chandra, of the Soviet-backed World Peace Council (1980), Elizabeth Van Haut, a Dutch journalist linked to the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) (1980) and Louis Farakhan, black separatist preacher (1986). Such exclusion orders have not been used against popular musicians, but were called for by MPs Leo Abse, with regard to Alice Cooper, in 1972, see p593 below and Peter Brunivels, over The Beastie Boys, in 1987, see p588 below.
- (54) See pp149-156 and 161-168 below.
- (55) The Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship, 1980 (The Williams Report).
- (56) ibid
- (57) See Greer, 1981, p31.
- (58) IOC Vol12 no4 August 1983 p40.
- (59) For an account of the "nasties" scare and the "fixing" of

evidence see Barker, 1984b.

(60) See Robertson, 1991 pp216-226 for the impact of this law. See Sunday Times 14//3/93 for calls to strengthen it further.

(61) See pp180-182 below.

(62) See IOC Vol13 No4 August 1984 p39.

(63) See IOC Vol16 No3 March 1987 p37.

(64) See IOC Vol17 No2 February 1988 pp34 and 35.

(65) See Wells, 1987.

(66) For details of "Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin" see IOC Vol17 No8 September 1988 pp37-39. For clause 28 see ibid p39 and Newburn, 1992, pp188/189.

(67) See pp237/238 for more on the "Birmingham Six" ban.

(68) See IOC Vol17 No10 November/December 1988 p4 and Vol12 No9 October 1990 pp2-4 for details of this ban.

(69) For an outline of the Rushdie affair see IOC Vol18 No5 May/June 1989 pp2, 14 and 15 and Vol19 No4 April 1990 pp9-25. (70) See IOC Vol19 No2 February 1990 pp3-4.

(71) See pp180/181 for details of 1990 Broadcasting Act and the Broadcasting Standards Council.

(72) See pp425-427 below for the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act.

(73) See Simpson, 1991.

(74) See NME 2/3/91.

(75) NME 9/11/90.

(76) See IOC Vol22 No1 January 1993 p34 and McAliskey, 1992.

(77) See Daily Telegraph and Guardian 31/7/92.

- (78) NME 12/12/92 and Independent 2/12/92.
- (79) Willis, 1990, p ix.
- (80) Guardian 2/3/93.
- (81) Daily Telegraph 23/1/92.
- (82) See Morrison, 1992.
- (83) See Redhead, 1990, p8.
- (84) For just two examples of British secrecy see Fraser, 1991 and Cathcart, 1992.
- (85) For more details see Newburn, 1992, p15.
- (86) See O'Higgins, 1972, p155.
- (87) ibid p122.
- (88) See ibid p62.
- (89) Robertson and Nicol, 1984, p69.
- (90) Jenkins, 1991.
- (91) R.Smith, 1991, p53.
- (92) Hansard, Written answer 12/11/91. See chapter on pp145-178 for more on legal cases.
- (93) See pp567-568 below for pop and moral panics.
- (94) See NME 10/4/93.
- (95) See pp440-490 below.
- (96) For more on the importance of local censorship see Benedictus, 1979, p996, Robertson, 1974, p243, Sutherland, 1982, p163 and Wistrich, 1978, pp 122/123. In April 1993 Glasgow City Council banned the film "Romper Stomper". See Guardian 6/4/93.
- (97) Calder, 1984.
- (98) S.Harding, 1988, p25.

(99) O'Higgins, 1972, p44 notes the plethora of local obscenity laws.

(100) ibid p156.

CHAPTER THREE

CENSORSHIP: SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEBATE

This chapter examines the debates surrounding censorship and the arguments of censors. Before this a definition of censorship will be offered. For purposes of this thesis, I shall define censorship as being: The deliberate attempt to interfere, either pre- or post-publication, with the artistic expressions of popular musicians, with a view to stifling, or significantly altering, that expression. This includes the marginalisation, as well as overt banning, of such expressions.

There has been a proliferation of books about censorship and its merits and demerits within various media(1) but, as already noted, very little has been written about the censoring of pop, especially in Britain. As noted elsewhere, Martin and Segrave's Anti-Rock(2) is invaluable for documentary evidence, but its proposition that censoring pop is essentially an act of generational revenge is weak. As will become apparent, the truth is more complicated than that.

The censorship debate has tended to polarise around "liberals" who have stressed the right to free expression and artistic statements and "conservatives" who have appealed for artists to be "responsible", or to face having responsibility forced on to them by censorship. To this divide has recently been added a third dimension - that of radical feminism(3). At its most extreme this viewpoint has, for example, seen pornography as rape

and the debasement of women, rather than being a causal factor in these phenomena(4). But throughout there has remained a suspicion that attempts to intervene in the creative process are actually attempts to interfere with thought processes, to initiate self-censorship(5).

The debate has consistently featured a number of elements. Prime amongst these is the concept of freedom of speech but few, if any, see the right to free expression as being absolute. In a famous example, the right to free speech does not entail the right to randomly shout "Fire!" in a crowded theatre(6). The question centres on where, rather than whether, to draw the line(7). In On Liberty Mill alluded to the problems of text and context. The right to say corndealeters were swindlers was not the same as the right to say this before an angry mob outside a corndealer's house(8). Taboo is generally contextual rather than absolute(9). The problem of what is suitable entertainment for children is an example of this which recurs throughout the thesis.

A problem is that the very word "censorship" induces paranoia amongst both its proponents and its opponents. Call it "responsibility", "commonsense" or "restriction", but don't use the "C" word. Whilst all commentators claim to believe in free speech, all would draw the line somewhere. Birmingham councillor Alan Blumenthal(10), illustrated this tension perfectly when he said of NWA's "Efil4zaggin" album:

'I'm a great believer in free speech, I don't believe in censorship, but one does have to have certain standards... and if

you go beyond a line, then you have to be stopped.'(11)

Such line-drawing in British pop has often invited ridicule and occasionally had sinister overtones. Ridicule has often centred upon the apparently arbitrary nature of censorship. For example, One played "Walk On The Wild Side", but not "Big Seven", both risqué songs from the early 1970s. The more sinister overtones come in attempt to ban political songs(12). Inconsistency compounds this image. For example, O'Higgins reports that Yoko Ono's film, Number Four, which concentrated on the human backside, was refused a certificate by the BBFC, got an "X" certificate in London and a "U" in Birmingham(13), again illustrating that censorship in Britain is often locally mediated.

A popular misconception about British censorship is that it the story is one of evermore liberalisation(14). The reality is one of a constant re-negotiating of boundaries. For example, it may have been the case that records with swearing on them were commonplace in 1992, but it was also true that, as the BSC noted, that the word "nigger" was less likely to be acceptable on television than it had been years before(15). I have also suggested that the tide turned in favour of censorship during the 1980s after the alleged "permissiveness" of the 1960s and 70s(16).

In other areas liberalisation **has** taken place and, in retrospect, some censoring of pop seems quaint. For example, "Great Balls of Fire" was shocking in the 1950s, but used in a cheese advert in the 1980s(17), "Relax" was banned by One in 1984, but used in an advert a couple of years later(18) and Denselow notes

that "If I Had A Hammer" was a dangerous, politically-charged song in 1949 but a night club favourite by 1964(19). The last British report into obscenity also noted changing perceptions about what was "obscene"(20).

So it is a case of ebb and flow, rather than increasing liberalisation. This can mean that records previously held to be innocent can **become** offensive. Lennon's "Imagine" was innocent until the Gulf War, The Pogues' "Birmingham Six" was fine until the government ban on statements supporting terrorism in 1988 and Ice T's "Cop Killer" only **became** an issue after the LA riots of April and May 1992(21). But the **idea** that rampant liberalisation has taken place may be a motivating factor for Whitehouse et al, whilst the apparent arbitrariness of censorship is often a reflection of changing social mores.

The censorial climate is also bound up with contemporary events. The three examples above all reflect action taken against pop in times of social crisis and/or war. A major incident can increase the censorial heat. In March 1993 there was a moral panic over the effects of television in the wake of the murder of two-year-old James Bulger. In 1973 concern over the effects of the film "Clockwork Orange" followed the IRA bombing of Aldershot and disturbances in Ulster(22). Raids on sex shops in Oxford and Cambridge followed the arrest of the Cambridge rapist in 1975(23). Similar clampdowns occurred around the drug scare in 1967, the press reaction to punk at the time of the 1977 Jubilee celebrations, the video nasties scare of 1983/4 and the wars in the

South Atlantic, the Gulf and Ireland. In pop One's Mike Smith tried to ban the Jesus and Mary Chain's "Some Candy Talking" in 1986 as it was allegedly about cocaine and at this time Boy George's drug problems were getting much press coverage(24). It has also been reported that the clampdown on raves followed press scares surrounding ecstasy(25).

The issue of censorship also brings up that of control. Frith has written of the "gatekeepers" of the pop world(26) and indeed the whole process of deciding who gets signed and played on the radio is in some ways a censorial one, falling within my definition. One way in which pop adds to the censorship debate is that it soon leads into areas of social control, in a way that, for example, books do not, especially once it enters the live arena. Indeed no clear dividing line between regulation and censorship in pop exists and the given definition is my attempt to clarify it.

The debate also centres on notions of a public/private divide - with some material and acts being legitimate in private, but not in public. Pop is problematic here as a medium which transgresses the divide and it has often been denied a public place. Laing noted that punk was deemed as legitimately consumed in private, but public expression was often denied(27). Similarly hardcore rap records can be bought for private consumption and gigs go ahead, but a vital public performance, that of broadcasting, is denied because the language is deemed "offensive".

The market also acts as a censor to those who don't sell and adds another, recurrent, dimension to the censorial debate. For

example, Q magazine noted that it was small bands that suffered in times of recession and were effectively economically censored by not being able to get a market for their music(28). Censorship has often had the appearance of being an in-house capitalist debate, some being willing to sell **anything**, whilst others have moral objections to some material. Attali has noted that with the onset of capitalism: 'It was necessary to sell oneself to have the right to create' and he cites Mozart as an example of such selling(29). Suffice to say here that matters of artistic control in the industry **do** have censorial implications(30), although the demarcation between regulation and censorship remains blurred. But calls for control are generally underpinned by certain arguments.

Justifying My Hate - Arguments For Censorship

Proponents of censorship broadly postulate two sorts of arguments to substantiate their case. These are the causal and the offence arguments.

Causal arguments posit the idea that the medium in question can cause behavioural or attitudinal changes in members of the audience. With pop, this argument is primarily forwarded against its recorded format. In the live arena, as we shall see, censorship is more often, though not exclusively, motivated by fears about crowd control, rather than by the music. Pop's most notorious causal arguments have centred on attempts in America to blame music for being the decisive factor in suicide and murder cases(1).

But there are a number of problems with causal analyses. Regardless of the intent of writers, reception of music is not a simple process. Music has no given meaning or effect. Its "meaning" to an individual listener will be mediated by a number of factors such as age, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, class, knowledge of musical conventions and so on. Pop is not simply music and Negus writes that: 'Music is not simply received as sound, but through its association with a series of images, identities and associated values, beliefs and affective desires.'(2) Moreover, doubt has been cast over the plausibility of determining the causal effects of **any** media. Simpson has argued that 'it is by no means certain that causal explanations of social phenomenon are in principle possible.'(3) A 1993 Guardian editorial raised much the same point(4) and Wistrich writes that few professionals now take causal arguments seriously(5), although there is some evidence that material **may** exacerbate pre-existing problems and mediate the **type** of crime committed(6).

In response would-be censors have fallen back on arguments that "commonsense" indicates effects. So Whitehouse now says: 'you've got to get away from this silly business of having to prove things. We've got to start using our commonsense and human experience'(7). Her problem is that the law as it stands is a causal one. The matter in question must have a "tendency to deprave and corrupt" - a causal link, despite the fact that the Act's architect, Roy Jenkins, now thinks causal arguments are dead(8).

But, if dead, they have shown a marked reluctance to lie

down. They have plagued pop throughout and a feature of the arguments used by the censors I document will be the preponderance of unsubstantiated causal claims. Laurie writes of a letter from a teacher in New Statesman claiming that The Beatles were turning his pupils into homosexuals(9) and quotes Holbrook's condemnation of their music as 'low grade masturbation'(10). Letters to MM in 1967 blamed pop for drug usage(11). In 1972 Robinson claimed that 'the popularity of "pop" and "pot" is more than accidentally contemporary with the popularity of pornography.'(12) By 1992 rap was being blamed for the LA riots(13) and Medved varied the causal argument by saying: 'I do not claim that media messages **cause** destructive behaviour, but I do contend that they **encourage** it.'(14)

But such attributions have failed to stand up to scientific tests. Wistrich noted that 360 surveys of the impact of film had failed to establish any firm conclusions on their impact(15). Three different American commissions on the effects of pornography came to three different conclusions(16). Whitehouse feels British law is inadequate as a tendency to deprave and corrupt **can't** be proved(17). The debate appears hopelessly polarised around the "liberals" who want scientific "proof" and the "conservatives" who lay claim to "commonsense" and have not been averse to tampering with the evidence of research in order to get the conclusions they want(18).

But causal debates have made a comeback in recent years. Bloom's The Closing of The American Mind attempted to give academic

credence to causal claims in 1987 and The Sunday Times(19) has serialised the work of Medved, whose 1992 book Hollywood vs America advocates boycotting Capital because WASP are on the label. He sees popular culture as the cause of America's moral malaise and advocates 'letter writing, public shaming' and 'using stockholder meetings' as part of a campaign to engender more "responsibility". Censorship, he says, doesn't work, it merely makes heroes out of "thugs" like 2 Live Crew. Best to get in right at the point of production rather than have to fight a marketplace battle(20).

Causal and offence arguments are the two poles around which debates on censorship tend to gravitate, but they are not mutually exclusive. However, claims based on offence tend to be the most common. They are easier to maintain as the protagonist does not have to prove effects, merely show repulsion. Thus records are banned from daytime radio, not because they will **cause** children to commit crime, but on grounds of offence to listeners. Pop's offence is often caused not so much by the music as by the lifestyle of its musicians. So moralists attacked Mick Jagger for living with Marianne Faithfull out of wedlock(21) and Godbolt notes that the terms rock and roll and jazz were both initially offensive in themselves as they had sexual connotations(22).

A problem is that one can be offended and enjoy it(23). Offence in art can also be a safety valve and AIDS and VD advertisements have shown the beneficial uses "offensive" material can be put to(24). Swearing is omitted from daytime radio, presumably on grounds of offence, but Feinberg has argued that

exposing children to swearing is partly beneficial as it is part of growing up(25). Redmond has said that there is no phrase quite like "Shut the fuck up" for getting a point across(26) and songs such as Neil Young's "Fuckin' Up" and NWA's "Fuck Tha Police" would not make sense without the key words. For Whitehouse swearing simply debases our culture(27), but Feinberg has pointed out that some people can be offended by anything(28). Censors have also pointed out the moral pollution that phenomena like pornography can bring about, an argument which seems to marry causal and offence arguments. But censors have also had other motivations.

Fighting The Right To Party - Common Themes in Censorial Thinking

When the arguments of rock's opponents are examined several common features emerge.

(1) As already noted, there is often the assertion that the pop audience is the hapless dupe of the cynical and amoral men who run the record industry. In 1964 Johnson spoke of Beatles fans as 'a generation enslaved by a commercial machine' and 'fodder for exploitation' and saw that: 'Behind this image of "youth" there are... some shrewd older folk at work.' Intellectuals he wrote, should get back to real art and leave pop well alone(1). This attitude captures the elitism which has often characterised censorship(2). After the Sex Pistols television debacle(3), Butt called for EMI to drop them and wrote: 'Exploitation comes in many guises. The masses were once exploited by being made to work too

hard for too little cash. Today it is their children's minds which are exploited, to make quick bucks by the million for the record companies'(4). This was a particular nonsense, as at this time only three punk bands had been signed by majors and no millions had been made. Even the more enlightened Cosgrove warned, in the middle of a scare over the links between raves and ecstasy, of 'unscrupulous record companies which are marketing themselves in the most sickeningly opportunist ways.'(5)

The idea of the industry foisting rubbish more or less at will on to a totally passive audience is facile. If it could do so it would, but it can't. Most records are **not** hits, the industry is notoriously slow in picking up on crazes and audiences soon tire of artists who are hyped into the charts. This is not to say that is impossible to get record sales via advertising etc, but it is hard to demonstrate that the industry can do this for as long as it wants, whenever it wants. Even the apparently malleable teen audience is not an easy target. Rimmer has written of young pop fans that 'all the media manipulation in the world isn't going to sell them something they haven't any use for.'(6) As an example he quotes the failure of the Roaring Boys in 1985. To that we might add 1970s television hosts Flintlock and 1980s hype Sigue Sigue Sputnik. Rimmer concludes that 'the pop market remains notoriously difficult to control'(7) and, as noted in the introduction, The Economist has agreed(8).

The theme of exploitation is closely linked to another:

(2) "Doing it for the kids" - Sooner or later all censors, or

would be censors, of the mass media are called to defend their actions. Almost invariably such defences will contain references to protecting children. "The Kids" form part of the mythology of both the industry(9) and its opponents(10). Because pop's audience is, often wrongly(11), seen as being made up of defenceless children attempts are made to justify censorial action on the grounds of defending their innocence. So Whitehouse claims that in pop songs such as Presley's "It's Now Or Never": 'Children accept many of these words at face value but are nevertheless being brainwashed by the pornographic ideas behind them.'(12) Tory MP Peter Brunivels said of a proposed Beastie Boys tour in 1987: 'Our children will be corrupted by this sort of thing.'(13) Note that these are unsubstantiated causal claims.

A problem is that proponents of such arguments tend to have an ahistorical view of children and reject theorising and empirical evidence which suggests that the concepts of childhood which they claim to have existed since the dawn of time (or at least since Christianity) are in fact recent inventions. Being new, does not, of course, automatically invalidate a theory, but here a concept of childhood which is a modern invention is being used to justify censorship in the name of a morality that claims a lineage of two thousand years.

Censors also tend to present children as obsessed with pop(14), but this is true only for a small minority(15). Protecting children recurs throughout this thesis, and whilst obviously respecting this motivation, I was often left with the unprovable

notion that children are being used as an excuse for censoring material which the censors find aesthetically offensive. Others have also drawn this conclusion. Barker noted the use of children as an excuse to mask political censorship in the video "nasties" scare(16) and Rolling Stone editorialised that the PMRC were using "protect the children" rhetoric to impose their morality on society(17).

(3) Aesthetic critiques. A regular feature of censorial activity in pop is that proponents of censorship often feel compelled to prove pop's cultural worthlessness. Pop not only has to be dangerous, it also has to be, in the words of Dr Donald Soper, "artistic suicide"(18). So to defend pop from censorship one also has to defend its cultural validity.

Obviously not **all** aesthetic critiques of pop are calls for censorship, but censors frequently use aesthetic critiques to substantiate their case. In the 1950s the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) had a copyright battle with the rival Broadcast Music Industries (BMI), who had the publishing rights to much early rock and roll. ASCAP played the aesthetics card and leading member Billy Rose said: 'Not only are most of the BMI songs junk, but in many cases they are obscene junk'(19).

Johnson compounded his critique of Beatles' fans by saying that their concerts featured 'the monotonous braying of savage instruments.'(20) In the Daily Telegraph Simple followed his praise of the ban on McGuinness Flint's anti-interment song, "Let The People Go", by telling his readers that the record had 'matchless

idiocy, inanity and feebleness.'(21) Such feelings were backed up by the classical world in the mid 1970s when Dr Ruth Gipps, conductor of the London Repertoire Orchestra, mixed causal and aesthetic arguments by saying that: 'amplified "pop" is evil and injures those who partake in it' and that: "'Pop" is not music.... it is an ugly blasphemy.'(22) Her censorial intent was also clear - 'It is time pop festivals were outlawed for good.'(23)

With punk aesthetic critiques reached their peak. The Daily Mail and Marsh both concluded that, even by pop's lamentable standards, punk musicians were poor(24). The Sun assured its readers that an EMI union convener thought the Sex Pistols were: 'Just rubbish'(25) and commented itself that: 'Unfortunately the Sex Pistols are not only foul mouthed, they are foul sounding.'(26). Sunday Times music writer Derek Jewell had already informed his readers that punk's 'apologists are pathetic... when it dies it will not be mourned.'(27)

There has been a long standing aesthetic battle between "high" and "low" art and censors have the work of critics of "low" culture to fall back on. Denisoff and Peterson write that: 'the general view among art critics and other spokesmen for the "art" establishment came to be that the **high** art of the intelligentsia instituted, enabled, entertained and civilised, while the commercial or **low** art of the common people dulled and corrupted.'(28) In pop this meant it was **only** rock and roll and censorship doesn't matter - as nothing of redeeming social importance will be lost. In this respect it is interesting to note

that in 1991 Island defended NWA's "Efil4zaggin" not on artistic grounds, but on grounds of free speech(29). Even those within the industry seem reluctant to defend their products on aesthetic grounds.

(4) Miscellaneous other themes.

(a) Xenophobia. Initial reaction to rock 'n' roll in Britain was clouded by fear of "Americanisation" and the replacement of a genuine national culture with crass commercialism(30). Xenophobia was apparent in the Daily Mail's response to rock(31), MP Leo Abse's comments on Alice Cooper(32), Brunivels' comments on the Beastie Boys(33) and it has also surfaced elsewhere(34). Patriotism continues to be as much the refuge of the censor as it is of the scoundrel. Further evidence of this is suggested by Whitehouse's spirited defence of 'our national culture'(35) from 'alien patterns of behaviour'(36). Pearson has shown that this fits a long tradition of blaming foreigners for domestic problems - for example by giving young trouble makers an Irish name - hooligan(37).

(b) Religious motivation. I will deal with the attitude of various religious sects to pop elsewhere(38), but it should be noted that many of pop's would-be censors come from religious backgrounds. Examples of this include Whitehouse, former Manchester police Chief James Anderton and Brunivels (a member of the Church of England's General Synod). It is not surprising that the church should take an interest in problems of morality, but that this can easily lead to censorial attitudes and actions should be noted.

(c) Much censorial activity concerns pop's attendant

features, especially the behaviour of its fans, rather than the music itself. This is most obviously the case with live music and raves, but it also occurs elsewhere. The chapter on religion will show that many of pop's opponents make much of stars' lifestyles. Attempts to prosecute t-shirts(39) also fit into this category and the links between pop and drugs are often picked up on by moralists(40). Links between counterculture and gay culture have also been criticised(41).

(d) Many would-be censors have bigger agendas. For example, Whitehouse aims to make Britain a theocracy(42) and the reactions of many MPs to pop are often motivated by the desire for publicity and votes, rather than a moral agenda. Similarly the objections of feminists to some of rock's imagery, such as the name Rapeman(43) and the depiction of women on covers(44) cannot be divorced from their desire to see a society which is more egalitarian in the way it treats the sexes. Indeed many would-be censors, including moralist pressure groups, only move against pop as part of a much bigger agenda. Pop is not attacked **as** pop, but as part of a cultural and moral malaise. But noble aspirations do not lessen the censorial impact or intent.

(e) Many of these critics are also nostalgic - pop and the country are to be returned to a previous, often mythical, golden age(45).

(f) I have already mentioned the perennial problem of self censorship - for whatever reason and that, unfortunately, it is hard to document and will therefore be somewhat under-represented

in this thesis(46).

Here I have listed a number of features and themes of censorship that will recur in the thesis. I've noted that virtually the only British commentator on censorship of pop is NME writer Steven Wells(78) who believes that rock's opponents 'are all conservatives'(48). But I shall demonstrate that this is a little simplistic and that opponents of pop have been drawn from across the political spectrum. Conservatives may initiate the majority of censorial actions, but they do not have a monopoly. Jenkins has claimed that 'censorship doesn't work'(49), but this would be a premature conclusion. However, with a medium such as pop it appears that the odds are stacked against the would-be censors. So why bother to censor pop? What particular characteristics does it have that arouse censorial ire?

Why Pick On Pop? - The Particular Censorial Problems of Popular Music

To avoid giving the impression that pop is an innocent victim of censorship it is necessary to recognise that it is an active medium which provokes censorship because of its capacity to antagonise. It is this capacity I wish to examine here.

As a non-verbal form of communication, music is a medium which has a long history of attracting suspicion and occasional vehement opposition. I want to briefly look at that history here in order to show the **particular** problems music has faced.

Plato believed that music's power was that: 'By gradual infiltration it softly overflows upon the characteristic pursuits of men and from those issues forth grown greater to attack their business dealings, and from these relations it proceeds against the laws and constitution with wanton licence till it finally overthrows all things public and private... For the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling the most fundamental political and social conventions.'(1) For these reasons censorship was justified. Note also here how music interrupts the private/public divide.

In 550 AD Cassiodorus wrote in The Divine Letters that: 'Music doth extenuate fears, furies, appeaseth cruelty, abate heaviness and to such as are wakeful it causeth quiet rest; it cures all irksomeness and heaviness of the soul.'(2) In Britain, Blom reports that Welsh harp music 'became subject to official regulation'(3) in the twelfth century, whilst Cromwell suppressed the use of choirs and organs in church in 1644(4). In the eighteenth century "Polly", Grey's follow-up to "The Beggars Opera", was suppressed by the Lord Chamberlain for its political content(5). McClary reports the banning of Italian music from Louis XIV's court in seventeenth century France(6) and Attali notes that French revolutionaries banned the harpsichord and chants because of their association with the ancien regime(7). Authoritarian regimes such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union also censored music, usually because of its composers race or beliefs(8).

Eighteenth century Britain saw attempts to promote some forms

of music, such as brass bands and tonic sol fa(9) at the same time as clamping down on others, especially Music Hall(10). The arrival of jazz in the early twentieth century provoked accusations that 'the music is impertinent and hath no respect for persons.'(11) In America jazz was blamed, by the Illinois Vigilance Association, for the downfall of 1,000 girls in Chicago alone(12) - again an unsubstantiated causal claim.

In the 1930s Frank Sinatra was held to be personally responsible for young girls running away from home, truancy and juvenile delinquency(13). Becker noted the "outsider" status of musicians in 1948(14), whilst 1951 Britain had Rowntree and Lavers worrying that youth were being corrupted at dance halls where dancing could 'easily degenerate into a sensuous form of entertainment' and lead on to 'unruly behaviour and not infrequently to sexual immorality.'(15)

The arrival of rock and roll in Britain caused a moral panic as youths denied the opportunity to jive to the "Rock Around The Clock" film took revenge by cutting up cinema seats(16). Beatlemania brought forth Johnson's poison pen(17), whilst 1967 saw "Sergeant Pepper" and the beginnings of the "Is rock art?" debate. Punk raised questions of whether it was even music, but this had also been asked of jazz and rock and roll before. By the 1990s Redhead was pointing out that pop in Britain was part of an ever more heavily regulated leisure arena(18). It also remained a centre of controversy and censorial actions, with Medved pointing the finger and accusing pop of going into moral decline(19). Pop

certainly goes beyond mere notes, chords and vocals and involves image, covers and so on(20), as movements like punk show. The implication of this for pop is that censorship of it should go beyond consideration of the music, hence the inclusion in this thesis of sections on festivals and raves.

One consequence of this is that popular music censorship can be differentiated from that of most other art forms in the way it soon becomes embroiled in questions of social control, primarily because of its live context. Dunaway has noted that performance is a vital part of pop's meaning(21), so attempts to control live pop are simultaneously attempts to control pop's meaning. Reviving unsubstantiated causal claims, Medved argues that behaviour at gigs has worsened because of the changing (ie worsening moral depravity) nature of the music(22). The ahistoricity of this is illustrated by the fact that Russell notes many examples of bad behaviour by brass-bandsmen in the Victorian era(23).

Another reason to censor pop is that it is a particularly intrusive medium. For example, music caused a third of all complaints about household noise in Britain in 1991(24). It is often the very **sound** of pop that offends. But it differs from much classical music and many of the previous examples in being primarily based on lyrics. Frith has alleged that it is lyrics which cause censors most concern(25) and this too has a long heritage(26). But Frith's analysis misses the aesthetic critiques that censors often use to supplement their arguments. Lyrics are often a prime motor for censorship(27) but: (1) One is also left

with the feeling that music itself upsets many of the censors(28) and (2) It is often noted that few fans listen to lyrics with any great attention(29). In this sense concentration on lyrics misrepresents the case(30).

But such concentration continues(31) and a problem for pop is that it is harder for a singer to distance himself from the sentiments of the character in the song than it might be in a novel or film. Too often pop artists are held to straightforwardly advocate the sentiments they express in song, when they may be assuming a persona to sing with which does not necessarily reflect their personal views(32). There is also the perennial problem of context and content(33) and misinterpretation(34). Much of the criticism of heavy metal, for example, misses the pathos and humour in the genre. The humourless tracts of Medved et al are full of examples of irony being taken at face value(35).

Reaction to pop centres around how its "meaning" is perceived. Those who see pop as harmless are unlikely to call for its censorship. But pop's meaning is not fixed, it has been a notorious battleground over the years. Melly describes rock and roll as 'screw and smash music'(36), Burchill spoke of it as a CIA plot(37), others as a Communist conspiracy(38) and still others as a tool of Satan(39). But things are even more complicated than this. Frith points out that music's meaning is socially conditioned, so that it has different connotations in America from those it has in Britain(40). Moreover, he argues, such meanings are not fixed(41) and Wicke points out that the "meaning" of pop has

constantly changed throughout its history(42). Hence the ability I mentioned earlier of previously "innocent" pop to become "offensive". Moreover, Chambers notes that Live Aid was both pleasure **and** compassion simultaneously(43), which shows that pop's "meaning" is not etched in stone, but open to negotiation.

Pop also causes concern and suspicion because it is essentially a mass medium(44) and debates on the effect of **all** mass media have yet to be settled either way. As little research has been done specifically on the effects of pop, one is forced to look into other research into other media for guidance. This returns us to causal arguments as most research has centred on the alleged causal links between various media and subsequent audience behaviour. McQuail has suggested that: 'most dependable research so far available has not supported the thesis of a general association between any form of media use and crime, delinquency or violence.'(45) Overall, he suggests: 'The results remain confusing and contradictory.'(46) Frith also notes that it is hard to attribute causal influences to an industry which is itself an **effect**, 'of postwar social changes'(47).

Pop is also omnipotent and this has been held to be damaging. For example, Medved posits an argument based on the **accumulated** impact of exposure to film and pop(48), but Barker has argued that repeated exposure leads to knowledge of conventions rather than ever more danger(49). Barker has also pointed out that all mass media have been given mystic powers by both left and right in the political field(50) and thus rendered attempts at objectivity

almost impossible. Here pop has been hampered by the misconception of its audience as children that I mentioned previously(51). The fact that pop is an electronic mass medium means it has attracted criticism that, for example, literature would not.

McQuail has argued that to understand the medium, you must understand the industry, which I deal with in the next chapter(52). Pop in its recorded form is a commodity(53) and this has implications for the censorship of it. Once in the marketplace moves to censor pop are essentially attempts at controlling consumption and this again illustrates how pop blurs the line between censorship and social control. The industry itself has been accused of neutering the more radical developments in pop. Melly accuses it of turning a **genuine** revolt into a style(54).

British censorship of pop has tended to be sporadic and pop generally has an easier time of it in Britain than it does in, for example, America. But the fact that America may be more censorious up to 1992, does **not** mean that this situation will continue come what may. It is also worth noting that those who oppose pop in America can affect its dissemination in Britain, as the dropping of Ice T after "Cop Killer" shows(55).

Wicke has pointed to pop's democratic potential(56) and, if this is the case, censoring it must, logically, be anti-democratic. This is certainly the case in Britain. Censorial decisions are generally made behind closed doors. The issue of censoring pop is not merely one of free speech or artistic expression, but also one of who has access to the mechanisms of censorship. Here I am not

pleading special status of expression for pop musicians, but I am noting the need for censors to give a better account of themselves. Too often explanations are either simply not given or totally inadequate.

St. John-Stevan wrote that: 'The books we battle about are nearly always rather a bore.'(57) This is also the case in pop. Much of the material that is deemed offensive is either dull or uninteresting as music. The point in defending it is that it is such music that often makes life worth living for significant numbers of people and that artists have the right to offend. Pop's "offence" can bring to light problems that might otherwise not gain attention. To call an album "The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks" is not only offensive, but also a call for attention and action. Whatever else NWA do, they keep the issue of black ghettos in America alive.

That pop has the potential to offend is undoubted. That censors are increasing their efforts is also true, as the Ice T case in America and NWA case in Britain show. Street may be premature in declaring that all pop censorship is ineffective(58) as not being able to buy "Cop Killer" is of some effect. The impact of American censorship on British fans may be part of the "global village". The increasing role of the EC in British law also gives scope for further action. But to mention all this is, in some respects, to jump the gun and to move from offence to action. So let us move the action to the point of production and examine censorial problems there.

Notes

- (1) For debates on censorship see Cline, 1974 and Feinberg, 1985. See also Medved, 1992 for an updating of causal arguments.
- (2) See note 1 of Introduction, p8 above, Martin and Segrave, 1988 and Wells, various articles.
- (3) See New Statesman, 1991, p29.
- (4) See Chester and Dickey, 1988 and Itzin, 1992. For radical feminist approaches see Brownmiller, 1976, Dworkin, 1981 and Griffin, 1981. For anti-radical, feminist, approaches see Segal, 1991 and Rich, 1983.
- (5) Orwell's 1984 illustrates the links between the control of language and the control of thought.
- (6) See Cline, 1974, p8.
- (7) For a debate on the merits of free speech see Schaeur, 1992, esp pp5, 15 and 16. See his bibliography for much more.
- (8) Mill, 1974, p119.
- (9) See Feinberg, 1985, p250.
- (10) See p368 below for more on Blumenthal.
- (11) Blumenthal in Radio One interview 5/6/91.
- (12) See pp212-221 below for political bans on One and pp133, 136, 152-6, 306 and 586/7 below for Crass' problems.
- (13) O'Higgins, 1972, p87.
- (14) For example in Sunday Times 14/3/93 Kenneth Baker claimed: 'The threshold of acceptable violence in film and on video is being lowered all the time.' This ignores the fact that, for example, "Straw Dogs", with its protracted rape scene, is now rarely shown

and that the Guardian of 8/3/93 reported a decline in violence on television in comparison with 15 years before.

(15) BSC, 1991, p13.

(16) See pp28-34 above, Calder, 1984 and S.Harding, 1988.

(17) Street, 1986, p91.

(18) See NME 20/6/87.

(19) See Denselow, 1989, p13.

(20) See Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship, 1979, p11.

(21) See pp237/8 and 109/110 below.

(22) See Wistrich, 1978, p21.

(23) Sutherland, 1982, p145.

(24) See p233 below. - *use Negus 492*

(25) See pp432-434 below for more on the press and raves.

(26) See Frith, 1983 for more on "gatekeepers", especially p92. Negus, 1992, argues that those in the industry should be seen as mediators rather than gatekeepers. See p45.

(27) See Laing, 1985, p35.

(28) See Q September 1992.

(29) Attali, 1977, p70.

(30) See Frith, 1983, pp53, 54 and 81 for the tension between being an "artist" and being a "Star". See Denisoff and Peterson, 1972, p236 for the quest for profit. See Street, 1986, pp107/8 and Garofolo, 1987, p81 for more on the market as censor. For the internal workings of the industry see Negus, 1992.

Justifying My Hate

(1) For attempts to blame rock for deaths see S.Jones, 1991

Cosgrove, 1986, Wells, 1991a, and Walser, 1993 pp 145-151.

(2) Negus, 1992, p79.

(3) Simpson, 1982, p246. Grossberg, 1987, pp177/178, pointed out that: 'millions of us have listened to Ozzy Osbourne's "Suicide Solution", Van Halen's "Jump" and Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper" without following the rather demented example of a small number of already suicidal fans.'

(4) Guardian 9/3/93. The Independent's editorial of 8/3/93 claimed that causal links between television and actual violence were 'difficult to prove, but impossible to dismiss.'

(5) Wistrich, 1978, p88.

(6) See Guardian 20/3/93.

(7) Whitehouse quoted by Merck, 1988, p192.

(8) Davies, 1975, p24.

(9) Laurie, 1965, p102.

(10) ibid p101.

(11) See MM 18/3/67.

(12) Robinson, 1972, 171.

(13) For example, Mickey Rourke said: 'The blood of Los Angeles falls on those who instigated this revolt - the malicious prophets of black cinema and rap music..'. NME 16/5/92. Medved, 1992, p341 also saw Ice Cube as a causal factor in the riots.

(14) Medved, 1993d, p23

(15) See Wistrich, 1978, p144.

(16) See Hawkins and Zimring, 1988, esp pp75 and 276.

(17) See Whitehouse, 1985, p182.

(18) See B.Brown, 1984, for the way research into video "nasties" was manipulated for political profit.

(19) For Bloom as a causalist see Grossberg, 1992, p5. For the machinations of Medved and Rupert Murdoch's media empire see Lennon, 1993, M.Walker, 1993 and Martin, 1993.

(20) See Medved, 1992 and 1993a-d and Sunday Times 7/3/93.

(21) See Wyman, 1991, p597 and Lady Morrison, 1978.

(22) See Godbolt, 1984 p3.

(23) Williams Committee, 1979, p97 and Laing, 1985, p81.

(24) See Smart, 1982.

(25) See Feinberg, 1985, p277.

(26) Redmond, 1991, p47.

(27) See, for example, Whitehouse, 1982, p61.

(28) Feinberg, 1985, p102.

Fighting The Right To Party

(1) Johnson, 1964, p326.

(2) For an elitist attitude see Rumbold, 1992. Sutherland, 1982, p23ff notes elitism in the Chatterley case. Benedictus, 1979, p996 also notes elitism in book censorship.

(3) See pp284/285 below.

(4) Butt, 1976.

(5) Cosgrove, 1988b.

(6) Rimmer, 1985, p108.

(7) ibid p144.

(8) See Economist 21/6/86. See also Vox March 1992 pp30-31 for hyped bands who failed. Harker, 1980, pp9/10 notes that far from

being passive it is the audience which gives music meaning. See also Melly, 1989 p42 and Morrison, 1992.

(9) See Negus, 1992, p59 for the myth of the "kids" and the "street".

(10) See Newburn, 1992, p78 for the importance of children to moralist campaigners.

(11) See Negus, 1992, p68 for the declining importance of the younger audience. The Observer of 14/3/93 noted that in pop 'the average punter is growing older' and 'it is the 24 to 35 year old whom the music companies must now satisfy.' Morrison, 1992, confirmed this, see summary. See Pattison, 1987, p96 for similar findings in America in 1983.

(12) Tracey and Morrison, 1979 p42. See Durham, 1991, p95 for the importance of children to Whitehouse.

(13) NME 25/4/87. Brunivels also claimed the Beasties 'undermine family values' NME 23/5/87.

(14) For example, see Larson, 1998 p86 and the Kings Church video.

(15) See NME 15/10/91 where a Gallup poll found only 7% of teenagers put pop as the most important thing in their life. A 1978 poll found that two thirds of youth between 15 and 21 listed their parents as their greatest influence, only 6% listed pop stars as the biggest influence, see Roberts, 1983, p38.

(16) See Barker, 1984b for how rational debate is impossible once children enter in. See also A.Walker, 1984 p5.

(17) Garofolo, 1987, p88. See also BSC, 1991, p68 for children as an excuse for censorship.

- (18) MM 29/3/58.
- (19) Gillett, 1983, p19.
- (20) Johnson, 1964, p327.
- (21) MM 11/3/72.
- (22) Gipps, 1975a.
- (23) Gipps, 1975b. Flashman, 1992, p14 shows a religious censor being motivated by a cultural dislike of rock.
- (24) See Marsh, 1977, p113 and Usher, 1976.
- (25) Sun 4/12/76.
- (26) Sun 22/12/76.
- (27) See Jewell, 1980, p109. For more on the aesthetics of rock see part two of Heylin, 1992 and Grossberg, 1987, p181.
- (28) Denisoff and Peterson, 1972, p3.
- (29) See Marot, 1991a.
- (30) See p24 above, Wicke, 1990, pp55-58, Pearson, 1983, p20 and Chambers, 1986, p23 and 38-40.
- (31) See pp549/550 below for the Daily Mail on rock and roll.
- (32) See MM 26/5/73 and p593 below.
- (33) See NME 23/5/87 and pp588/589 below..
- (34) For example see anti Mick Jagger remarks from America's National Star in NME 12/7/75 p9.
- (35) Newburn, 1992, p36 and Whitehouse, 1985, p158.
- (36) Whitehouse, 1977, p150.
- (37) See Pearson, 1983, pp x and 75.
- (38) See pp491-547 below for religiously-motivated censors.
- (39) See p172 for prosecutions of t-shirts.

- (40) For example see Whitehouse, 1977, p38.
- (41) For example see Bogle, 1986, p11.
- (42) Tracey and Morrison, 1978, pp 188 and 198.
- (43) See pp313/314 below for details of Rapeman.
- (44) See Stallings, 1984, p157.
- (45) For example see Whitehouse, 1971, p21 and Pearson, 1983, pp9/10.
- (46) For an early example of self-censorship, in the Music Halls, see Russell, 1987, p97.
- (47) For example, see Wells, 1990a and 1991c
- (48) Wells, 1990a, p19.
- (49) Jenkins, 1991, p4.

Why Pick on Pop?

- (1) Attali, 1985, p33. Christian fundamentalist Noebel also noted Plato's remarks, see M.Sullivan, 1987, p315 and Jimmy Swaggart quote in NME 27/10/92 p12.
- (2) L.Hart, 1981, p48. For more on this see Allen, 1972.
- (3) Blom, 1943, p17.
- (4) ibid p61.
- (5) ibid p97.
- (6) McClary, 1985, p155.
- (7) Attali, 1977, p56.
- (8) For Nazi censorship of music see Pappenheim, 1993. For Soviet see Coles, 1992. Radio One, 1993c, noted that **all** music was banned in Khomeini's Iran.
- (9) See Russell, 1987, p31.

- (10) For attacks on Music Hall see Chambers, 1986, p130.
- (11) Godbolt, 1984, p10. See also ibid pp3, 8, 11 and 93/94.
- (12) See Leonard, 1964, p25.
- (13) See Kelley, 1986, p80.
- (14) See Becker, 1963
- (15) Frith, 1983, p203.
- (16) See Rogers, 1983, pp16/17.
- (17) Johnson, 1964.
- (18) Redhead, 1990, p8.
- (19) See Medved, 1993d.
- (20) See Negus, 1992, p70 for pop as more than just music.
- (21) Dunaway, 1987, p50.
- (22) Medved, 1993d.
- (23) See Russell, 1987, p182.
- (24) Daily Telegraph 23/1/92.
- (25) See Frith, 1983, p56.
- (26) See Hillman, 1968.
- (27) See F.Hoffman, 1987, pp 120-122, 136/137, 197-205 where most pop censorship cases concern lyrics and, to a lesser extent, backmasking.
- (28) For example see Leonard, 1964, p2 for the **sound** of jazz offending.
- (29) See Lull, 1982, p122.
- (30) ibid. Pattison, 1987, notes that outrage at least shows moralists are listening to lyrics, whilst Street, 1986, p159 notes that it is pop's **sound** as well as its lyrics which give it its

meaning.

(31) For concentration on lyrics see publications by Whitehouse and the PMRC.

(32) See, for example, pp151 and 155/6 below for courts mis-interpretating songs.

(33) Chambers, 1985, p211, also notes how the same song can have different meanings in different circumstances.

(34) Wicke, 1990, p ix notes that meaning is also tied up with use, Street, 1986, p5 also notes that gestures and images also contribute to pop's meaning.

(35) For Medved misunderstanding films see Lennon, 1993 and Martin, 1993. For the ignorance of pop's censors see Wells, 1990a.

(36) See Melly, 1989, p34.

(37) Burchill, 1985.

(38) See Street, 1986, p55.

(39) For various claims of rock as a tool of satan see pp514-517 below. See also Wells, 1989a, p12 for various bizarre attempts to define rock.

(40) Frith, 1983, p10.

(41) See ibid pp 15 and 38.

(42) Wicke, 1990, p xii.

(43) Chambers, 1986, p188.

(44) Chambers, 1985, notes the early British discussions of rock as **American** mass culture and Frith, 1983, notes that pop is **essentially** a mass medium.

(45) McQuail, 1977, p83.

- (46) ibid p85.
- (47) Frith, 1983, p268.
- (48) Medved, 1993d.
- (49) Barker, 1984a p134.
- (50) ibid p186,
- (51) See reference 11, p72, above for the age of the audience.
- (52) McQuail, 1977. p77.
- (53) See Cutler, 1985, p9 for pop as something to be consumed.
- (54) See Hewison, 1986, p62.
- (55) See pp109-110 below.
- (56) See Wicke, 1990, pp13/14 and 22.
- (57) Street, 1986, p115.

PART TWO: INDUSTRY AND LAW

CHAPTER FOUR

"NOT HERE YOU DON'T" - CENSORSHIP BY RECORD COMPANIES

One of the least reported, but probably most frequent, areas of censorship occurs at the point of production. This is censorship which occurs when record companies decide a particular track or video is "unsuitable" for the market because of its "controversial" nature. Details of such decisions are hard to come by, but enough leak out to give evidence that a lot of such "offensive" material never reaches the public. In 1967 The Game's "The Addicted Man" was withdrawn by EMI following Juke Box Jury's condemnation of its theme of drugs(1). EMI also made Smoke change their lyrics to their 1967 hit "My Friend Jack Eats Sugar Lumps" several times before they would release it(2). In 1992 Warner Bros made REM change the title of a track from "Fuck Me Kitten" to "Star Me Kitten"(3) and also instituted a worldwide ban on Ice T's "Cop Killer" track, after the LA riots(4). A wide range of censorial actions by labels spans this thesis. Rap albums may now be full of swearing, but they carry warnings and REM fans must, apparently, be spared the word "fuck".

Here I shall examine a number of censorial actions over the years. For reasons of economy I shall simplify matters into accounts of artists against companies, of artistic expression versus commercial expediency. The truth is more complex than this, involving disputes **within** both bands and labels, as well as **between** them, but my main aim here is to illustrate label censorship rather

than internal industry machination(5).

However, some detail of the relationship between artist and label is first necessary. There are various permutations of this, depending on such factors as the status of the act, size of the company, likely audience, sales of previous records and so on(6). Whilst the relationship is not **simply** one in which artists have their surplus value expropriated in order to make their employers profit, it **is** one where the artist's product is owned by the label(7). By 1992 the world's record industry was dominated by six major companies - EMI Music, MCA, Polygram, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music International and the BMG Music Group. These companies are themselves owned by larger multinational corporations(8). The diversity of many of these companies leaves them open to consumer boycotts of other products should one of their pop products offend.

It is one of the themes of this thesis that the market is in a sense inherently censorious and record companies are run according to market criteria. Generally, only that which is likely to cover its costs is released. It has been variously estimated that between 5%(9) to 12½%(10) of artists signed will recover their costs and go on to make their label money. This has been held to have bred an in-built conservatism. Repeating successful formulas, at least until the public becomes satiated, may often be tried, especially in time of recession(11), rather than risking something new - although it is important to note that the industry can never be sure **what** will sell. The industry ultimately conforms to the logic

of capitalism(12). This is not overt censorship, but the market inevitably means that artistic expression is compromised by the need to make that expression sell. Labels dropping artists, as happened to such acts as Julian Cope (Island), Public Image Limited (Virgin) and Pop Will Eat Itself (RCA) in 1992(13), means the public is deprived of the chance to hear them in recorded form - which will be the **only** form available to many. The fact that new artists may take their place is of little comfort to either the sacked artist, or their fans. It is also an example of how decisions made in one country can effect fans in another.

When a label signs an artist it generally acquires the right to do what it wants with their work. It **owns** it and can thus decide whether or not to market it. Artists can negotiate, but the ultimate decision lies with the label. In this sense labels are the **only** ones, apart from artists themselves, with the capacity to **pre-** censor recorded pop, as other censorship cases tend to involve attempts to censor a product which is already on the market. Whilst artist power fluctuates the industry is, as Frith notes, generally in control(14). Profit, not artistic expression, motivates the industry. Wicke notes that for the industry music is just a means of selling records(15) and Miles Copeland admitted: 'We're not in the music business... We're in the commodities business.'(16)

But artists can resent their commodification. In 1992 George Michael stopped producing any new material in a row with his Sony label and initiated legal moves to get out of his contract(17). The Stone Roses success in doing this with Silvertone in 1991(18) was

possibly an inspiration for the action. Former Wham! manager Simon Napier-Bell described Michael's situation: 'Imagine a film star not only having to pay the cost of the film he appears in, but not even being allowed to choose the script.'(19) The case came to court in October 1993 and was unresolved at the time of writing. It may well have major implications. Dire Straits' manager Ed Bicknell says a victory for Michael 'could mean that for the first time the artists will have the record companies in a stranglehold... but this could prove disastrous for new bands who already find it hard to get a deal. Companies won't be prepared to take a risk on new talent.'(20) Changes in the relationship between artists and labels could have the censorial implication of giving the superstars greater control, whilst making it harder for the nobodies to get their voice heard. Thus does the market censor.

The fact that companies own the product the artists produce can have even more implications should the artists leave (or be sacked) at the end of their contract and move on to a new label. The previous label can then release old material and stifle the impact of releases by the new label. Numerous examples of this have occurred. In 1967 MM was lamenting the "Curse of the Revived 45" - when an artist's former label has a hit by re-releasing tracks without the artist's permission(21). In late 1992 All About Eve were dropped by their label MCA after poor sales of their "Ultraviolet" album, which were partly blamed on their former label, Phonogram, releasing a "Greatest Hits" package around the same time(22). Lisa Stansfield took out an injunction against

Sovereign Music to prevent them releasing earlier "immature" material(23). Similar cases occurred when Decca placed an injunction on a proposed Jimi Hendrix/Curtis Knight early album in 1968(24), the same label promoted old Taste albums contrary to the wishes of Rory Gallagher in 1971(25) and EMI released a Tears For Fears compilation in 1991, contrary to their wishes, after they had left the label(26).

* These cases could be multiplied many times. The point is that they illustrate that not only is control of music **not** with the consumers, it is also seldom with the producers. It is with, in Frith's term, "gatekeepers". The record company is the most important "gatekeeper" (and therefore potential censor) of all, as it decides what will reach the market. One reason for the proliferation of bootlegs is that companies will market only a limited amount of material, whereas fans often want everything. The (rare) fan who wants all the material possible by an artist is effectively being censored by the market, as companies cannot make profits out of releasing that amount of material. Hence the market for bootlegs(27).

Music press interviews often feature questions about the relationship between artist and label. Bicknell says Dire Straits' label, Polygram, 'makes you feel like you could be selling staples or picture frames.' (28) Liam of Flowered Up explained their relationship with their label in 1991: 'It's not like we've been having big arguments with London... but they talk units and you talk passion... Virtually every song we've done we've had to chop

up to get on the radio... I fucking hate it, you're dissecting your songs, but if it's got to be done, you gotta do it.' (29)

The latter part of this quote reflects a problem that has dogged musicians for years - the compromises between playing what they want and the need to have commercial success in order to live. Becker noted this form of self-censorship in his Outsiders study in 1948(30) and Laurie confirmed it in 1965, when he found that many bands had to sacrifice their art for money(31). Negus suggests that it is not so much art versus commerce, but a struggle to control the fate of the art(32), but no one is more aware of the rules than the pop musicians themselves. As Joe Elliott of Def Leppard put it: 'We wanted to be the biggest band in the world and you don't do that by sounding like Napalm Death.'(33) Obviously no artist wants **not** to sell, the point is that record companies may be able to exploit artists' vulnerability in order to make them put out a product which is (self) "censored" inasmuch as it is not that which the artist would rather issue. Shane MacGowan spoke of his songs not being recorded by The Pogues because their record label wanted to "clean up" the band's boozy image(34). This can happen to even the most radical of artists, as Street notes that SWP members The Redskins were told which producer to use by their label, London(35).

The signing policy of major labels is also a contentious issue. Labels look to artists who are likely to have an international appeal and Negus suggests that the culture of those doing the signing, mainly young university-educated men from a rock

tradition, militates against some other forms of music(36). Likely appeal to radio formats is also crucial, especially to American signings(37). Looks can be as important as music - as the remarks of an American label that female duo The Banderas were 'too fat and too ugly for America'(38) show. Street suggests that not signing bands is censorship(39) and as far as freedom of expression is concerned it is, although it would be hard to envisage a situation where **all** bands got signed.

The examples thus far add up to a form of subliminal censorship, based on industry control and market expectations, but there have been numerous occasions when product has either never been released or, once released, has been withdrawn for overtly censorial reasons. This too has a long history, which I shall now examine.

Stopping The Rot

Leonard notes that the industry had tried to censor itself in America during the 1920s(1) and in the early 1950s The Weavers were thrown off Decca Records when singer Pete Seeger had to appear before McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee. In the early 1960s Decca refused to release Ray Peterson's American hit "Tell Laura I Love Her", the story of the dying words of a man killed in a stock-car racing crash, on the grounds that it was 'too tasteless and vulgar'. They scrapped an estimated 20,000 copies of the record which had already been printed. EMI-Columbia

subsequently released a Ricky Valence version of the song, which topped the charts(2). Perhaps more understandably, a Phil Spector song written for The Crystals' "He Hit Me (And It Felt Like A Kiss)", was withdrawn in 1962(3).

The capacity for censorship in one country to have effects on another also has a long history and it became apparent at this time, as did the fact that even artists of the highest stature can be censored. Bob Dylan had to keep "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues" off his second album(4) and Gillett claims that in fact two songs were rejected by the label(5). By the time I'm primarily concerned with various other American artists were also suffering from censorship, which had implications for UK fans. Attali notes that in the business in the 1960s: 'Explicit censorship played a very prominent role'(6) - which undermines the decade's reputation as an era of permissiveness.

That record companies are as prone to the ebb and flow of the censorial climate as any other institution, and that this climate is often tied to contemporary events, was illustrated by a 1967 case mentioned above. I noted earlier the moral panic surrounding recreational drug usage in 1967(7) and it was into this climate that The Games' "The Addicted Man" came. After its drugs theme was criticised on Juke Box Jury, EMI made the decision to withdraw it. A spokesman explained that:

'We believe in all sincerity that this is an anti-drug record and no one is sorrier than us that it has had such repercussions. The very last thing we want to do is cause offence,

however, and so... we will do everything we can to restrict sales.'(8)

The record's withdrawal despite it being an anti-drugs song indicates the censorial climate within which labels sometimes have to work. It appears that at that time **any** reference to drugs might have been enough to cause "offence" and so EMI dropped the song. The Game, as far as I can tell, were never heard of again.

Ireland was, as ever, a contentious issue at this time and Pye took steps to make sure that a record by The Tinkers called "The Reluctant Patriot", which made references to Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon joining the IRA, was only available in the Irish Republic(9).

Then, as now, even the most supposedly radical could suffer and succumb. The MC5's refrain of "Kick Out The Jams Motherfuckers" became "Kick Out The Jams Brothers and Sisters" for the single version of the song(10). Previously the band had got into trouble with their label, Elektra, for using its name in conjunction with an advertisement saying "Fuck Hudsons" after the store of that name refused to carry their debut album because of the "motherfucker" refrain(11). Peterson also notes that RCA was censoring virtually all of Jefferson Airplane's records - primarily because of swearing(12).

Drugs continued to cause some paranoia and as psychedelic rock rose EMI felt the need to announce that: 'The Pink Floyd does not know what people mean by psychedelic pop and are not trying to cause hallucinatory effects on their audience.'(13) MGM's

president, Mike Curb, threatened to sack any band using drug references in their lyrics and claimed to have done so to 18 unnamed bands. But it appears that this was more of a publicity stunt than a policy as the label didn't drop known drug-user Eric Burdon whose albums on MGM included "Sky Pilot" and "Sandoz" - the name of a Swiss LSD manufacturer(14). Burdon's manager, Steve Gold, described Curb's action as 'McCarthyism at its best.'(15) Martin and Segrave also say that the label 'censored the lyrics on Mothers of Invention songs without telling them.'(16) Again censorship in one country had repercussions in another as American censorship meant that these records either did not appear, or were altered, in Britain too. Decisions made thousands of miles away were determining the moral welfare of British pop fans.

By 1969 at least one record company adopted a more liberal approach to artistic expression. The first "fuck" on a British record came that year, some four years after its television debut(17). It appeared in the title track of Al Stewart's "Love Chronicles" album and it earned the MM headline 'The Song Al Hopes Everyone Will Understand.' CBS' Derek Everett commented that: 'this word is very much in the context with the lyrics. If it was used in a sensationalist way I would have said no.'(18) So the word became acceptable in some circles if its use was not gratuitous. Slowly, it appeared, labels were pulling the censorial curtains apart.

But things are never that simple. As noted earlier, censorship is not a process of continually rolling back the boundaries, but one of their constant re-negotiation. The same year Serge

Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin's "Je T'Aime" was a big hit, despite being blacked by the BBC(19). But it was dropped by Phillips when number 3 in the charts. The company explained that:

'Recordings on the Phillips label are only released if they measure up to our high standards of artistic and technical quality.

This record is no exception. However certain sections of the press and general public have seen fit to make a controversy over the contents of this recording. And as Phillips does not intend to allow any of their products to be the subject of controversial matters the record is being withdrawn from our catalogue.' (20)

It is interesting that the press(21) were singled out as a reason for this particular form of censorship as it illustrates the constant surveillance the industry is under. The record was subsequently re-issued by the Major Minor label and carried on selling well, rising to number 2(22).

The debut album by John Lennon's Plastic Ono Band also caused problems in 1970. The track "Working Class Hero" included a few "fuckings" which caused EMI, the distributors, some concerns, but it was duly released. However the lyrics on the inner sleeve omitted the offending word(23).

EMI took a more censorial stance the following year by refusing to distribute Eric Burdon's "The Black Man's Burdon" album because one track, "PC3", contained a reference to the Queen being caught with her knickers down. EMI believed that such an idea 'could clearly sound offensive to many people.' Eventually the album was issued in two formats - one with the offending track,

which independent distributors distributed and one without, which EMI happily distributed(24).

EMI turned censor again weeks later when it refused to release Lennon's "Power To The People" because the B-side, Yoko Ono's "Open Your Box", was considered 'distasteful' by Philip Brodie, the Managing Director of EMI Records.

A spokesman for Lennon's label, Apple, explained that: 'The original lyric said: "Open your trousers, open your skirts, open your legs and open your thighs.

The last words in each case have now been changed - with the consent of John and Yoko - to "houses," "church," "lakes" and "eyes".'(25)

This particularly futile case of censorship could be seen as EMI reminding Lennon that he couldn't get away with anything he liked.

The same month also saw Pye delete the words "And Your Ass Will Follow" from its advertising campaign for Funkadelic's "Free Your Mind And Your Ass Will Follow" album. Pye International repertoire manager, Dave McAleer, said that: 'Pye wanted to keep an image of good, clean family fun. So in all our advertising there will be no mention of "Your Ass Will Follow".' (26) A "family image" was apparently incompatible with the word "ass".

The same year also saw allegations that Polydor were interfering with Slade's lyrical content. MM reported that:

'...for the third time, the group had to make the trip to Olympia studios in Barnes, London, to alter the words on a recorded

song... Polydor... had objected to the "suggestive" lyrics of on a number called "Do You Want Me". Each time they made an alteration, Polydor said no - until finally they have an acceptable version had been produced.'

The band's singer, Noddy Holder, commented that: 'John Lennon got away with much worse on his solo album... but we're not John Lemmon.' (27)

This comment links an artists' stature with the amount of censorship they are likely to encounter. The early stages of a career may be the time when artists are more likely to listen to "advice" from their label about what to record and release. Certainly George Michael can only take the risk of an expensive court case because of his commercial stature(28). Once established, with a loyal market, the artist may be in a stronger position to say what gets released and the label, knowing a certain amount of sales may be assumed, may be willing to court controversy if profits are more or less guaranteed. Thus the market again enters into the realm of "artistic expression". Slade's treatment hints at thousands of other such censorial decisions which never reach the public. However it should be noted that REM were censored by having to change the name of "Fuck Me Kitten" - presumably so as not to offend their newly-found mass audience, so it is by no means the case that stardom always brings more artistic freedom.

Inevitably disputes between artist and label continued, and Warner Bros sued Alice Cooper for not making enough "commercially acceptable" material during their contract with the label(29) and a

similar move by Geffen against Neil Young also occurred around this time, when he was sued for making "unrepresentative music"(30). Later he recorded the "Everybody's Rockin'" album after his label had disliked a country and western one he produced. These are not examples of overt censorship - but they do have implications for artistic expression and indicate the power the labels have to determine what the public gets to hear. They might even control the names of tracks as when The Rolling Stone's "Starfucker" appeared on their 1973 album "Goats Head Soup" as "Star Star".

By the time of punk censorship by labels was nothing new - but sacking a band because of public misbehaviour added a new dimension to the equation. The Sex Pistols were sacked by EMI after their television swearing and an alleged incident featuring them spitting and vomiting at Heathrow - a story the band always denied.

When they signed to EMI, on 8 October 1976, its A&R director, Nick Mobbs, enthused that: 'They are a band who are shocking up the music business. They've got to happen. I don't think there'll be any problems with their lyrics because I've got more than a little sympathy with what they are doing.' (31)

But from the Grundy affair(32) onwards pressure was applied to EMI as the press continually speculated about their future(33). Initially it appeared that the label would stand by their signing. At EMI's annual general meeting on 7 December 1976 chairman Sir John Read said that:

'During recent years in particular, the question of acceptable content of records has become increasingly difficult to

resolve ... Throughout its history as a recording company, **EMI has always sought to behave within contemporary limits of good taste** taking into account not only the traditional rigid conventions of one section of Society, but also the increasingly liberal attitude of other (perhaps larger) sections of Society (sic) at any given time...

It is against this present-day social background that EMI has to make value judgements about the content of records in particular. EMI has on a number of occasions taken steps to ban individual records, and similarly to ban record sleeves or posters or other promotional material which it believed to be offensive.'

After noting the 'disgraceful interview' and the 'vast amount of newspaper coverage' the group had attracted, again showing the censorial power of the press, Read went on to say that EMI was considering whether to release any more Pistols records, would try to get them to behave in public and that:

'EMI will review its general guidelines regarding the content of pop records... Our view within EMI is that we should seek to discourage records which are likely to give offence to the majority of people. In this context, public attitudes have to be taken into account.

EMI should not set itself up as a public censor, but it does seek to encourage restraint... (34)

I have quoted this at length because it raises a number of interesting points. Firstly it shows a company acting not by some eternal moral code or abstract theory of taste, but by what they

think the public will accept at a particular time - again illuminating the link between censorship and contemporary events. Read also admits EMI's past censorial role and hints at a future. It won't set itself up as public censor, but... well, we shall see.

By this time EMI had released the band's first single, "Anarchy In The UK", which was selling around 1,500 copies a day(35). The lyrics were confrontational, but hardly likely to 'give offence to the majority of people'. However, it was soon to be censored. It sold around 50,000 copies - which undermines Street's argument that the business 'censors only when the market is offended'(36). Pressure was kept up on by the press and certain MPs, as well as radio bans on it(37). The alleged "puking" incident at Heathrow on 4 January(38) was apparently the straw that broke EMI's back. A moral panic centring on a group of vulnerable teenagers had built up and, in retrospect, EMI's decision to exercise its ultimate censorial power by sacking the band was inevitable from Grundy onwards.

The end came on 6 January 1977 when the label issued a statement saying, in part, that: 'EMI and the Sex Pistols group have mutually agreed to terminate their recording contract.

EMI feels it is unable to promote the group's records **internationally** in view of the adverse publicity which has been generated over the last two months, although recent press reports of the behaviour of the Sex Pistols appear to have been exaggerated.'(39) The single was also withdrawn.

'Blown out of all proportion' might have been a better

finishing line. Hill continually cited press pressure as the reason for the termination(40), which came officially on 22 January. The aesthetic critique that supplemented the press campaign centred on allegations that the band didn't even play on their single(41).

Unlike Butt(42) and Leslie Hill, EMI's MD(43), I class this as a case of censorship and a very important one. At this time the band was the most exciting in the country and it was being denied the chance to put out records. Savage notes that it was always likely that they would get another deal(44), but this is irrelevant. "Anarchy" was censored just as it started to make its impact. Pop is often to do with the moment and "Anarchy" was effectively denied its moment. Censorship is seldom any starker.

I said earlier that I have simplified matters into artist against label and here it seems that the A&R department at EMI wanted the band to carry on(45), but those higher up decided they had to go. EMI's shareholders at this time included such luminaries as Geoffrey Howe, Lord Delfont and Lord Shawcross(46), thus taking pop censorship into the heart of the British establishment.

EMI's corporate and multinational structure made it vulnerable and so more likely to censor. The appearance of the Sex Pistols on the front of the LA Times had put in jeopardy an EMI brain scanner project(47) and their earlier quote referred to the problems of marketing the band abroad. Others claimed EMI dropped the band because it owned half of the shares in Thames, the company which broadcast the Grundy show(48). This illustrates the censorial pressures which can accompany corporate multinational

diversification.

The Pistols moved on to A&M, signing, in an attempted publicity glare, outside Buckingham Palace on 10 March 1977. The "proper" contracts had been signed the previous day. In the early hours of 12 March members of the band were involved in a scuffle with OGWT presenter Bob Harris in London's Speakeasy Club. The man who had signed the band, A&M's English director Derek Green, was appalled that the band were now getting involved in violence - although they already had a reputation for this at gigs. Despite the fact that 25,000 copies of "God Save The Queen" had already been made he phoned the label's American half-owner Jerry Moss. Within an hour the other owner Herb Alpert had called back and the decision was made to sack them(49).

The company issued a statement which read: 'A&M Records wishes to announce that its recording agreement with the Sex Pistols has been terminated with immediate effect. The company will therefore not be releasing any product from the group and has no further association with them.'(50) A&M denied, as EMI had done, that they were acting as censors(51).

Pressed copies of "God Save The Queen" were subject to the censorial martyrdom of being melted down and today the few remaining copies are amongst the most prized of rock rarities. Johnny Rotten claimed: 'They've given us up through fear and business pressure. They've kicked us in the teeth. A record company is there to market records - not dictate terms.'(52) His tone echoes that of punks' supposed enemy, Mick Jagger, years previously

in a dispute with Decca over the cover of "Beggars Banquet"(53). Malcolm McLaren tried to blame the sacking on objections from other A&M artists such as Rick Wakeman, Peter Frampton and Karen Carpenter - but this appears now to have been a "scam"(54). Green later said the sacking 'was nothing to do with pressure from any other quarter. I just didn't want to be involved in the things they were involved in outside their music.'(55) Alpert cited the band's rudeness as the reason for their sacking (56).

So the band were effectively once again without the power to issue records. They moved on to Virgin, signing on 13 May. There they were finally able to release "God Save The Queen" - but not until a strike threat at the CBS plant at Aylesbury, which pressed records for Virgin, had been overcome(57). It was subsequently released - to suffer further censorship - on 27 May. Despite various hassles, some of which are detailed elsewhere in this thesis, Virgin was willing and able to release a series of Sex Pistols records from then on.

But the Sex Pistols were far from being the only punk band to suffer censorship at the hands of record companies. I refer in the chapter on MPs to The Ramones' problems with the track "Now I Want To Sniff Some Glue" from their eponymous first album(58), and they also encountered problems with their second album, "The Ramones Leave Home". American copies of this featured the track "Carbona Not Glue" (Carbona is the brand name of a typing fluid), but the band's British distributors, Phonogram, forced their label, Sire, to drop the track from British copies. The connection between

censorial action and contemporary events in this case was a moral panic around glue sniffing with Phonogram quoting a Home Office edict that: 'Sniffing practices are harmful'(59).

But evidence shows that this was not a clear-cut case. Tony Morris, managing director of Phonogram in England, wrote to Sire president Seymour Stein saying:

'I'm sorry, but I have to say we cannot promote product which extols the virtues of "dope". As you know, we had correspondence with the Home Office about "Glue sniffing". Carbona is apparently available, and more dangerous than glue.

..when we repress we will have to omit the offending track. Please ensure that the Ramones record responsible lyrics if you wish us to release in the future.'(60) Note here the reference to "responsible" lyrics - a term which is crucial to the censorial debate.

Stein replied: 'You're entitled to your feelings about the use of drugs of any sort. But what you're attempting to do is set yourself up as judge and jury. This is censorship, a far greater evil than either Carbona or glue, and something that in good conscience I cannot be a party to.' (61) Nevertheless the album subsequently appeared in Britain without the offending track. Phonogram's censorial attitude won out over Sire's defence of artistic freedom.

Hypocrisy also characterises corporate censorship. In July 1977 advertisements appeared in the music press for an album called "Live At The Roxy". The blurb for this ran: 'Between January and

April this year, The Roxy Club devoted itself entirely to new wave music. There was nowhere else for the groups to play. This is the album of the club.'(62)

Attentive readers would have noticed the words 'distributed by EMI' on initial advertisements, although this was later dropped(63). In fact the album was on Harvest - an EMI subsidiary generally used for its progressive rock acts. Ironically EMI, who had sacked punk's leading lights, placed an advertisement bemoaning the lack of punk venues. Note also its aversion to the term "punk" and preference for the more acceptable epithet of "new wave"(64). It was also noted that whilst EMI had sacked the Pistols following their television swearing, this album was full of swearing(65).

Laing notes that labels often had a contradictory attitude to punk - they wouldn't promote bands **as** punks, but the Pistols were the only ones to suffer sacking(66). But others also suffered label censorship. The Rough Trade distribution network refused to handle Raped's "Pretty Paedophiles" EP(67), but it was the majors who remained the most censorious. After CBS released the "Remote Control" single without their consent, The Clash released one called "Complete Control". An accompanying statement read:

'It tells of two opposing camps. One sees changes as an opportunity to channel the enthusiasm of a raw and dangerous culture in a direction where energy is made safe and predictable. The other is dealing with change as freedom to be experienced so as to understand one's true capabilities, allowing a creative social situation to emerge.'(68)

This may have been a hype, but it perhaps masks a genuine conflict between label and artist. The Clash were being censored by not being allowed to make and release records for the British market the way they wanted. When the time came to market them in America, the situation got worse. American release of their eponymous debut was held up for some two years as it was felt to be too raw for American ears. When it was finally released it was with track changes. CBS were determined no such problems would beset the next album and hired successful producer Sandy Pearlman to tone down the band's sound. Pearlman said that:

'There is a real revolutionary, anti-authoritarian, subversive consciousness in The Clash's songs. I've been asked to produce their next album to bring their sound more into line with what's acceptable to American ears.'(69) The censorial agenda of a major record company is seldom so boldly stated.

Other censorial actions by labels during punk included CBS' refusal to continue printing an album by porn star Xavier Holland after complaints from a worker(70) and major distributors refusing to handle Wayne County and The Electric Chair's "Fuck Off" single. The independent Lightening then distributed it. Initial copies came in plain brown paper bags(71). CBS also refused to continue distributing Derek and Clive's "Come Again" album for Virgin in October(72).

An example of EMI'S A&R department re-asserting itself came in August 1978 when the label signed the Tom Robinson Band - a controversial decision in the light of Robinson's vocal espousal of

gay rights and various other political agendas(73). There was much speculation as to how EMI, having sacked the Pistols, would handle the band. Virgin had apparently turned the band down because of their political stance(74). The fate of live favourite "Glad To Be Gay" was the centre of most interest. Soon after the band signed NME reported that: 'Already there is a "minor boardroom drama"... because executives are reluctant to release his homosexual anthem "Glad To Be Gay" as a single.'(75) By January 1978 the label announced that: 'We're treating it like any other release.'(76) This was not exactly the case. Rather than being a single in its own right, the song appeared as one of four on the band's "Rising Free" EP(77). It later surfaced as the "B" side to one of the other tracks on the EP, "Don't Take No For An Answer", as a single intended mainly for use on juke boxes. By August EMI had released tracks from the band's debut album as singles and question were again asked about the band's amount of artistic control (78).

EMI also continued its role as "public censor" elsewhere, despite Read's words that it shouldn't. In January 1978 they refused to press The Buzzcocks' debut single for United Artists, "What Do I Get", because of the "B" side, "Oh Shit" - a song reflecting the mood of a jilted lover. Buzzcocks manager Richard Boon commented that: 'It's sad that EMI are setting themselves up as censors again. It seems that nothing has changed over the last year.'(79) Later that year EMI refused to manufacture Ivor Biggin and The Red Nosed Burglars' "The Winkers Song", although they were willing to distribute it(80).

Other censorship was undertaken purely for radio. The lyrics to The Jam's "This Is The Modern World" had the words "two fucks" changed to "a damn" when it was released as a single by Polydor in February 1978. Rough Trade issued Stiff Little Fingers' "Suspect Device" with the words "fuck all" changed to "sod all". These censorial excursions can only be explained by a desire to ensure maximum television and radio coverage. Arguably this was in the artists' interest, whether it benefited either fan or society is a more debatable point.

In June 1978 the Sex Pistols returned to controversy. With Rotten gone, they released a single featuring great train-robber Ronnie Biggs. This was originally to be called "Cosh The Driver" (the train-driver involved in the robbery eventually died of his injuries), but after protests by workers at a CBS pressing plant it was changed to "No One Is Innocent"(81).

Record companies also appear sensitive to criticism. In February 1979 Graham Parker planned to issue a song called "Mercury Poisoning" as the "B" side to his "Protection" single for Phonogram. The song was Parker's reaction to what he felt was unsuitable treatment by the promotions department of his American label, Mercury. However Phonogram were affiliated to Mercury and vetoed the release of the single leaving Parker to produce a cover of the Jackson Five's "I Want You Back" to fill the vacant space(82).

By 1980 the women's movement had been criticising the sexist nature of much of the advertising and imagery around rock. The

advert for the Rolling Stones' 1976 album "Black and Blue", which depicted a half-naked woman tied up and bruised, provoked particular anger. In response the Los Angeles-based Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) launched a campaign against sexist imagery in the industry(83). After three years of campaigning Warner Bros announced a new policy: 'Opposing the depiction of physical and sexual violence against women on record sleeves and promotional material.'(84) This was heralded as a breakthrough at the time but it appears that little concrete has resulted. The emergence of the Fuck Off Records label(85) showed that not all labels were keen to jump on the censorial band wagon.

The industry itself was torn over how to deal with the home-taping of music. The words "Home taping is killing music" began to appear on some album covers in a belated and doomed attempt to discourage the habit. Island tried its own way of coping by releasing a series of albums on cassette featuring a new album on one side and a blank tape on the other, under the title "1+1". Other labels were not impressed by this apparent condoning of home-taping and the BPI pressurised various retailers and distributors into blacking the format(86). "1+1" was soon dropped. Later WEA threatened to withdraw advertising from 35 publications if they supported or encouraged piracy or home-taping in any way(87).

1981 was the year of Oi. After the burning down of the Hamborough Tavern in Southall whilst it was being used as an Oi venue(88) the press, particularly the Daily Mail, became interested in pop's latest "cult"(89). One result of this was the withdrawal

of an Oi compilation record, "Strength Through Oi" by Decca's subsidiary, Deram(90). Another, un-specified label, said that: 'In future all bands will be screened; we're not imposing censorship but we don't want to give out contracts and money to fascists.'(91) This attitude generally continues throughout the industry today and so records by confirmed supporters of the far right such as Skrewdriver are only available through networks such as Blood and Honour(92).

Oi again showed the censorial climate being affected by contemporary events - especially the inner city riots of 1981. The year also saw hunger-strikes in Northern Ireland. It was against this climate that The Au Pairs released an album, "Playing With A Different Sex", which featured the track "Armagh", a criticism of the treatment of women in that prison. NME reported that: 'The major record distributors in Northern Ireland have refused to handle the LP because of this track - a case of virtual, undeclared, censorship.'(93)

1981 was also the International Year of The Disabled. In sympathy with this polio-victim Ian Dury decided to release a single called "Spasticus Autisticus". The record was soon effectively vetoed by radio because of its use of the word "spastic". So it was deleted by Polydor - but with the permission of Dury. (It remained available as part of the "Lord Upminster" album). A joint statement from Dury and the label said that: 'it was made impossible to function as a normal record'(94). Thus ended a brave, if misguided, attempt to change preconceptions of

disability in Britain.

In 1983 Dury was again involved in a censorship case. This concerned the track "Noddy Harris" or "Fuck Off Noddy", the lyrics of which Polydor wanted to change. It was eventually dropped, with Dury's agreement, after it was pointed out to him that the tabloids might have a field day connecting lines like "Winnie The Pooh is having a wank" with paedophilia(95). Dury's acceptance of the decision is a rare example of documented self-censorship, but the delay in releasing the album caused by deleting the track meant that it missed the vital Christmas market. Again the point here is not to lament over a lost classic (Dury himself saw it as a "throw-away" number), but to note the atmosphere within which pop works. The British press has its ear to the ground for scandal at all times(96) and both artists and labels might drop contentious material for a quiet life rather than risk "shock horror" headlines. A similar attitude lay behind the decision by WEA not to release a Jesus and Mary Chain track called "Jesus Suck" in 1985(97).

By the early 1980s video was an important marketing device and inevitably brought more disputes between artists and labels over what was and was not marketable. Marc Almond is a prime example here. In 1982 he had problems with the violence in the video of his band, Soft Cell's, "Sex Dwarf" song(98) and in 1983 he and Some Bizarre label boss Stevo attacked the offices of Phonogram in London after the label issued a single by the band called "Numbers" and gave away a previous hit, "Tainted Love", with it

without consulting them. By 1986 Almond was with Virgin and presented them with a video for his "Ruby Red" single. This was generally of a "camp" nature, featuring male buttocks and "romping" devils. However Virgin ordered cuts to it in order to make it suitable for television - again illustrating that disputes are not simply between artist and label, but can involve consideration of third parties.

Virgin's head of promotions, Chris Griffin, said that he liked the video but: 'It's just not the sort of thing Saturday Superstore would show and it would be very hard to convince any TV producer when the subject matter is so risqué... As a video it was very well made, but as a marketing tool it doesn't work.'(99)

This comment makes a few interesting points. Firstly there is the conflict of interests between Almond's desire for artistic freedom or control clashing with Virgin's need for a video which will be useful as a marketing tool acceptable to television companies. The second point is that an under-current of homophobia was being assumed on behalf of television. The objections seemed to be that the buttocks featured all belonged to men and that the video was generally too "camp". Almond commented that: 'If the video contained scenes of near naked women then that would have made it acceptable.'(100) The third point is the way "children's television" is used as censorial tool.

Polydor also made a similar, homophobic, stand in 1983 when they ordered cuts to be made to a Style Council video for their "Long Hot Summer" single as they feared that scenes of band members

Paul Weller and Mick Talbot tickling each other's ears might be "misinterpreted"(101). Boy George's video for his band Jesus Loves You's "Generations of Love" single was also vetoed by Virgin in June 1990. It featured an erect penis and scenes from Soho(102). George had previously complained in 1988 that Virgin had not promoted his "No Clause 28" single - a protest at the government's homophobic local government clause - as enthusiastically as they had done with other singles(103).

The same year as Almond's "Ruby Red" affair, 1986, also saw censorship of a more overtly political nature. This came when the Orlake pressing company refused to complete "Voices", an album by singer-guitarist Maria Tolly, because of its lyrics. Four of the twelve tracks on the album were about the political situation in the north of Ireland and such topics as strip searching of women, plastic bullets and the need for a "troops out" policy. Orlake deemed this "too controversial" and Tolly had to look elsewhere to press the disc(104).

Meanwhile in America the PMRC gained its first victory as the Record Industry Association of America agreed to place warning stickers on albums containing "explicit lyrics"(105) - again demonstrating how censorship in one country can affect fans in another. Soon it was being reported that MCA were carefully vetting all material that was released(106) and NME was talking of a "chill factor"(107) where American companies were unwilling to sign acts that were likely to get "stickered" and thus face consumer boycotts(108). Again the censorial point is that if American labels

don't sign domestic acts British fans are unlikely to hear them.

Back in Britain an attempt was made to test the censorial waters. Manchester's Savoy Books had endured various censorship problems(109) and in revenge it issued a cover of New Order's "Blue Monday" in November 1987 under the name of the Savoy-Hitler Band with vocals by Lord Horror. Its cover had a cartoon of Manchester Chief Constable James Anderton with the back of his head blown off and the words "fucking suckarse nigger Jew" coming out of his mouth. The record was apparently dull and it received a total blacking by distributors. It was, however, something of a scam. A spokesman for Savoy admitted that the reason for the record was 'to test out the climate as regards how far you can go with extremity in this country... it took us six months to get the cover printed'(110).

Overall the record meant little, but it did illustrate that limits - both formal and informal - were definitely in place. Another label occasionally interested in exposing limits is Fierce Records of Swansea. Their first issue, in 1985, was a bootleg of Charles Manson under the title "Love Terror Cult". It resulted in a major distribution chain, Revolver, refusing to work with them. The label then upset the Jesus and Mary Chain by issuing the sounds from a riot that followed an unduly short set at North London Polytechnic. This was the single "Riot" and although the band's management threatened legal action nothing came of this because, as it contained no music, no copyrights were infringed. A later plan to feature John Lennon's killer Mark Chapman singing a version of

his "Imagine" had to be dropped after objections from Yoko Ono(111).

The censorial impact of events in one country upon another was shown again in July 1987 when it was reported EMI were thinking of dropping plans to feature the WASP track 'Fuck Like A Beast' as a "B" side of a single in response to PMRC objections to the track in America(112). The Beastie Boys also had to cut material from their "Licensed To Ill" album, because of fears the album would get stickered(113).

By now rap was becoming of ever growing importance and Public Enemy were at the forefront of this. Their label Def Jam, a CBS affiliate, often toned down their lyrics, especially on singles. In December 1989 the word "nigger" was bleeped-out of their "Welcome To The Terrordome" single (it remained on the album version). In the summer of 1991 the words "kiss my butt" were cut from the "I Can't Do Nothing For You Man" single (again remaining on the album) and in October 1991 part of their video for the "Can't Truss It" was cut by Def Jam. The scenes included hanging, rioting and rape(114). The word "nigger" was also alleged to have got Birdland into trouble as when they were dropped by their American label, RCA, in September 1990 it was rumoured to have been because the company were unhappy at them recording a version of Patti Smith's "Rock 'n' Roll Nigger"(115). The same word was also cut from Arrested Development's "People Everyday" single in Britain in 1992. This is an example of a word **becoming** offensive, an example of the links between censorship and contemporary social mores. In the

early part of the century "nigger minstrels" would have been routinely referred to, now use of the word is likely to cause great offence(116). Another censorship issue which arose at this time is sampling, which I deal with elsewhere(117).

Island Records was involved in ~~the~~ major censorial case of 1991, the attempt to prosecute NWA' album "Efil4zaggin"(118). On this occasion it stood resolutely against censorship - despite the seemingly sexist nature of the album. However a few weeks later Island turned censor itself when it decided that it would only release Ice Cube's "Death Certificate" album if two tracks were omitted. The first, "Black Korea", threatened Korean shopkeepers who allegedly discriminated against black shoppers in LA. The second, "No Vaseline", was an attack on NWA's Jewish former manager Jerry Heller. To their detractors these tracks were racist(119). British fans could only find out by buying import copies of the album. When I put it to Marc Marot, MD of Island UK, that this seemed a little hypocritical, he argued that Island was not operating an open door policy - but deciding where it drew the line. For Marot the racist content of the Ice Cube album was offensive, because it advocated racism, in a way that the NWA did not, as their album was reportage(120). Island offered to let Ice Cube release the album on another label, but he agreed to leave the two tracks off. To Marot this made it a case of self-censorship(121).

By 1992 censorship was still causing even major stars problems and again showing the capacity for events in one country

to shape the censorial climate in another. After the LA riots of April 1992 attempts were made to link the violence with the lyrics of rap artists(122). By this time the "Body Count" album, by Ice T's band of the same name, had been out for some time. Members of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) took great exception to a track on the album called "Cop Killer". They threatened various actions against Time Warner, Ice T's label, including a boycott of its film "Batman 2", and refusing to cover its premises. They also joined pickets of Ice T concerts. Warners received death threats to its employees and, under such pressure, it withdrew the track from the album on a worldwide basis. So the unelected forces of law and order deprived fans the world over of hearing the track - although Jello Biafra promised to record a new version of it and copies of it were to be given out at Ice T concerts(123). A causal argument was swallowed and commercial expediency put before free speech.

In relation to the Island case above where an album containing a lot of sexist sentiment was defended whilst two racist songs were vetoed, it is worth pointing that the track "KKK Bitch", which features the sodomising of a Grand Duke's daughter was allowed to stay on "Body Count". The California Women's Law Centre, noted that not until a white male bastion, the LAPD, was threatened did the company take action(124). Warners were also the company who got REM to change the title of the track "Fuck Me Kitten" to "Star Me Kitten".

A number of censorship cases followed in the wake of the "Body Count" affair. Intelligent Hoodlum dropped a track called

"Hoodlum", which called for a shoot-out with police, from an album for A&M. WEA were also alleged to have pressurised the Boo Yaa Tribe into dropping a track called "Shoot 'Em Down" from their debut album(125). Prince and Madonna issued their respective "Symbol" and "Erotica" albums in clean and explicit versions. It was also reported that the rapper Paris was having problems getting a US release for his "Bush Killa" album(126).

In November 1992 Soho claimed that their "Thug" album, released in America the previous March, was not being released in Britain by the record company Savage Records (whom they left in September), because one of the tracks concerned an alleged affair between a senior Cabinet Minister and the owner of a catering company, whispers of which were widespread(127). The band also claimed to be under surveillance from, 'the kind of people who have an interest in watching people who talk about ministers having affairs.'(128) A break-in at the band's London home was also reported. Savage Records said that in March the proper structure was not in place to facilitate the release and by September they did not want to take up their option on it - for reasons they wouldn't disclose(129). So the album remained un-released in Britain, where an air of mystery surrounded it.

Indeed such an air surrounds much of the internal machinations of the music industry. The day to day disputes between artists and company remain the subject of gossip and speculation(130). Adam Ant told an apocryphal tale of CBS refusing "Dog Eat Dog" and "Antmusic" for being too noisy - 'We took the

tape home, didn't touch it, and took it back a couple of days later. "Yes, this is much better," they said.'(131) Companies ultimately treat artists as product - the reality of labour under capitalism. But some of the labour's product is not deemed suitable for the market, or, worse still, unmarketable. In such cases labels will try to ensure the product does not reach the market. But this struggle is not without its ironies. In 1992 EMI bought Virgin Records. It is now the proud owner of the Sex Pistols back catalogue. "Anarchy In The UK" had succumbed to the anarchy of the market. But the market also controls pop's packaging.

Cover Versions

Censorship problems concerning record covers take the issue away from music per se but, as I have continually argued, pop is more than simply music. Covers play an important part in pop's overall message(1) and Fabbri argues that: 'It is well known that the record sleeve contributes to determining the meaning not only of the record object but also of the very music found itself.'(2) The nature of such "meaning" has often been a matter of dispute between companies and artists.

The Rolling Stones' numerous disputes with Decca are illustrative here. In 1965 the cover of their "No2" album had to be changed after complaints about Andrew Loog Oldham's sleeve notes, which talked of robbing a blind man in order to be able to buy it(3). The following year the label vetoed a plan to release an

album titled "Can You Walk on Water", which eventually became "Aftermath"(4).

In September 1968 the band's "Beggars Banquet" album was held up because Decca objected to the cover which depicted a toilet wall. They rejected a compromise solution of putting it out in a plain brown envelope. Predating Rotten by some nine years Mick Jagger commented that: 'The job of a record company is to distribute records.... not dictate how they should and should not look.'(5) He also claimed that: 'You can't have entrepreneurs making moral judgements'(6), but, apparently you can, as the album eventually appeared on 6 December 1968 in a plain white sleeve. Despite Jagger's protestation that 'I am opposed to all forms of censorship'(7) the band's idea for the cover was effectively censored by the label - although it did appear on the CD version some years later.

Decca had more problems with graphics in 1973. The cover for Caravan's "For Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night" album, on its subsidiary Deram label, did not meet with their approval. They blocked a proposal for it to feature a naked woman. Charles Webster of the company said: 'W.H.Smith would not have carried it if it went out with a naked lady. A certain amount of moral judgement comes into this. If we think a dealer is unlikely to stock something we take a straight attitude... We don't go out of our way to be sensationalist in any way.'(8) The evidence of this thesis suggests that artists do not have to go out of their way to be sensationalist to encounter censorship. The passive censorial role

of major retailers here should also be noted.

Also in 1973, the cover of Gong's "Angel's Egg" album was objected to by its distributors, EMI because it depicted a naked woman. Virgin, the band's label, offered to cover up the offending parts, but EMI refused this. MM also reported that: 'It was also planned to include a booklet containing the complete libretto, but due to the large number of four-letter words contained EMI have refused to have anything to do with this.'⁽⁹⁾ The album was eventually released without the offending articles.

In 1980 covers again caused problems. Iron Maiden planned to feature a cartoon of their "mascot" Eddie having stabbed Margaret Thatcher for pulling down a poster of the band, on the cover of their "Sanctuary" single. The cartoon showed Thatcher on the floor. However the single's release coincided with physical attacks by skins on establishment figures Lord Home and Lord Chalfont and so the band and their label, EMI imposed self-censorship and changed Thatcher's face to a more anonymous one⁽¹⁰⁾. In 1986 the cover of a cassette version of Elvis Costello's "Blood and Chocolate" album in the shape of a Bournville chocolate bar had to be changed after complaints by Cadburys⁽¹¹⁾.

The Iron Maiden case had again illustrated the link between contemporary events and censorship and this was further highlighted in November 1987 when The Stranglers wanted to feature Monica Coughlan, the prostitute then at the centre of allegations surrounding Jeffrey Archer, on the cover of their single "All Day and All Of The Night". The 12" version of the single (which was to

have had the catalogue number VICE1) was to feature a "Jeff Mix" of the track. Here their label, Epic, drew the line, because of possible libel by association(12). The single was held up for a month whilst a new sleeve was designed, a delay which the band later claimed hampered the single's chances of success(13).

In 1988 Epic also vetoed a sleeve suggested for The Godfathers' "Cause I Said So" single, which featured Margaret Thatcher with a Hitler-style moustache. The single was held for two weeks whilst the cover was changed. Epic gave no official reason for the ban, but the likely reaction from retailers such as WH Smith and Boots was mooted(14).

Covers caused more problems in October the same year when Geffen vetoed a sleeve for Slayer's "Mandatory Suicide" single. This depicted a youth hanging from his bedroom door after receiving his call-up papers. It appears that the label was wary of upsetting anyone in the wake of legal cases taken against Ozzy Osbourne in America(15). So debate on what could grace the cover of records continued and even involved legal action(16). Overall it is illustrative of the power record companies have over what the public gets to see and hear.

This chapter has illustrated that companies censor for various reasons, ranging from dislike of content, covers or lack of commerciality. During punk EMI said that: "We don't release a record **only** if we feel it isn't commercial."(17) But a mixture of market and moral forces is in play. If the market is dominant, the acceptability of material to those who constitute the market also

has to be considered. I simplified matters here and presented the disputes as being between artist and label, which is not always the case, and am aware that artists vary in the amount of intervention they will allow or need. Some will do anything to sell records, others may have more reservations.

Future research should concentrate on the processes of censorship within companies; my concern here has been to show the outcomes. If a confusion emerges between intervention and censorship it is because there is no clear dividing line. Is cutting an eight minute track down to three for the radio censorship? If the artist is unhappy about it, perhaps yes, if they don't mind, perhaps no. The problem may be one of artistic control, rather than artistic expression. Clearly problems like racism(18) and sexism(19) can have a more detrimental effect on artists on a day to day basis than overt censorship, but cases of censorship by companies need documenting in order to show that censorship occurs not only **in** the marketplace, but also **prior** to it. The next section deals with problems records can have once they reach the marketplace(20).

Notes: Censorship or Control?

- (1) See MM 14/1/67.
- (2) NOTW 12/2/67.
- (3) NME 3/10/92.
- (4) See p110 for the "Cop Killer" case.
- (5) For the machinations of the industry see Negus, 1992.

- (6) See Negus, 1992, for details of this. See also Chapple and Garofolo, 1977, p179 for an earlier example.
- (7) See Frith, 1983, p109 and Eliot, 1987, p162.
- (8) See Negus, 1992, pp5, 6, and 156/157 for details. For a very brief history of the music business see Vox July 1991 p38.
- (9) Eliot, 1987, p249.
- (10) Negus, 1992, p40.
- (11) 1992, the year of the cover version, may be a paradigmatic case here. See NME 19/26/12/92.
- (12) See Harker, 1980, p104, Frith, 1983, p184 and Negus, 1992, p137 for the nature of the industry. For more on the machinations of the industry see Demnan, 1992 and Vox March 1992 pp36-40. For an outline of various sections of the music industry see Lawrence and Houghton, 1992.
- (13) See O'Brien, 1992, for more on sacked bands.
- (14) See Frith, 1983, pp41 and 51.
- (15) See Wicke, 1990, p130.
- (16) Rimmer, 1985, p141.
- (17) See NME 21/11/92 and 5/12/92. See also Garfield, 1992.
- (18) See NME 25/5/91 and 16/5/92.
- (19) Napier-Bell, 1992.
- (20) Garfield, 1992. See Guardian and Independent 11/10/93 for more details of the case and ibid 19/10/93 for the case starting.
- (21) See MM 14/1/67.
- (22) NME 26/9/92 and 19/26/12/92.
- (23) NME 19/26/12/92 and Guardian 8/12/92.

- (24) MM 3/2/68.
- (25) MM 2/10/71.
- (26) NME 12/10/91.
- (27) There have been numerous press reports about bootlegs and industry moves against them. For just a few examples see MM 19/6/71, 13 and 20/11/71, 8/1/72, 22/6/74, NME 9/11/74, 1/3/75, 9/8/75, 4/12/76, 20/7/77, 22/7/78 23/12/78, 19/1/80 and so on.
- (28) Garfield, 1992.
- (29) NME 17/8/91. See also Vox November 1992 for Radiohead having to re-record "Creep" without the word "fuck" on it in order to release it as a single.
- (30) See Becker, 1963, pp82/83.
- (31) Laurie, 1965, p75.
- (32) Negus, 1992, p150.
- (33) NME 21/1/89.
- (34) NME 28/11/92.
- (35) Street, 1986, p102. Such directives can also apply to superstars such as Stevie Nicks, see Vox February 1992 p33.
- (36) Negus, 1992, p57.
- (37) Negus, 1993, pp61-63.
- (38) C.Sullivan, 1991.
- (39) Street, 1985, p108.

Stopping The Rot

- (1) Leonard, 1964, p99.
- (2) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p107.
- (3) See Chapple and Garofolo, 1972, p272 and Hilton, 1993.

- (4) See Harker, 1980, pp119/120.
- (5) Gillett, 1983, p301.
- (6) Attali, 1977, p105. CBS also claimed to have "The Revolutionaries" on its roster, see Goodwin, 1988.
- (7) See pp12/13 above.
- (8) MM 14/1/67.
- (9) O'Higgins, 1972, p158.
- (10) Neville, 1971, pp65/66.
- (11) Vox December 1990.
- (12) Peterson, 1972, p269.
- (13) Record Hunter, Vox, August 1992 p4.
- (14) See Martin and Segrave, 1988, pp206-207 and MM 14/11/70.
- (15) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p207.
- (16) ibid p149. See also Chapple and Garofolo, 1977, p77.
- (17) See Tynan, 1988, pp236-242 for the first televised "fuck".
- (18) MM 1/2/69.
- (19) See pp 207 and 272/273 below for bans on "Je T'Aime".
- (20) MM 20/9/69.
- (21) For more on the press as a pop censor see pp548-579 below.
- (22) Vox February 1991 p61.
- (23) Harker, 1980, p214. See also MM 26/12/70 for a letter from a reader outraged by Lennon's swearing.
- (24) MM 30/1/71.
- (25) MM 13/3/71.
- (26) MM 27/3/71.
- (27) MM 1/5/71.

(28) Radio producer Tim Blackmore said that Madonna was able to get away with swearing and so on 'because she has enormous commercial power', Radio One, 1993a. Frith, 1983, p135 and Negus, 1992, p158 note the great disparities in earnings (and therefore power) within the industry.

(29) NME 9/8/75.

(30) NME 4/5/91.

(31) Wicke, 1990, p150 and Vermorel, 1978, pp208/209.

(32) The Grundy incident was on 1/12/76. See pp284/285 below.

(33) For example see both Daily Telegraph and Daily Mirror 8/12/76.

For more details see pp552-558 below.

(34) Wood, 1988. This book has no page numbers. Emphasis mine.

(35) Savage, 1991a, p271.

(36) Street, 1986, p107.

(37) See pp214-215 for the radio ban on "Anarchy" and p557 for the pressure exerted by the press on EMI.

(38) See NME 15/1/77.

(39) Wood, 1988. See Vermorel, 1978, 63 for details.

(40) See, for example, Vermorel, 1978, p63.

(41) See NME 15/1/77.

(42) See Butt, 1976, and pp53/54 above and p556 below.

(43) See Vermorel, 1978, p63.

(44) Savage, 1991a, p288.

(45) NME 15/1/77. See Negus, 1992, pp48, 148 and 149 for the relationship between A&R and marketing departments.

(46) For Howe see Guardian 14/12/76, for Delfont see Guardian

- 8/12/76 and for Shawcross see Daily Express 6/12/76.
- (47) Savage, 1991a, p285.
- (48) Wood, 1988.
- (49) See Savage, 1991a, pp 307-321 for details.
- (50) Wood, 1988.
- (51) Vermorel, 1978, p86.
- (52) MM 26/3/77 and see also Wood, 1988.
- (53) See p113 for the "Beggars Banquet" dispute.
- (54) Savage, 1991a, p339.
- (55) NME 16/7/77.
- (56) NME 20/6/77.
- (57) See Wood, 1988.
- (58) See pp593/594 below.
- (59) NME 5/3/77.
- (60) For moralist calls for "responsibility" see pp448, 476 and 478 below.
- (61) NME 12/3/77.
- (62) NME 2/7/77.
- (63) NME 2 and 16/7/77.
- (64) See Sunday People 19/6/77 for details of punk being promoted as "new wave".
- (65) See NME 20/8/77.
- (66) Laing, 1985, pp 37 and 49.
- (67) ibid p138.
- (68) NME 10/9/77.
- (69) NME 25/2/78.

- (70) NME 7/5/77.
- (71) NME 22/10/77.
- (72) NME 29/10/77.
- (73) NME 20/8/77.
- (74) Denselow, 1989, p149.
- (75) NME 20/8/77.
- (76) NME 14/1/78.
- (77) Robinson later said that EMI made the decision in order to get radio plays, Radio One 1993a.
- (78) See NME 26/8/78.
- (79) NME 21/1/78.
- (80) NME 1/1/78.
- (81) NME 24/6/78. "No One Is Innocent" is also known as "The Biggest Blow - A Punk Prayer", see Savage, 1991a, p565.
- (82) NME 10/2/79.
- (83) See Stallings, 1984, p153.
- (84) NME 2/2/80.
- (85) See Sounds 24/5/80 and NME 30/8/80 4/10/78 8/11/78 and 13/12/80.
- (86) NME 21/2/82.
- (87) NME 2/10/82.
- (88) See pp330/331 below.
- (89) See pp561/562 for the Daily Mail and Oi.
- (90) NME 11/7/81.
- (91) New Statesman 11/9/81.
- (92) For more on Blood and Honour see G.Marshall, 1991, p140 and

Guardian 14/9/92 and 30/10/93.

(93) NME 11/7/81.

(94) NME 26/9/81.

(95) NME 1/10/83.

(96) See pp548-579 for the press and its search for scandal.

(97) See NME 21/28/12/85 and Heslam, 1990, p404.

(98) NME 19/6/82.

(99) NME 18/10/86.

(100) ibid

(101) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p277.

(102) NME 16/6/90.

(103) I am grateful to Keith Negus for this reference.

(104) NME 26/6/86.

(105) See Denselow, 1989, pp286/287. See also NME 28/2/87.

(106) See Wells, 1990a.

(107) See Wells, 1987.

(108) See NME 27/10/90.

(109) For an examples of Savoy's brushes with the law see IOC Vol20, No10, November/December 1990 p53.

(110) Sounds 24/11/87.

(111) NME 20/2/88 and Gregory, 1991. For more on Fierce see NME 9/4/88 (including the reaction of the Daily Mirror) and 2/7/88.

(112) NME 11/7/87. Yoko Ono also got a sample of Lennon's killer, Mark Chapman, reading the lyrics to the Lennon song "Watching The Wheels" taken off their "Lies" track, NME 15/6/91.

(113) Jello Biafra refers to this on his "No More Cocoons" album.

- (114) NME 12/10/90.
- (115) NME 22/9/90.
- (116) For "nigger" as a highly offensive word see BSC, 1991, p13.
- (117) See pp168-172 below for sampling.
- (118) See pp pp161-168 below for the NWA court case.
- (119) See NME 25/1/92. "No Vaseline" has also been seen as homophobic.
- (120) Marot, 1991b.
- (121) ibid
- (122) For Mickey Rourke blaming rap for the LA riots see NME 19/26/12/92. See also Medved, 1992, p341.
- (123) See NME 8/8/92 for Ice T leaving Warners. See NME from May 1992 until the end of the year for the build up to, and fall out from, the "Cop Killer" controversy.
- (124) NME 8/8/92.
- (125) NME 19/9/92.
- (126) NME 9/1/93.
- (127) The minister concerned was John Major, who instigated libel proceedings against the New Statesman and Scally Wag magazines for printing the allegations.
- (128) Independent 8/11/92. See also NME 7/11/92
- (129) Independent 8/11/92.
- (130) But see Negus, 1992, for some details.
- (131) NME 22/29/12/90.

Cover Versions

- (1) For example, see Sweeting, 1993.

- (2) Fabbri, 1982, p139.
- (3) Wyman, 1991, p359.
- (4) ibid p431.
- (5) Stallings, 1984, p152.
- (6) MM 14/9/68.
- (7) Wyman, 1991, pp595/596.
- (8) MM 8/12/73.
- (9) MM 15/12/73.
- (10) Sounds 10/5/80.
- (11) NME 11/10/86.
- (12) NME 7/11/87.
- (13) NME 23/7/88.
- (14) ibid
- (15) NME 1/10/88. For cases involving Osbourne see Cosgrove, 1986 p13, NME 1/6/91 and Walser, 1993, pp145-151.
- (16) See pp147-149 and 156-161 for legal cases involving covers. For more on covers see Stallings, 1984 pp148-159 and Vox February 1991 pp38-41.
- (17) Guardian 4/12/76.
- (18) For example see Hewitt, 1986.
- (19) For examples of sexism within the industry see Negus, 1992 and Steward and Garratt, 1984.
- (20) I am grateful to Keith Negus for comments on this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

"I'M SORRY SIR, WE DON'T STOCK THAT" -

RETAIL POLICY TOWARDS POPULAR MUSIC

This chapter examines the stocking policy of various retailers and argues that this has often led to a limiting of choice and contributed to censorship and the continued marginalisation of certain genres of music.

By 1992 Britain's record shops were divisible into three categories: the major chains which specialise in music-related products (eg HMV and Our Price), the generalist chains which sell music along side a variety of other products (eg Boots and Woolworth) and the independent record shops of various sizes (such as Manchester's Eastern Bloc and Liverpool's Probe). The last group contains those shops where the consumer will be able to buy various non-chart artists, including many reggae, techno and indie bands, which the larger stores may not stock.

The importance of this distinction as far as censorship is concerned is that the chainstores, both specialist and general, often offer a limited form of consumerism and make deliberate decisions not to stock the work of various artists. Often "choice" involves only records which are already in the charts. The "generalists" often jealously guard their reputations as "family stores" and in some cases will not stock any product that carries warning stickers about the "explicit" nature of the lyrics. For example, Boots do not consider stocking such product as: 'We do not

consider it ethical to stock merchandise which would offend the families that shop at Boots.'(1) A tone of "protecting children" underpins this remark.

This attitude is typical of the major chain stores, who avoid controversy and put profit before artistic freedom - again hinting at censorship via the market. In 1980 HMV explained their decision not to sell Crass records by reference to the market. A memo to staff said: 'The question is does the commercial advantage of selling Crass records outweigh the risk of prosecution?'(2) But the slight risk of being prosecuted was not the primary concern of HMV - their image, by which is meant their profit margin, was. The market enters as censor because should Crass have been likely to sell more records then perhaps 'the commercial advantage' **would** have outweighed the risk of prosecution. Meanwhile, stores like Eastern Bloc and Spectrum, which can ill-afford court cases have stocked controversial records and faced police harassment and prosecution(3).

The previous chapter noted the role of labels in censoring covers and covers have also lain behind decisions by retailers not to stock records. In November 1968 MM reported that 'a number of record shops... in various provincial towns' (4) were refusing to stock Jimi Hendrix's "Electric Ladyland" album, because the cover featured 21 nude women. Note again the importance of locality. The same year John Lennon's "Wedding Album" was only available by mail order to avoid retailer objection to him and Yoko Ono appearing nude on the cover(5). In January 1976 Boxer released their first

album. The cover featured a naked spreadeagled woman with a boxing glove over her crotch. The band's label covered up parts of the cover, but NME reported that 'some multiple stores are adamantly refusing to stock it.'(6)

1977 was the year of punk and the attempted prosecution of the Sex Pistols' album cover(7) and punk's legacy caused problems in 1985. A single by The Ex Pistols, some of the Pistols' former associates, called "Land of Hope and Glory", was banned by HMV and Woolworth because of obscenities on the back cover(8). In 1987 Guns and Roses' "Appetite For Destruction" was banned by WH Smith because its cover featured a robot raping/having sex with a woman(9). In 1989, The Beautiful South had problems with the cover of their eponymous debut album. It featured a woman with a gun in her mouth and a man smoking a joint. NME reported this had to be changed as 'several shops refused to stock the record.' It was replaced with a picture of two teddy bears cuddling(10). In 1992 it was reported that some stores were making Chrysalis obscure a reference to condoms on the cover of Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine's "Only Living Boy in New Cross" single(11) and several shops also refused to stock Sonic Youth's "Dirty" album because of "offensive" photographs on the cover(12).

The sexual nature of many of the covers here meant that those retailers who sought a "family" clientele wouldn't stock them for fear of offending customers, especially those with children. But the net result was censorship, however subsequently justified. So,

I shall now examine the censorial policy, and justifications, of retailers.

The "Generalists"

(1) Boots: Britain's biggest retail chain(13) definitely sees itself as a family-orientated store. Music is a secondary concern - its audio department is present only in some of its branches and it remains primarily a chemist. It is little surprise, therefore, that it has often taken a somewhat cavalier attitude towards music and has often censored product. It sold Hendrix's "Electric Ladyland", but only in a brown paper bag(14). In July 1972 Boots would not stock Nilsson's "Son of Schmilsson" album because one track, "You're Breaking My Heart", contained the phrase "fuck you". Boots commented that: 'The situation will remain that way until the word on the record and booklet of lyrics is removed.'(15) So a chainstore called for the direct censorship of a record.

Boots was among the stores that refused to stock Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's "Derek and Clive" album(16) and during punk, it lined up with other major retailers to ban The Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen"(17) and "Never Mind The Bollocks". The power of the chainstores was shown by the fact that Virgin toyed with the idea of releasing two versions of the album to circumvent a possible ban by them. The alternative album was to have had a different title and omit "God Save the Queen", but the plan was eventually shelved(18).

By 1984 Boots had mastered the censorial game and stopped stocking The Smiths' eponymous debut album and the single "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now", because both contained the track "Suffer Little Children" - which dealt with the Moors Murders - apparently after complaints from one of the victim's family. Boots withdrew the single as the lyrics were 'offensive to the family'(19). By 1991 this family store did not even consider stocking stickered albums(20), including Guns 'n' Roses' "Use Your Illusion" albums(21).

(2) WH Smith: This chain has a history of censorship going back to its days as a newspaper and books outlet on railway stations(22). In 1992 it had a market share of 26.5% in UK music and video(23). Vox listed its record buyer as the eleventh most powerful man in the UK music business in 1993(24) and I have already noted its passive censorial role(25).

Like Boots, it elected to sell Hendrix's "Electric Ladyland" in a brown paper bag(26) and declined to sell the "Derek and Clive" album(27). Its attitude to punk bordered on the paranoiac. Not only did it refuse to stock The Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen" single and "Bollocks" album(28), it also left a blank space in shop chart lists where "God Save The Queen" should have been(29).

WH Smith has often stepped back from any potential controversy. It stopped stocking Gay News at the time of Whitehouse's prosecution of the magazine(30). It also banned Guns and Roses' "Appetite For Destruction"(31), King Kurt's "Big Cock" (the cover featured a large cockerel)(32) and NWA's "Just Don't

Bite It"(33). But although veering toward the censorial, double standards, rather than any principled stand, emerge. It used a picture of a jean-clad behind with the words "Shift It" superimposed on it to advertise a sale in 1980(34) and has resisted attempts by the Campaign Against Pornography (CAP) to get it to remove soft porn from its top shelves. It sells porn, but not some pop.

The idea of the market as a censor was reflected in a letter from the company which said that it was unlikely to stock hardcore rap or metal records as they had 'an extremely low market potential' for the firm(35). It knows its likely customers and is clearly happy to ignore genres which it will leave to more specialist stores, a position which can only contribute to the marginalisation of such genres.

(3) Woolworth: Owned by the Kingfisher group this chain held 18.9% of the British music market in 1992(36). It aims its music sections at the teen market(37) and feels that it is impossible to monitor the vast amount of product that comes out each year but that:

'Woolworths is a family store and as such, our suppliers, in conjunction with our Entertainment Department, do attempt to identify before release any items which contain contentious lyrics. If we are able to do this we pressurise the record companies to sticker the product with warnings. In some cases, we may decide not to stock the item at all.'(38) The term "contentious lyrics" allows plenty of room for discretion. But at least Woolworth entertains

the idea that, having been informed of potential offence, the customer can make their own mind up about whether or not to buy.

Woolworth was also more ambivalent (or hypocritical) than Boots in their attitude towards The Sex Pistols. Whilst they banned "God Save The Queen" and "Bollocks"(39), in 1980 they cashed in on the band's notoriety. An advertisement in that year advertised their "Rock 'N' Roll Swindle" soundtrack for sale at a reduced price with the slogan "How Low Can The Sex Pistols Sink?"(40). Once the initial fuss had faded Woolworth returned to letting the profit motive take precedence.

But not totally. As the above quote shows, Woolworth still reserve the right to censor. It exercised this right in 1984 with The Smiths records referred to in the Boots section(41) and The Ex Pistols record(42). In 1990 it banned NWA's "Just Don't Bite It", commenting that: 'It's certainly not the kind of thing we would dream of stocking in our family stores.'(43) So again the "family" was used as a censorial excuse. The following year Woolworth only stocked De La Soul's "Is Dead" album on the condition that it was stickered and it also placed "Over 18" stickers on albums such as Anthrax's "Attack of The Killer Bees" and Skid Row's "Slave To The Grime"(44). I shall discuss this sort of censorial halfway house in more detail below.

The Specialists

(1) HMV: Owned by EMI, in the 1980s this outlet's stocking policy attracted much media comment. In 1979 it advertised the Sex Pistols' "Bollocks" LP in its sale, modestly calling it "Never Mind"(45). The track "Bodies" on this LP contains an abundance of swearing and it appeared that by stocking and advertising the album HMV had a liberal attitude. But this limited liberalism ended in 1980 when HMV became embroiled in controversy over the Poison Girls/Grass single "Persons Unknown"/"Bloody Revolutions". The Poison Girls' Vi Subversa got a copy of a letter from John Tyrell, HMV's managing director, telling staff to either destroy copies of the record, or send them to head office for destruction(46). The company apparently feared prosecution, although it admitted that the chances of that were "slight"(47). It transpired that the letter emanated from Brian McLaughlin, an executive under Tyrell, and that the stipulation was that Grass records were not to be sold(48). In 1982 when the Grass free flexi single "Sheep Farming In The Falklands" began turning up it was reported that 'at the HMV Shop in Oxford Street, any copies found on the premises are immediately destroyed.'(49)

HMV had no problems with The Smiths "Suffer Little Children" which other majors banned(50), but in 1985 they refused to sanction the Ex Pistols' single(51), although they carried on selling the Sex Pistols' "Bollocks" album, again advertising it as a specially priced album in 1986(52).

Late 1986 saw the censorial wind really start to blow through HMV. In December they refused to issue the Fuck Facts newspaper that came free with the Dead Kennedy's "Bedtime For Democracy" album and, ironically, dealt with the band's censorship problems in America. In response the band instructed their label, Alternative Tentacles, not to let HMV have any of their product. Label manager, Bill Gilliam called HMV's action 'direct censorship' as the newspaper was 'an integral part of the package'(53). Indeed the HMV decision appears a strange one. There was little chance of a prosecution and any fan purchasing a Dead Kennedys' record would presumably be aware of the nature of their material. Under these circumstances it becomes hard to see why HMV should object to the newspaper and whom it was trying to protect.

Possibly the word "fuck" upset them, a theory given more credence by the fact that HMV also refused to stock Big Black's "Songs About Fucking" in September 1987 because of the title(54). It was then revealed that HMV had compiled an "Obscene Product" list, which was dated 16 February 1987 and included all records on the Crass label, all Dead Kennedys records, Conflict's "Increase The Pressure", Microdisney's "We Hate You White South African Bastards", Ian Dury's "Four Thousand Week Holiday" and various obscure punk and satanic metal records(55).

HMV explained that 'there is an Obscene Publications Act that HMV as retailers are obliged by law to observe. Whatever the artistic merit of this product, the fact that it could find its way into the hands of young children is something that should concern

us all.'(56)

Thus the slight risk of prosecution was mixed with moralising over the welfare of children to excuse censorial action. That this was somewhat hypocritical was illustrated in autumn 1990 when HMV gave away an in-house copy of Q magazine which included a Bob Geldof interview containing various swear words. The fact that **this** could fall into the hands of children did **not** appear to be "something that should concern us".

HMV also withdrew copies of Flux's "The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks" from sale in October 1987(57) and didn't stock Dead Kennedy's singer Jello Biafra's anti-censorship "No More Cocoons" album(58). By 1990 rap was causing more than punk to HMV. Its Canadian stores stopped selling 2 Live Crew's "As Nasty As We Wanna Be" in July after police raided other shops selling it(59) and in Britain it joined the boycott of NWA's "Just Don't Bite It"(60).

Unfortunately HMV do not feel obliged to explain their censorial policy to their customers. I was advised that 'the stocking policy of HMV is confidential and we are unable to make comment on it.'(61). I was also told that 'as retailers HMV are liable for prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act for selling product deemed to be obscene. Therefore to protect our staff from possible prosecution HMV reserve the right to withdraw certain product.'(62)

(2) Our Price: This chain started in 1971 and became part of the WH Smith group in 1986. By 1992 it had 318 shops in Britain and the largest market share of any of the specialist chains -

10.5%(63). Its stocking policy has attracted little press attention, although it did refuse to stock Flux's "Fucking Cunts" in 1984(64). It also only stocks singles that have already charted. Its position on censorship is that, whilst not wishing to act as censors: 'we would not wish to offend any of our customers and have issued guidelines in order to avoid such situations. These guidelines are based on freedom of expression under the law.'(65) It sold NWA's "Efil4zaggin" album after it was cleared in its obscenity trial(66) and generally leaves censorship to the market.

(3) Virgin: Virgin is in an odd position for a major retailer in that it has operated outside the law by selling bootlegs, in its early days - as owner Richard Branson left decisions on whether to stock such items up to individual store managers(67). Its label was the home of The Sex Pistols and it was one of its stores which was involved in the attempted prosecution for displaying their "Bollocks" cover(68).

But as Branson sought media respectability a more censorious attitude was adopted by Virgin. In 1982 it took the unusual step of distancing itself from the free Grass flexi-disc, "Sheep Farming In The Falklands", which was appearing in record shops all over the country(69). It continued to sell The Smiths' records mentioned above, but in August 1987 dropped plans for window displays featuring the controversial cover of Guns and Roses' "Appetite For Destruction"(70). A month later it refused to stock Big Black's "Songs About Fucking", not because of its title, but because on the inner sleeve group leader Steve Albini advocated using heroin(71).

Virgin commented that: 'We have no blacklist, we don't want to dictate people's taste. If the word "fuck" is on the sleeve then there's a chance we won't stock it. Individual product may be banned from time to time at the discretion of Virgin, but there are no hard and fast rules.'(72) So the right to censor was upheld. Virgin shops were bought by WH Smith in 1988, who also bought a half share in their Megastore chain in 1991(73). In 1992 that chain banned Cannibal Corpse's "Tomb of The Mutilated"(74).

The independents and others

One result of the reluctance of many of the majors to stock punk records, and of major labels to sign punks, was a growth of both independent shops and labels. The "do it yourself" attitude of punk was partly an enforced one - you **had** to do it yourself if other outlets were closed. This led to a growth in specialist shops like London's Rough Trade and Liverpool's Probe. These continue today and are an alternative outlet for smaller labels the majors can't or won't deal with. In many ways the shop divide mirrors that adopted by Radio One - the majors can be stereotyped as catering for the daytime/CD/family audience, the independents for the fan or night-time listener(75).

The independents, of various shapes and sizes, have tended to have a more liberal stocking policy, not necessarily for ideological reasons, but for commercial ones - they can't afford **not** to sell records. During punk the independents were of vital

import in circumventing the ban on "God Save The Queen". Thus Virgin was able to proclaim in one advertisement for it 'No.1 in NME thanks to you and England's independant (sic) record shops. Support real record shops.'(76)

But the cost of a more liberal stocking policy has been that it is often such shops that have been in the censorial firing line. Mike Lloyd Music in Newcastle Under Lyme received a phone call in 1977 threatening to fire bomb the shop if they continued to stock punk records(77) and London's Small Wonder was raided by police for copies of The Sex Pistols' "Bollocks" album(78). As the censorial process often works backwards, from retailer to publisher, shops can find themselves at the forefront of censorship cases. In May 1980 it was reported that Birmingham police had been monitoring shops selling Grass records, following a complaint from a mother who found her son playing one of their records(79). In 1984 came the Spectrum/Grass case I document elsewhere(80) and in 1987 and 1988 came the Eastern Bloc /Flux case(81).

Somewhat more understandably, in October 1988 many retailers refused to stock the single "Eternal Nightmare" by US metal band Violence - because it came with a free bag of vomit - which was apparently a mixture of vegetables and vinegar(82). Menzies refused to stock NWA's "Just Don't Bite It"(83), as did the Midlands chain, Music Junction(84). The latter's owner, Bob Barnes, said they were 'not going to risk criminal charges' by stocking the single(85) and that as the law was too vague: 'We need some kind of censorship along the same lines as the video industry.'(86).

Many retailers were wary of a law that appeared too vague. The "tendency to deprave and corrupt" on which British obscenity law hinges on has alarmed them, as was evidenced by a statement by the British Association Of Record Dealers (BARD), which includes Barnes, in December 1990 which called for a ratings systems for records - similar to that used for videos. This came in the wake of concerns over "Just Don't Bite It"(87). Barnes removed the record from his stores after checking the Obscene Publications Act. He said that: 'for our own protection we've got to be seen to be making sure the things we consider obscene aren't sold.'(88)

Thus far little has come of this and rating of records seems a non-starter in Britain. There are too many problems connected with what criteria to use, who would do it and so on. Most importantly there may not be enough political capital to made out of introducing such a system. But the issue of what shops should do with records which could be deemed offensive carries on. The Music Retailers Association has no policy on censorship, leaving decisions to individual members(89). There has been an increase in the stickering of albums and reactions to this are mixed. Some feel that stickering records makes them more attractive to customers, especially adolescent boys, by giving them an air of "forbidden fruit"(90). Others, like Bill Gilliam, argue that a chill factor may be involved and that stickered albums put off retailers who may decide not to take the (limited) risk of prosecution or the (greater) risk of offending customers(91). This certainly affects companies like Boots, who refuse to stock any stickered material.

Others, like Woolworth, have been known to do their own stickering.

Whatever the policy, stickering should be seen as a censorship issue. It is the record retailers' equivalent of putting product on the top shelf or under the counter. It marks out certain records as "unclean". They may get a certain amount of reflected glory via their notoriety, but they also get regarded as "dirty" and thus liable to boycott by the major chains. As a spin off of the PMRC's actions in America(92), it is also another instance of American censorship affecting Britain. The net effect of this is not only denial of consumer choice, but also a contribution to the ghettoising of the music concerned. Major retailers have a history of not stocking at the merest hint of controversy. They jealously guard their "family" images and the secrets of their policy. The customer who is annoyed at not being able to buy Flux records at Our Price has no effective complaint mechanism and the history of British record shop censorship again illustrates the often elitist nature of censorship, based on a denial of choice.

The paternalism and professed concern for the welfare of staff of stores like HMV masks an attitude which puts profit before artistic freedom. Few records are prosecuted and thus far, it has been independent retailers, who can least afford it, that have been hit when prosecutions for obscenity are being made. The paranoid might even feel that this apparent policy of picking on the smallest first is deliberate. Perhaps its just the law's way...

Notes

- (1) Boots 1991.
- (2) Sounds 7/6/80.
- (3) See pp152-158 below.
- (4) MM 9/11/68.
- (5) See MM 21/12/68.
- (6) NME 7/2/76.
- (7) See pp147-149 below.
- (8) NME 16/2/85.
- (9) NME 1/8/87.
- (10) NME 11/11/87.
- (11) Vox June 1992.
- (12) MM 15/8/92.
- (13) Blackhurst, 1993. See this article for more on Boots.
- (14) MM 9/11/68.
- (15) MM 29/7/72.
- (16) NME 25/9/76.
- (17) NME 4, 12, 18 and 25/6/77.
- (18) NME 22 and 29/10/77 and 5/11/77.
- (19) MM 15/9/84.
- (20) Boots, 1991.
- (21) Guardian 30/10/92.
- (22) O'Higgins, 1972, p73 and St.John-Stevas, 1965, pp44, 77 and 90.
- (23) Music and Copyright Vol 1 No 12. September 1992.
- (24) Vox March 1993.

- (25) See pp 113-115 for the passive censorial role of Smiths.
- (26) MM 9/11/68.
- (27) NME 25/9/76.
- (28) NME 11/6/77 and 22/10/77.
- (29) See Coon: 1988 p90.
- (30) NME 18/2/78.
- (31) NME 1/8/87.
- (32) NME 22/10/88.
- (33) NME 13/10/90.
- (34) NME 10/5/80.
- (35) WH Smith, 1992.
- (36) Music and Copyright 12/9/92.
- (37) ibid
- (38) Woolworth, 1991.
- (39) NME 22/10/77 and 4 and 11/11/77.
- (40) NME 28/6/80.
- (41) NME 15/9/84.
- (42) NME 16/2/85.
- (43) NME 20/10/90.
- (44) Longrigg, 1991.
- (45) NME 14/7/79.
- (46) Sounds 7/6/80.
- (47) NME 14/6/80.
- (48) Sounds 21/6/80.
- (49) NME 19/6/82.
- (50) NME 15/9/84.

- (51) NME 16/2/85.
- (52) NME 28/6/86.
- (53) NME 20/27/12/86.
- (54) NME 26/9/87.
- (55) NME 3/10/87.
- (56) ibid and see Denselow, 1989, p272.
- (57) NME 10/10/87.
- (58) NME 28/11/87.
- (59) NME 14/7/90.
- (60) NME 13/10/90.
- (61) HMV, 1991.
- (62) ibid
- (63) Music and Copyright 12/9/92.
- (64) NME 12/5/84.
- (65) Our Price, 1992.
- (66) See pp161-168 below.
- (67) MM 20/11/71 and NME 9/5/92.
- (68) See pp147-149 below.
- (69) NME 19/6/82.
- (70) NME 1/8/87.
- (71) NME 26/9/87.
- (72) NME 3/10/87.
- (73) Guardian 9/9/91.
- (74) Heller, 1992, p4.
- (75) See pp198-202 below for the division of One's audience.
- (76) NME 25/6/77.

- (77) NME 3/9/77.
- (78) Savage, 1991a, p424.
- (79) Sounds 13/5/80.
- (80) See pp152-156 below.
- (81) See pp156-158 below.
- (82) NME 29/10/88 and Sounds 5/11/88.
- (83) NME 13/10/90.
- (84) NME 10/11/90.
- (85) ibid
- (86) Halassa, 1990.
- (87) MM 15/6/91 claimed that '60 per cent' of retailers had refused to stock this record.
- (88) NME 8/12/90 and Guardian 22/11/90.
- (89) Rushworth, 1993.
- (90) For example John Peel has spoken of swearing making records more attractive to adolescents. See Longrigg, 1991. See also Holden, 1993.
- (91) Gilliam, 1991. See also Wells, 1987.
- (92) For the PMRC's stickering campaign see Denselow, 1989, pp265-269.

CHAPTER SIX

"I FOUGHT THE LAW" - POP INTO COURT

Prosecution of records is comparatively rare in Britain, with most legal cases in pop tending to be contractual or copyright disputes. I shall deal with copyright as it affects pop at the end of this section, but wish to concentrate most attention here on cases where records, or their covers, have been taken to court. These cases generally attracted little publicity, especially in comparison to cases such as Lady Chatterley, and have usually passed media commentators by - a situation which arguably reflects the elitism that characterises discussion of the arts in Britain.

One law in particular needs noting at the outset. This is the 1959 Obscene Publications Act which defines an obscene article as one which, taken as a whole, tends to "deprave and corrupt" those who are likely to come into contact with it. Articles seized can be destroyed under Section 3 of the Act, which instigates proceedings at a magistrates court. Here a defendant has to show good reason why the material should not be forfeited. The proceedings apply only to those items seized. A prosecution under section 2 is more serious, involving a High Court, jury, trial which can lead to an unlimited fine and imprisonment(1).

The subjective nature of this law has led to much criticism(2). One problem is that there is no way a retailer or publisher can find out in advance if an article is "obscene" - only the courts can decide that. The police's attitude to the law varies

from force to force, again illustrating the way locality affects British censorship(3), but once a complaint has been made they are obliged to act and, after raiding, generally send material to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) where decisions on whether or not to prosecute, and, if so, under which section, are made.

The complainer becomes that almost mythical creature "a member of the public"(4) who is so outraged by what they encounter that they rush to their local police force and demand that they confiscate the relevant material and bring a prosecution. The police do not have to disclose the identity of complainers, which means that their identity in particular cases is hard to ascertain, and one is left with intuitive guesses as to whom they might be. But I shall present evidence that the pressure groups I discuss elsewhere often lie behind attempts to prosecute.

The first case of censorship to note does not concern the 1959 Act, but libel. In 1979 Roy Harper was forced to remove the track "Watford Gap" from his "Bullinamingvase" album. The song alleged that the Gap's service station served up 'crap' and 'grease and excrement'(5) as food. Its owners, Blue Boar, sued EMI for this 'totally unjustified attack'(6). EMI offered no contest, removed the track, made a donation to charity and paid the court costs. Such libel prosecutions are rare in pop, but probably lie behind such decisions as Phonogram's one not to release Graham Parker's "Mercury Poisoning"(7). Far more important are attempts to legally label pop as obscene.

The Sex Pistols: "Never Mind The Bollocks"

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first case of a record being prosecuted for obscenity occurred during punk and concerned The Sex Pistols. Their first album, "Never Mind The Bollocks Here's The Sex Pistols", was released on Friday 28 October 1977. Ironically, it was not "controversial" tracks such as "God Save The Queen", nor the plethora of "fucks" in the anti-abortion track "Bodies", but the word "bollocks" on the cover which brought the record to court. The previous two chapters noted problems with covers and here again we see an example of pop's attendant features causing offence. However, bearing in mind Fabbri's comments on the importance of covers and the impression the band were trying to create, the cover was undoubtedly part of the "message" and so the attempt to censor it, was effectively an attempt was made to censor that message itself.

On Saturday 5 November 1977 policewoman Julie Dawn Story saw a window display of the covers in Virgin Records' Nottingham branch and informed its manager Chris Searle that this was an offence under the Indecent Advertising Act of 1899(8). In London Virgin and Small Wonder record shops were also visited by plain clothes policemen(9). When Searle replaced his window display on November 9 he was arrested and charged under the 1899 Act .

The case was heard at Nottingham Magistrates Court on 24 November 1977. The defence lawyer Virgin hired was John Mortimer QC, who also defended the Oz case. The prosecution unsuccessfully

tried to make much of the fact that the word "fuck" appeared on the album(10) - but this was irrelevant to the case in hand. Expert witnesses were allowed to appear for the defence, including James Kingsley, Professor of English at Nottingham University. He testified that the word "bollocks" was a thousand year old Anglo-Saxon word which originally meant a small ball(11). In the last century it was used of clergymen who, many believed, talked a great deal of rubbish. In conclusion Kingsley said he'd 'take the title to mean: Never Mind the Nonsense here's the Sex Pistols'(12).

In retrospect this seems so obvious that it is hard to see why the case was ever brought. Mortimer's summing up speech speculated as to: 'why a word which has been dignified by writers of the Middle Ages in the translation of the Bible to Dylan Thomas and George Orwell... should be singled out as criminal because it is on a record sleeve by the Sex Pistols. **It was because it was The Sex Pistols and not Donald Duck or Kathleen Ferrier that the prosecution was brought.**'(13)

This contentious point is supported by the evidence. The Sex Pistols were at this time the media's whipping boys. Their records and gigs were censored and band members had been physically attacked by "outraged" "patriots" stirred up by a press that saw the Pistols as the summation of all that was wrong with the country. Pop here illustrated both its power to offend and the way in which censorial agencies, such as MPs and the press, will move first to express the offence and then to stifle it. That the offence in this instance was partly planned is irrelevant. Pop had

illustrated how far artists can and cannot go in their artistic and public pronouncements in Britain. It appeared that, other censorial agencies having done their work on the Pistols, it was now the turn of the law.

But it failed. The case was dismissed by the magistrates. But the senior magistrate said that: 'Much as my colleagues and I wholeheartedly deplore the vulgar exploitation of the worst instincts of human nature... we must **reluctantly** find you not guilty on each of the four charges'(14).

With the cover cleared displays of it continued. In rock mythology it was a small victory for punks against the law. Another interpretation would be that it was a reminder not to go too far. The next time it was to be the music itself, or at least the lyrical content, which attracted the authorities' wrath. This time the prosecution was also to be successful.

The Anti Nowhere League: "So What"

Punk band The Anti Nowhere League released their debut-single, a cover of Ralph McTell's "Streets Of London" backed with their own composition "So What"(15), on the WXYZ label in December 1981. By the end of January 1982 it had reached Number 1 in the NME's Independent Chart(16) when, on February 12, the Metropolitan Police raided a number of premises in London, including the band's label's offices, the distributors, Faulty Products' offices and the pressing plant, seizing copies of the single under the 1959 Act.

The police were acting after what Faulty Products believed were complaints by 'a number of public citizens'(17). In this case there is evidence to identify the complainer. Whitehouse alludes to the record in her book, A Most Dangerous Woman?(18), but neglects to mention the title. However a letter from NVALA confirmed that they instigated the case(19). Whitehouse had pressed for a prosecution under section 2 of the 1959 Act(20), her concern being 'children who buy such records'(21). But the police opted for forfeiture under section 3.

Bromley magistrates heard the case - the first attempt to prosecute a record under the 1959 Act. They found that the record **did** fall within the ambit of that Act, in having the required "tendency to deprave and corrupt". Although WXYZ initially planned to appeal to the High Court it appears that no such appeal was ever launched - possibly due to the potential costs involved for a relatively small label. Perhaps if they could have hired Mortimer the case would have been won, again showing links between status and censorship. The seized copies were destroyed(22). Pop records had been legally declared obscene and incinerated.

This was not to be the end of the story for "So What". In July 1983 the band tried to include it on their "Live In Yugoslavia" album. Again police raided the record company and the distributors and seized 5,000 copies of the LP. Three months later a compromise was reached and the LP was released, with the five supposedly obscene words bleeped(23). However the LP was further delayed by staff at the Damont pressing plant refusing to handle

it, although it was later pressed by the Orlake company and went on to top the NME Independent Charts.

So what was the fuss about? "So What" relates a young man's exploits, setting the lyrics to a somewhat heavy-handed punk back-beat. The singer asks "So fucking what?" as the song begins and then recites his exploits, including fellatio on an old man, bestiality, drinking urine, injecting heroin, getting pubic lice and VD, and underage sex with a schoolgirl. To all these admissions the singer retorts: "So what - you boring little cunt?". The general tone of the record could fairly be described as "over the top". It is in a similar vein to that of rugby songs and the style throughout verges on punk parody. It is closer in spirit to the Barron Knights than to The Clash.

The narrator's boasts are as much improbable as impressive. The tone is: "I've done all these things and I don't give a fuck, what have you done?" It is not a particularly articulate lyric, still less is it impressive musically, yet it is hard to see it as obscene. To do so the Bromley magistrates must have taken the lyrics at literal face value with no regard for context or the exaggerated bragging style of the singer. Like the Christian fundamentalists I look at later(24), the magistrates missed the parody here.

More pertinently the record does not, as far as I can tell, meet the criterion for obscenity laid down by the 1959 Act. This talks of articles depraving and corrupting "persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear

the matter contained or embodied in it". The potential audience must therefore be considered(25). The band's audience would most likely have consisted of hard-core punks (not the children Whitehouse mentions) who were unlikely to be depraved and corrupted by swearing. In any case, swear words are **not** enough to make an article obscene under the terms of the Act, as was noted in the case discussed next. The record was never likely to receive airplay, which further limited its potential audience. Perhaps it is the casual listener who has this record inflicted upon them by friends, or others, that was to be protected by the destruction of the record - which had by then already sold 36,000 copies(26).

Whatever the merits of the case, "So What" has the distinction of being the first pop record in Britain to be convicted under its obscenity laws. But the 1959 Act was also used against another relatively obscure band in the 1980s.

Spectrum Records and Crass

In August 1984 police raided the Spectrum Records shop in Northwich, Cheshire, and seized 19 records by artists such as Crass, the Dead Kennedys, Icons of Filth and Crucifix. The raid allegedly came 'after the father of a boy who had bought a record had complained to the police'(27), but the fact that much of the material involved here was overtly anarchist was not lost on those subsequently involved in the case. I noted earlier that left-field music has had a tendency to suffer disproportionate censorship and

this is one example. Shop-owner Graham Cheadle was charged under Section 3 of the 1959 Act and had to appear before magistrates to show good reason why the seized records should not be destroyed.

The case came before Northwich magistrates on August 30 1984. Cheadle was found guilty, the seizure order upheld and Cheadle ordered to pay costs of £100. The magistrates opined that 'there is a lowering of standards and we feel we should do our best to halt such a fall in standards. It's in young people's interests that we do so'(28) - an expression of ethical evangelism not required by the 1959 Act.

One of the bands whose records had been seized, Crass(29), were amongst those who saw the case as having political overtones. Member Penny Rimbaud claimed that: 'we've been picked on because we are a small label and we've taken a stand about real obscenities like the Falklands war.'(30) Further credence was given to this theory by the fact that the defence had played parts of one of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's swearing-dominated "Derek and Clive" albums to the magistrates, whose reasoning in deeming this legal and the anarchist albums illegal became hard to follow.

Crass set out to back an appeal and enlisted the support of the independent network, believing that the case had implications far outside the narrow confines of Northwich. Crass' objectives were: '(a) to get the verdict reversed and (b) to defend the rights of retailers, labels and distributors to handle the material of their own choice, free from the risk of prosecution'(31). Labels, such as Abstract, Alternative Tentacles, Factory and Fast Forward

donated money to the defence. The appeal was granted and heard at Chester Crown Court, before Judge Robin David, on 4 January 1985.

Crass' lawyers believed that they had good grounds for appealing because the magistrates had misdirected the original case by talking of the lowering of standards in society and so on. They opined that: 'It is clear that the Court applied the wrong test and were concerned only to find four letter words without considering the underlying message'(32). Crass agreed that the magistrates had singled out the swearing, but believed that this was done precisely as a pretext for stifling that underlying, anarchist, message.

The judge also concluded that the magistrates ~~had~~ wrongly singled out the swearing, without considering context and the records' likely audience. Cheadle had meanwhile withdrawn from his appeal without telling the court and, as a result, forfeiture orders against his stock were upheld. A policeman, acting as a DJ, played the confiscated records to Judge David and two magistrates. The judge concluded that none of the records, with one exception, were obscene. Records cleared included Crass' "Sheep Farming In The Falklands", "Whodunnit" and "Bullshit Two", Dirt's "Never Mind The Dirt, Here's The Bollocks" (a parody of the Sex Pistols album title which, the judge noted, was seized purely because of its title and was nowhere near the legal definition of obscenity) and the Icons Of Filth's "Used, Abused and Unamused". The record found to be obscene was Crass' album, "Penis Envy". In particular the first track on the album, "Bata Motel" was deemed by the judge to be 'quite clearly obscene'(33). Again this appears contrary to the

1959 Act which requires the work to be taken "as a whole".

The judge said the cleared records were 'crude, vulgar and they consist to a large extent of abusive rubbish but they don't tend to deprave and corrupt' and he also ruled that 'bad language does not satisfy the test of obscenity'(34). But he refused to award costs to Crass' distribution company, Exit Stencil Ltd, who brought the case as: 'They have been trading on the borders of obscenity'(35). Crass felt vindicated as their two aims, of overturning the original verdict and showing that the independent network could work together to defend artistic freedom, had largely been achieved. As the case was brought under Section 3 it only applied to the seized stock, although the potential for another prosecution elsewhere was a possibility, albeit a remote one.

But the case proved expensive for Crass, eventually costing them in the region of £5,000(36). This caused a sense of weariness and demoralisation in their ranks, which resulted in them abandoning their musical activities. Unknown censors had achieved the ultimate stifling of a voice of dissent, by forcing Crass to question whether the hassles were worth it.

They were also left with the impression that, having gone so far, the Court was reluctant to let them get away scot-free and so convicted a record that would not normally be deemed to be obscene. Certainly the singling out of "Bata Motel", which contains no swear words, in contrast to other tracks on the album, was strange. The album's tone is avowedly feminist and "Bata Motel" is a spoof of marriage and/or prostitution in which the female singer invites

the listener to use and abuse her in various ways. It is hardly subtle (Crass seldom were), but again its parodic quality seemed to escape the Court. Once again the only way to find this track "obscene" would be to take it totally at face value. Even given a misunderstanding of the genre such a mistake would be hard to make. In this light Crass' belief that "Bata Motel" was found guilty because the Court wanted to salvage **something** from the prosecution gains plausibility. It remains one of only two records successfully prosecuted under the Act - but law is only one way of skinning the censorial cat. Nor was this the end of attempts to legally define pop as obscene.

Eastern Bloc and A Flux of Pink Indians

The punk band Flux of Pink Indians released their album "The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks" on the One Little Indian label in the spring of 1984. Like Crass, the band had a confrontational approach, and the title was the culmination of this, being inspired by the problems the band were having with violence at its gigs. The "cunts" of the title were both those who disrupted the gigs and those who made daily life hard for punks. Band member Derek Birkett later admitted that the title was somewhat heavy-handed, but said that this was a deliberate, Dadaist-style, ploy to get publicity and thus the album's feminist message into places it would not otherwise reach(37).

The title certainly attracted publicity. HMV and Our Price

were amongst multiple stores who refused to stock it and an unsuccessful attempt was made to prosecute a shop in Scotland which sold the album(38). But although it sold well enough to get near the top of the Independent album charts, it sold less than some of Flux's other releases - possibly due to the somewhat extreme and uncompromising nature of the music(39).

As major retailers refused to stock the album, it was mainly available through independent local record shops, including Manchester's Eastern Bloc, which specialised in independent music and also sold various magazines, including anarchist ones. The shop's proprietors believed that it was this activity that first aroused the interest of Manchester police, whose Chief Constable was then the renowned puritanical Christian James Anderton, again linking religion and censorship and showing the effect of locality on the censorial climate(40).

In September 1987(41), four years after the album's release, police raided Eastern Bloc, again following an alleged complaint from "a member of the public". Although a large amount of stock was examined **only** the Flux album was seized and Martin Price, one of the shop's three joint-owners, was warned that he could face prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act or for indecent display - as the album had been displayed in the shop's window. Again the independent network sprung into action. One Little Indian organised a Defence Fund, telling companies who didn't give a donation that it would go through **their** catalogues looking for potentially obscene material and start to bring prosecutions

against them.

The album was sent to the DPP, who decided that a case under the 1959 Act was not viable. Manchester police then decided to prosecute for "obscene display" and this case came to court in September 1988. Price conducted his own defence in the magistrates court, which soon led to an adjournment. The case suffered further adjournments and this led the police to drop the case because it was costing too much. Price felt that this was effectively saying morality is capable of being bought. He had been willing to go to court to defend his morality, the police had put a price tag on theirs(42).

This was not Eastern Bloc's last run-in with Manchester police. In January 1990 it was charged, under the 1981 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, with selling tickets for illegal raves. This prosecution was brought privately by Anderton himself(43), fuelling the shop's belief in a vendetta against it - a belief enhanced by the fact that the police had also raided the shop's **legal** Christmas party that was being held in a disused warehouse, with the owners' permission. Again the priority police forces give to such work means that the amount of censorship one is likely to be subject to in Britain varies regionally. Certainly with Anderton as Chief Constable Manchester was seen at the forefront of the battle against all things obscene with pop being one of those alleged "obscenities". The attempted prosecution of the Flux album centred on its cover and covers were also to be at the centre of attempted censorship prosecution in 1991.

Earache Records

The Nottingham-based Earache Records label specialises in the Death Metal and Speed Metal. Much of the material it releases is extreme inasmuch as it takes Heavy Metal to its (il)logical extremes(44). The label's acts include Napalm Death, Lawnmower Deth and Sore Throat, whose claim to fame is the 101 track CD "Disgrace To the Corpse Of Sid" album. Earache is a label whose tongue is firmly in its cheek.

On 27 March 1991 its offices were raided by police with a warrant to look for "obscene articles and associated documentation kept for gain". A large amount of stock was seized, including demo tapes sent in by unknown bands, covers of LPs by groups such as the Filthy Christians and Torture Garden and an Alice Cooper poster, complete with blu-tak! (see photocopies of warrant and schedule overleaf).

Most of the stock was soon returned but three covers were kept and sent on to the DPP for possible prosecution under the 1959 Act. These covers were from the following LPs - Carcass' "Reek of Putrifaction" (this features a collage of dismembered and scared body parts, knives, charred bodies etc), the same band's "Symphonies of Sickness" (here a plain black cover opens up to reveal a collage of meat, eyes, maggot infested faces etc. This was the Observer's LP of the year in 1989) and Cadaver's "Hallucinating Anxiety" (which features an animal's eye, maggots and what appear to be part of an animal's brain, all on a sheet).

WARRANT TO ENTER AND SEARCH PREMISES

(P.A.C.E. Act 1984 s.15)

COUNTY OF NOTTINGHAM

PETTY SESSIONAL DIVISION OF NOTTINGHAM (CODE

COPY

On this day an application was made by: (specify name of applicant)

SHARON ELIZABETH SIDDULPH, WPC 89

for the issue of a warrant under (state enactment under which warrant is to be issued)

SECTION 3 OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACT 1959

to enter and search the premises situated at (specify premises)

EAR ACHIE RECORDS, ROOM 19, WESTMINSTER BUILDINGS, THEATRE SQUARE, NOTTINGHAM.

and search for (identify, so far as possible the articles or persons to be sought)

OBSCENE ARTICLES AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION KEPT FOR GAIN.

Authority is hereby given for any constable, accompanied by such person or persons as are necessary for the purposes of the search, to enter the said premises on one occasion only within one month from the date of issue of this warrant and to search for the articles or persons in respect of which the above application is made. A copy of this warrant should be left with the occupier of the premises or, in his absence, a person who appears to be in charge of the premises or, if no such person is present, in a prominent place on the premises

Authority is also given to any constable to enter the said premises if need be by force, and to search the premises and any person found therein.

Dated the 29.3.99

Issued at 10.00 a.m./p.m.

See Over for Articles Found or Seized.

Justice of the Peace.
Kacker
Certified a True Copy

Plate A

VICE SQUAD PROPERTY SCHEDULE

OFFICER IN CHARGE: P.W. 89. B. ABDULAH OFFICER DEALING: P.W. 89. B. ABDULAH

TIME AND DATE: 1025 HRS 27TH MARCH 1991

LOCATION: FABRICATION RECORDS, RM. 19, WESTMINSTER BARRACKS, NOT.

C.T.F.P. No 49191 WARE PROPERTY STORED: VICE SQUAD OFFICE

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	12 x Filmy Christians LP SIEVES
2	12 x Filmy Christians LP records
3	5 x Torture garden LP SIEVES
4	5 x Torture garden LP records
5	6 x Hallucinating anxiety LP SIEVES
6	6 x Hallucinating anxiety LP records
7	16 x Carcass LP LP SIEVES
8	16 x Carcass LP records
9	24 x Symphonies of Sickness LP SIEVES
10	24 x Symphonies of Sickness LP records
11	1 x Meat Slices / Regurgitate Semen CASSETTE CASE
12	1 x REEL OF purgation CASSETTE CASE
13	1 x REEL OF defecation CASSETTE
14	16 x Torture garden CASSETTE CASES
15	16 x Torture garden CASSETTES
16	1 x Necrotomy, Cranial Dismemberment CASSETTE CASE
17	1 x D&B TOK CASSETTE
18	1 x Hallucinating anxiety CASSETTE CASES
19	1 x Hallucinating anxiety CASSETTES
20	9 x Symphonies of Sickness CASSETTE CASES
21	9 x Symphonies of Sickness CASSETTES
22	33 x Filmy Christians CASSETTE CASES
23	33 x Filmy Christians CASSETTES
24	1 x Naked City CD CASE
25	1 x Naked City CD

Plate B

0.7.7.7. No 29121.....

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
26	6 x Carcass CD CASES
27	6 x Carcass CD'S
28	5 x Army Case Christians Co CASES
29	5 x Army Christians CD'S
30	Cases of newspaper comment (under Crown Hill in cabinet)
31	Texture jacket graphics
32	Photographs of animals? magnet in cabinet
33	Dissemination graphic Pudge funeral
34	AG - Case poster (blue tab)
35	Fax copies of Dennis (scissors/paper exposed) re issue Feb 15th 91
36	Hilton Bank
37	Quantity of Noked City poster

Plate C

None of the covers is exactly pleasant to look at and, with this in mind, it is hard to see how any of them could pass the legal criterion of having "a tendency to deprave and corrupt". They are more likely to induce vomiting than corruption. This being so, a prosecution under the 1959 Act always looked likely to fail, which raises the question of why Earache were singled out. This time the ubiquitous "member of the public" was not mentioned. Instead it appears likely that Nottingham Police were tipped off by Customs who earlier in the year had confiscated two photographs of autopsies, which were sent to Earache for consideration as album covers by American musician John Zorn. The threat of prosecution of the seized covers could be seen as a way of saying "watch your step", and certainly both Earache and Carcass subsequently adopted a more cautious approach to what they deemed as suitable material for their covers.

Whatever the facts about who decided to raid Earache (and returned pop censorship to Nottingham, host to The Sex Pistols case 14 years previously), the DPP could find no case for them to answer. The case fizzled out in November 1991 when the police telephoned Earache and told them to collect their stock. Carcass were adamant in arguing that the covers were part of their overall statement and thus attempts to censor them covers were effectively attempts to censor the band itself(45). Meanwhile, another form of confrontational music, rap, was rising as an international phenomenon. It was this music that led to what is arguably the most

significant legal case surrounding allegedly "obscene" pop music thus far in Britain.

Niggers With Attitude and "Efil4zaggin"

Niggers With Attitude (NWA) are a hardcore rap band from LA. By the time the "Efil4zaggin" ("Niggaz for life" spelt backwards) case came up in Britain they had already been embroiled in controversy. Their first, critically-acclaimed, album, "Straight Outta Compton", sold well in America, but the FBI objected to one track, "Fuck Tha Police", which, in an adapted causal argument, they claimed 'encourages violence against, and disrespect for, law enforcement officers.'(46) When NWA played Britain in 1990 local councillor Alan Blumenthal tried to get the song cut from their Birmingham show(47). As already noted, in November 1990 many major retailers refused to stock their "100 Miles & Runnin'" single in 12 inch format, because of the track "Just Don't Bite It", which dealt with oral sex(48).

"Efil4zaggin" was released in Britain, via the Island subsidiary, 4th and Broadway, on Monday 3 June 1991. On Tuesday 4 June the Metropolitan Police raided the distributors, Polygram's, plant in Chadwell Heath and seized some 12,000 copies of the album. The raid apparently followed 'a complaint to New Scotland Yard from a record dealer who'd been sent an advance tape of the LP by Island Records'(49). The raid took place after a story about it appeared in the Daily Mail(50).

It came despite the fact that the record cover had two warning stickers on it, the original, PMRC-derived, American warning of "Parental Advisory Explicit Lyrics" and a second from Island which read: "This record contains explicit language. It should not be played in the presence of minors!". Apparently this was insufficient and an attempt was made to bring the weight of the law to bear upon a popular music record. Island was warned that it faced prosecution under the 1959 Act and copies of the record were sent to the DPP. That the police expected a successful prosecution is evidenced by a letter from the Metropolitan Police to the National Campaign for the Reform of The Obscene Publications Act (NCROPA) which stated that the Service 'has chosen to adopt this course of action because it feels it is fully supported by existing legislation'(51). Article 19 joined NCROPA in protesting against the raid, but the Campaign Against Pornography (CAP) supported the police's action and described the album as: 'Open season on women'(52).

The case was significant in that it was the first time that a **major** as opposed to independent, label had been involved in an obscenity case that centred on the music. Polygram, the distributors and Island's owners, agreed with Island, the publishers, on the need to defend the record. Unlike Crass, WXYZ, Eastern Bloc, and Earache, who either had to rely on the goodwill of others to fight the case, or to simply give in, or face bankruptcy, Island and Polygram could draw upon vast resources and afford to hire the finest legal representatives. They chose

Geoffrey Robertson - possibly the country's leading expert on obscenity law.

The case attracted the sort of mainstream media attention that was notably absent in the Crass and Anti Nowhere League cases(53), although the issue involved was essentially the same - freedom of speech versus the need to guard against "obscenity". Island's Managing Director Marc Marot determined from the start to make a spirited defence of the album. He attacked the BPI for adopting a "softly softly" approach of giving Island legal and media-handling advice, but refusing to get publicly involved in defending the album, despite the fact that a number of BPI members such as Polygram (distributors) and MCA (publishers) had a stake in the outcome.

Marot wrote an article for Vox magazine defending the album, where he argued that 'the potential to be offended is one of the prices that we pay for a free society'(54). He favourably quoted Music Week editor Steve Redmond's point that, whilst the album might be offensive to many, 'it is a lot less offensive than the prospect of policemen building bonfires for pop records'(55). Marot summed up that: 'NWA is not great art; this is not a debate about aesthetic merit. It is about freedom of speech and your right to choose'(56). As I noted in the introduction, it is interesting that the defence was couched in terms of ethics rather than aesthetics.

When I interviewed Marot he said that Island had thought long and hard about releasing the LP. The apparently sexist nature of many lyrics had troubled him, but he thought that it was clear that

much of this was reportage, not advocacy. It was story-telling in the first person. NWA portrayed attitudes of pimps and others in the American ghettos, but did not advocate those attitudes. The language on the album reflected the relevant attitudes and lifestyles(57).

When questioned about the dubious morality of making money out of a record that included the killing of prostitutes and rape with a broomstick, Marot said that, whilst Island might make some money out of it, their prime reason in putting out the album was aesthetic. The company had a U2 LP coming out the following week and by comparison in Britain NWA were of no financial importance. Marot also pointed out that he was a well-paid young man who was risking a possible jail term, with all the disruption that would cause his family, in order to stand by the album(58). It would be easy to be cynical about this, but Marot seemed sincere.

In the end such martyrdom was unnecessary. The case was soon taken down the judicial scale when the DPP decided to prosecute under Section 3 of the 1959 Act, rather than under Section 2. So it was heard at a magistrates court and the issue was destruction of the albums, rather than involving a jury trial and a possible prison sentence(59). There is even evidence to suggest that the police would have dropped the case had Island agreed to the destruction of the seized copies(60). The case was set for Redbridge Magistrates Court on September 4, but adjourned to November 7 when magistrates ruled that the album was **not** obscene under the terms of the 1959 Act. They therefore ordered that the

confiscated stock be returned and that the Metropolitan police pay costs of £1,000 to Island and £350 to Polygram.

During the case the record was played in court and Robertson, defending, said that rap was street journalism that sounded crude to the untrained ear, but was 'all part of the experience. It tells it like it is'.(61) This defence fits with the Millian tradition of defending free speech on the grounds of it being a prerequisite of the search for truth. Robertson brandished pornographic magazines that were freely available in Redbridge newsagents which were designed to arouse lust which the LP was **not** designed to do. He said 'This record arouses fear, concern and distaste. It does not arouse lust'.(62) This proved to be the crux of the matter. The record might well offend, but it did not "tend to deprave and corrupt". The law requires that the potential audience be considered and the Home Office had opined that 'material which would tend to deprave and corrupt young people and was aimed at them might be caught even if it was harmless to adults.'(63) Here Robertson successfully argued that: "The people who are likely to hear it will be the people who are likely to seek it out'(64).

The defendants were not slow to herald their victory and 2,000 posters were issued defending the right to free speech(65). However, as noted in the previous chapter, Island soon turned censor itself when it refused to issue Ice Cube's "Death Certificate" album in Britain until two tracks were taken off(66).

Meanwhile a spokesman for civil liberties group Liberty, said: 'We welcome this verdict. It was a small but important case

for the industry. It's time to review the whole working of the Obscene Publications Act... NWA were lucky that Polygram were big enough to take on the Crown Prosecution Service, independent record producers couldn't possibly afford it'(67). So, as in the labels example, we see how the amount of censorship an artist is likely to suffer is often linked to their commercial clout, a fact further evidenced by the different decisions in the NWA and Anti Nowhere League cases.

After the NWA verdict Tory MP Sir Michael Neubert tabled a written question in the Commons asking the Home Secretary whether 'in the light of the judgement in the NWA case... he will bring forward proposals to amend the Obscene Publications Act 1959'(68). Neubert wanted the law strengthened as he believed that: 'This record crosses the boundary into extreme violence, and it is not something that society should condone'(69). He admitted to uncertainty as to how the law should be changed, but thought it should be via government, rather than the customary Private Member initiative(70).

Home Office Minister John Patten replied that he couldn't comment on specific cases but that: 'The Government recognises that there is concern about the effectiveness of the Obscene Publications Act 1959. This is traditionally an area for Private members and the Government is prepared to support proposals for amendments which would make the law more effective and which appear likely to command sufficient public and parliamentary support'(71).

Whilst this is a somewhat cautious answer it does mean that

pop is far from being in the clear. A tightening up of the law could hit various records and Marot has said that: 'If the law had been different at the time, we might not have put the album out at all.'(72) As it wasn't, why was the case brought? Partly because the "tendency to deprave and corrupt" is not enshrined in stone, but open to varying interpretations and thus to constant re-negotiation and embattlement.

This was a landmark case in a number of ways. It was the first time a major label had been forced to defend its musical product in court from charges brought under British obscenity laws. It may also mark the end of attempts to prosecute records under the 1959 Act. Certainly if "Efil4zaggin" is not "obscene", it is hard to think of a record that is. On grounds of sexism alone, it is offensive in ways that "So What" and "Bata Motel" do not even approach. The album contains the killing of prostitutes and the portrayal of women as merely sexual pawns. We are told how "To Kill A Hooker", which will leave "One Less Bitch" to worry about. The narrator tells us of his joy when "She Swallowed It" and tells another woman "I'd Rather Fuck You".

This is not easy listening, but it is not meant to be. Hardcore rap is problematic precisely because it does not accept the conventions that (white) liberals and other "progressives" would set up. It often seeks to portray the reality of American low-life, as it is, not as it might be. Rap is the ultimate in confrontational music thus far and alienates both left and right. Conservatives wince at the bad language and radical politics,

progressives can accept these but can't countenance the large amounts of sexism and, less frequently, racism. Whether rap's attempts to portray reality is an legitimate reason for its excesses remains a moot point.

I would be loathe to see "Efil4zaggin" banned and, whilst the case was going on, it seemed ludicrous to me that a Number One album in America was effectively banned here for four months. I felt somehow less free in this respect than my American counterparts and this worried me. NWA's is not a comforting voice, neither were any of the other records (or sleeves) that attempts were made to prosecute. But they were voices that should be heard. They were voices of scorn, anger, contempt, outrage, disgust and they provoked similar responses from those who sought their banning. Britain may not be a better place artistically for the likes of Crass and NWA, but it is certainly a much more vibrant place **politically**. These were examples of voices of dissent. They are on the extremes of the pop world, but it is here that much of what is interesting and new in the pop world initially comes. There have been relatively few cases in Britain of attempts to stifle those extremes. It is my hope that the evidence here has exposed both the arbitrariness and futility of such attempts(73).

Sampling: Censorship Via Copyright?

In October 1991, as the NWA case continued, Customs seized 800 copies of Swedish death metal band Dismember's "Like An Ever

Flowing Stream". The case finally came before Yarmouth magistrates in August 1992. Here Stephen Harvey QC, prosecuting for Customs, used the causal argument that songs such as "Skin Her Alive" were 'liable to inspire a sense of violence in the listener'(74). But magistrates were not convinced and allowed the appeal by Plastic Head distributors. A Customs spokesman said: 'It's a worry for us that this sort of music can now be heard by teenagers in Britain'(75) - again linking concern for children with censorial intent. But, as such attempts often concentrate on lyrics, death metal may prove illusive for censors as often the lyrics simply cannot be made out. This case appears to have been the first example of a Customs seizing a record since the Snivelling Shits' "Terminal Stupid", which was pressed in France, was seized at Heathrow in 1977 before being allowed in(76).

Whilst the Earache was also linked to Customs, a more important development in censorship disputes was that of sampling as rap rose in the 1980s. There is not space to enter into the complexity of copyright here, but Toop sums up the present (1993) legal situation thus:

'The 1956 Copyright Act was amended in 1988 to take this explosion of sampling into account. If the sample is qualitative a distinct sound is discernible to the average ear; or quantitative, the number of notes lifted from one track, and placed in another, or bearing a strong enough resemblance to the average ear, copyright is breached.'(77)

Frith has called the control of copyright 'a form of

copyright'(78) and it certainly has censorial implications, as being unable to sample means artists may not be able to create the music they want. A number of cases arose in the late 1980s and I shall note a few here. Perhaps the most infamous case thus far concerned the JAMMS' album, "1987 What The Fuck's Going On". A track here, "The Queen and I", used large sections of ABBA's "Dancing Queen". ABBA refused to allow such usage and ordered that all copies be returned and destroyed. When an attempt to meet ABBA failed the band burnt all the remaining copies they had - an event recaptured in their KLF incarnation as the track "Build A Fire" on "The White Room".

Most other cases so far have been settled out of court. Artists seem to accept being sampled as long as they are paid, although some consideration is given to whether the track is detrimental to the "original" version. Stock Aitken and Waterman settled out of court when MARRS used a slice of their "Roadblock" single for the 1987 Number One, "Pump Up The Volume". Despite industry opinion that 'sampling is theft'(79) the same sources admit that it is unlikely to stop(80). But NME has alleged that not being able to use a sample of Marc Cohn's "Walking In Memphis" stopped Shut Up and Dance's "Raving, I'm Raving" getting to Number One in 1992 after legal action by Cohn stopped further pressing of the record(81). Other examples of such censorship include The Orb having to cut a Rickie Lee Jones spoken intro from their "Little Fluffy Clouds"(82) and Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine being prevented from putting "After The Watershed" onto their "Love"

album after being sued by The Rolling Stones for using, but **not** sampling, the line "Goodbye Ruby Tuesday".

Sampling raises a number of issues about authorship, ownership of rights, "definitive" versions of tracks and so on(83). There is not space to debate all this here, but the issue **is** also one of censorship. A common culture is being separated into ownership rights and then sold. Artists who plundered the blues, like the Stones, have become over-protective of their own derivative creations. Ironically here it may be the smallest that benefit as it is only worth suing once a record becomes commercially successful enough to warrant damages that will cover the legal fees. Sampling is therefore de facto permitted at home, as long as it's not subsequently successfully marketed. But ownership of rights, done in the name of protecting musicians' interests, is de facto limiting the creative potential of others. This is, at least, covert censorship by legal mechanisms.

For example, in August 1991 Central Television prevented a band called Skin Up releasing a single called "Blockbusters". Based on the popular television show of the same name, where contestants ask the compere for clues beginning with certain letters, the record featured an acid house beat and the refrain: "I'll have an "E" please Bob" - a joke reference to ecstasy. After the Daily Star condemned it as 'a sick record about drugs'(84), Central took steps to stop copies reaching the shops(85). The same year the BBC got a court injunction preventing the release of a joke single by Verbal Vandalism. Called "Rhondda Rap" it featured out-takes of an BBC

interview with then Labour leader Neil Kinnock in which he said 'I don't give a sod about politics'(86). The BBC objected to breach of copyright, although Kinnock apparently had no objections.

Other Legal Cases

If, as I have argued, pop is about more than music, then legal attempts at stifling its non-musical aspects also need noting. This primarily involves t-shirt prosecutions. In 1977 a girl in Liverpool was fined for wearing a badge advertising Wayne County's "Fuck Off" single(87). Another fan was fined for wearing the Stiff Records t-shirt with the logo: "If It Ain't Stiff It Ain't Worth a Fuck"(88). In 1980 Peter Shaw, a 19 year old Crass fan was sent to detention centre for three months for singing a sacrilegious Crass song at a priest at York railway station(89). In 1990 an Inspiral Carpets fan in Coventry was charged under the 1981 Indecent Displays Act for wearing the band's "Cool As Fuck" t-shirt(90). Another in Bradford was conditionally discharged(91). In 1992 the phrase "Let's Fuck" on a t-shirt saw an attempt to prosecute a Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy fan(92).

Other artists were unable to call their bands as they wished. Marvel Comics forced Captain America to rename themselves Eugenius and Bomb Disneyland were forced to become Bomb Everything. More ominously Leeds anarchist band Chumbawamba reported that the Home Office had threatened to look closely at their political activities should they release, as planned, a single about Princess Diana

called "Never say Di/For The Love of a Princess"(93).

Overall the acquittal of "Efil4zaggin" makes it unlikely that a successful prosecution of a record **can** now be brought under the 1959 Act. However, this is **not** the same as saying that the days of pop records, still less pop paraphernalia, being taken to court are over. Calls to tighten up the obscenity law are continually being made by various interests, including The Obscene Publications Squad(94) and Tory MPs such as Neubert and Michael Stephens(95). A moralistic future government, of whatever political shade, could heed those calls. The impact of this upon pop would not be liberatory. The 1959 Act was not envisaged for use against pop, but has been. A more draconian law could well be more freely used. This is speculation about the future, but I shall move to examine another area where law and regulation greatly effects the output of pop - that of broadcasting(96).

Notes

(1) For more on the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 see Robertson, 1991, pp182-199. For more see summary by Michael Stephens MP see Hansard 9/7/82 Col 681.

(2) Whitehouse has said the law as it stands is of no use as it is impossible to prove a tendency to deprave and corrupt, see her, 1985, p61 and NVALA, 1990. The Arts Council described the law as "rubbish" in 1969 - see Hewison, 1986, p171 and the Williams Committee, 1980, p19 had a subheading of: 'The chaos of the present law'.

- (3) Individual police forces set up obscene publications squads at their discretion. This began in 1970 - see Hall et al, 1978, p287.
- (4) Palmer, 1972, p167 also notes that such a person started the Oz case and on p217 notes their almost mythical status.
- (5) NME 3/2/79.
- (6) ibid
- (7) See p101 above.
- (8) Wood, 1988.
- (9) See Savage, 1991a, p424.
- (10) NME 3/12/77. See this for more details of the case. See Savage, 1991a, pp424 and 425 for more.
- (11) NME 3/12/77.
- (12) Savage, 1991a, p425.
- (13) ibid Emphasis mine.
- (14) NME 3/12/77. Emphasis mine.
- (15) For a romantic approval of this record see Pattison, 1987, p112.
- (16) NME of 12/12/87 defined indie labels as 'those which receive no aid whatsoever from major companies and release their records through such distributors as The Cartel'.
- (17) MM 20/2/84.
- (18) See Whitehouse, 1982, pp132-133.
- (19) Beyer, 1992.
- (20) Whitehouse, 1982, p132.
- (21) ibid
- (22) NME 3/7/83.

- (23) NME 24/9/83.
- (24) See, for example, p516 below.
- (25) See Robertson and Nicol, 1984, p71 for more details.
- (26) NME 25/9/82.
- (27) Sounds 8/9/84.
- (28) NME 8 July 1984.
- (29) For more on Grass see pp133, 136, 306 and 586/587.
- (30) Sounds 8/9/84.
- (31) NME 27/10/84. It should be noted that, in a personal interview, Rimbaud was an "absolutist" on free speech.
- (32) Foskett, Marr, Gadsby and Head, 1984.
- (33) Sounds 19/1/85.
- (34) ibid
- (35) ibid
- (36) Grass, 1991.
- (37) Birkett, 1991.
- (38) NME 12/7/87.
- (39) Birkett, 1991.
- (40) In 1977 Anderton, newly appointed, launched 286 vice squad raids. In 1976 there had been 5. See Sutherland, 1982, p163.
- (41) 1987 was something of a vintage year for censorship, see Wells, 1987.
- (42) Price, 1991.
- (43) NME 13/1/90.
- (44) For more on Earache and death and speed metal see Spence, 1988.

- (45) Carcass, 1991.
- (46) Goffe, 1989.
- (47) Halassa, 1990.
- (48) See pp130-138 above. The Labour Party also opposed this record, see p596 below.
- (49) MM 15/6/91. NME of this date also reported the complaint as having come from a retailer. Marot, 1991b, said one theory was that a buyer at HMV may have approached the Obscene Publications Squad to see if its staff might face prosecution for selling the record. Another theory was that the complaint came from a union official at Polygram, the distributor.
- (50) Marot, 1991b.
- (51) Metropolitan Police, 1991.
- (52) Longrigg, 1991.
- (53) For example, see Toop, 1991a and Longrigg, 1991.
- (54) Marot, 1991a.
- (55) ibid
- (56) Vox November 1991.
- (57) Marot 1991b.
- (58) ibid
- (59) See pp145/146 for details of the 1959 Act.
- (60) I have a reliable source, who wishes to remain anonymous, for this information.
- (61) Guardian 8/11/91.
- (62) ibid
- (63) Home Office, 1991.

- (64) Guardian 8/11/91.
- (65) NME 23/11/91.
- (66) See p109 above.
- (67) NME 16/11/91.
- (68) Hansard 12/11/91 p 439.
- (69) Select January 1992.
- (70) Neubert, 1992.
- (71) Hansard, 12/11/91. p439.
- (72) Select January 1992.
- (73) It is also worth noting that the only successful prosecutions of records centred upon their lyrics. Attempts at prosecuting covers have always been unsuccessful.
- (74) Heller, 1992, p3. See NME 8/8/92 for more details.
- (75) Heller, 1992, p4.
- (76) See NME 5/11/77.
- (77) Toop, 1991a p76. For more on copyright see McFarlane, 1989, Frith, 1988, Bagehot, 1992. See also Beedle, 1993, pp197-209.
- (78) Frith, 1988, p72. At the IASPM conference of 1993 Richard Peterson also spoke of copyright being a form of censorship.
- (79) Andrew Jenkins, Polydor UK Legal Department, Radio One 22/1/91.
- (80) ibid
- (81) NME 19/26/12/92. For other cases see Bomb The Bass' "Beat Dis" in NME 27/288 and Black Box's "Ride on Time" in NME 20/10/89.
- (82) See NME 25/7/92.
- (83) For more on sampling see Goodwin, 1990a, Gray, 1987 and

Beedle, 1993.

(84) NME 24/8/91.

(85) ibid. This case was also discussed on Radio One, 1993b.

(86) Observer 3/11/91, Guardian 12/11/91 and NME 16/11/91.

(87) Savage, 1991a, p577.

(88) Robertson, 1991, p91. See NME 21/28/12/91 p47 for the importance of t-shirts to bands.

(89) Sounds 7/5/80.

(90) NME 28/7/90.

(91) MM 15/8/92.

(92) NME 20/6/92.

(93) NME 25/7/92.

(94) Gay Times July 1992.

(95) See Hansard 9/7/92 pp678-689 for Stephens on the need for new obscenity legislation.

(96) For musicians trouble with the law see Romney, 1987.

PART THREE: BROADCASTING

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: BRITISH BROADCASTING AND THE LAW

Censorship of broadcasting is an area where the layperson feels at home. Almost everyone can remember examples of the bannings of various television programmes and records(1). Space limits the amount of the censorial history of British broadcasting I can cover here(2), but broadcasting's censorial potential is well documented, with Street noting that 'the media's most obvious role is as a censor'(3). The next two chapters outline that censorial history.

British broadcasting is one of the oldest in the world. The BBC formed in 1922 and became a public corporation by Royal Charter in 1927, changing from a (private) "company" to a (public) "corporation". It was immediately debarred from broadcasting "controversial material"(4). It was, and still is, governed by a Charter, the licence terms of which are periodically renewable by parliament. The present licence expires on 31 December 1996 and its renewal has provoked much debate, including a government white paper and a BBC response(5). Part of the charter obliges the BBC to 'not offend against good taste and decency' nor 'to encourage crime and disorder' or to transmit material 'offensive to public feeling'(6). The problem is that, as Tracey and Morrison have pointed out, this implies an orthodoxy about "decency" which simply does not exist(7). That being the case the BBC has been left to **interpret** this part of the charter and has, as we shall see, often done so in a censorial way with regard to pop.

The BBC began television broadcasting in 1936 and had a

monopoly in British broadcasting until the establishment of commercial television under the Television Act of 1954, which set up the Independent Television Association (ITA). A further Act in 1964 extended the life of this association. By this time the BBC had agreed to follow taste and decency guidelines applicable to the commercial stations(8). This then, was the situation at the time in which this thesis begins.

In 1972 the Sound Broadcasting Act created the Independent Broadcasting Association (IBA) which replaced the ITA and covered both television and the newly-created independent local radio (ILR) stations, the first of which, LBC and Capital, began broadcasting in October 1973. The 1980 Broadcasting Act extended the life of the IBA, but it was abolished under the terms of the 1990 Broadcasting Act(9). This set up two bodies to regulate the commercial sector, the Radio Authority and the Independent Television Commission (ITC), both of whom are responsible for supervising licence renewals (subject to a bidding system) and programme content.

The Act extended the Obscene Publications Act to cover television and paved the way for more commercial radio stations such as Jazz FM, Kiss FM (both local), Classic FM (the first national commercial) and, most recently, Virgin, Britain's first national commercial pop station. The Radio Authority has the power to close down stations which broadcast offensive material. It has yet to do this, but it refused to intervene when Jazz FM sacked one of its directors and DJs, Giles Peterson, for playing a selection of "peace music" before the start of the Gulf war in 1991. Despite protests from listeners, the Authority ruled that it was an

internal matter beyond their remit, although it upheld a complaint against Jazz FM for broadcasting Peterson's opinions, contrary to the requirements of political impartiality contained in the 1990 Act(10).

The ITC has yet to become embroiled in major controversies over pop, which partly reflects the fact that the 1990 Act also set up a new statutory body to oversee standards of decency in all radio and television networks - the Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC). It was this organisation which upheld complaints against the BBC for playing The Shamen's "Ebenezer Goode" in 1992(11). It supplemented the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, which was set up in 1981 to monitor unfair treatment and invasions of privacy. The BSC is funded by the Home Office and in 1992 it was still under its first chair, William Rees-Mogg, a man who favours putting back television's "watershed" time from 9pm to 10pm(12).

Pop was one of the BSC's immediate concerns. Its first Code of Practice warned that: 'Pop videos... should observe the limits applied to drama, bearing in mind the times at which they are to be transmitted. The precise time of scheduling of **all** pop videos should be chosen with care.'(13) This effectively noted the offensive potential of pop and upheld the notion of a "watershed". Comparatively few complaints to the BSC get upheld(14), but this might be because broadcasters have trodden warily, rather than because the BSC lacked censorial imperative. Its future is in doubt as the Labour Party is committed to its abolition and the Conservatives favour merging it with the BCC(15).

The 1990 Act also saw moves against subliminal messages in

music, which I shall deal with in greater depth in the chapter on religion(16). Section 90(a) of the Act forbids the broadcasting of anything 'which offends against good taste' and part (c) requires the Radio Authority to ensure:

'that its programmes do not include any technique which exploits the possibility of conveying a message to, or otherwise influencing the minds of persons listening to the programmes without their being aware, or fully aware, of what has occurred.'(17)

This implicitly bans any recording containing backward messages, provided that it could be proved that these messages convey a message the listener is unaware of. Alex Maloney, of Face the Music Ministries(18), has claimed the credit for getting this clause in the Act, after help from the Conservative MP Andrew Bowden. Section 6 of the Act places similar restrictions on the use of subliminals on television, although the British Psychological Society has doubted that such messages can effect viewers or listeners(19). The use of subliminals take us into then world of high tech, but censorship in British broadcasting has a much longer tradition, which I shall now explore.

Notes

(1) See BSC, 1991, p29 for the ability of Radio One listeners to recall bans by the station.

(2) For the history of broadcasting see Briggs' four volumes of A History of Broadcasting in The United Kingdom.

(3) Street, 1986, p113.

- (4) Briggs, 1979, p367.
- (5) See National Heritage Dept, 1992 and BBC, 1992.
- (6) Whitehouse, 1982, p86
- (7) See Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p119.
- (8) See Durham, 1991, p76.
- (9) The IBA was allegedly abolished after its refusal to ban the Thames documentary "Death On The Rock" had upset Margaret Thatcher. See New Statesman 26/8/88 p12.
- (10) For details of the Peterson affair see NME 9/2/91. For the Radio Authority's ruling see their Complaints Bulletin No1, April 1991.
- (11) See pp226 and 280 below.
- (12) See Rees-Mogg interview, Evening Standard 22/1/92. For Mogg's over-view of his time at BSC see him, 1992. For an opposing view see Fraser, 1993. In June 1993 Mogg was replaced by Lady Home see Guardian 5/6/93. For a profile of her see Independent 9/6/93.
- (13) BSC, 1989, p40.
- (14) For example Viewer and Listener Autumn 1992 and Spring 1993. Fraser, 1993, called the BSC 'absurdly powerless'.
- (15) See IOC Vol 21 No 5 May 1992 p34.
- (16) See pp517-524 below.
- (17) Broadcasting Act, 1990.
- (18) For more on Maloney see pp491-547 below.
- (19) See British Psychological Society, 1992.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"WHAT'S THAT SOUND?" -

CONTROL AND CENSORSHIP OF BRITISH POP RADIO

The influence, both historic and contemporary, of radio on the course of popular music is hard to over-estimate(1). Despite the importance of video, and the likelihood of this increasing still further as satellite television takes off in Britain, radio remains of vital import. For example, a March 1990 survey found that: 'More people buy records after hearing them on the radio than any other form of advertising or promotion.'(2) For the more romantic pop fan there is nothing like hearing **your** current favourite blasting out of the radio. Hearing pop across the airwaves remains **the** definitive moment for many fans. So Chambers argues that 'radio is where pop has its daily currency.'(3)

Nowhere is this fact more realised than within the pop industry itself. For example, Morrissey noted that, when deciding which track to release as a single, 'Radio 1 has to be taken into consideration'(4). Negus has also noted how artists' material will be deliberately altered, or censored, in order to make it "radio friendly"(5). Albums may be where the big profits lie, but singles can create interest in those albums and, as such, the control of what gets heard on the radio becomes crucially important. The hours record company pluggers spend trying to get their records on the Radio One playlist (of which more below) is testament to this.

Here I shall briefly outline the history of radio in Britain,

the progress of popular music within it, the "pirates" that have attempted to undermine official radio and various bans that have occurred during the period this thesis covers. I shall concentrate most heavily on the BBC and One because, as Barnard notes, the BBC tradition has had enormous impact on the **whole** of British radio(6).

One reason for beginning the thesis in 1967 is that it sees arguably one of the most censorial government actions of all against popular music - the passing of the Marine, &c, Broadcasting (Offences) Act which outlawed the "pirates" and led to BBC monopolisation of the airwaves and the setting up of One. Henceforth any discussion of censorship and popular music in Britain would have to include discussion of "The Nation's No 1". But in order to understand the censorial, and general, role of One we need to look at the overall history of radio in Britain.

British Radio - An Overview(1)

Marconi patented his invention in 1896, but government interest in the medium really began in 1914 with the realisation that it was a means by which an enemy could contact the British public and vice versa. Hind and Mosco say that, with this realisation: 'The clampdown began.'(2) Henceforth there was a fairly rapid movement toward bringing the airwaves under state control. In 1921 a licensing system was set up, allowing 4,000 members of the public being to receive signals and a further 150 the privilege of legal transmission(3). From this point on the

government was to rule Britannia's (air)waves.

Such rule was further entrenched by the setting up of the BBC in 1926. Like the company which preceded it, the Corporation had a monopoly on broadcasting. The British Broadcasting Company was, after reports by the Sykes Committee (1923) and the Crawford Committee (1925) allowed to continue until January 1 1927 when the British Broadcasting Corporation, under the director generalship of John Reith, took over.

Reith aimed to simultaneously "elevate and educate" the tastes of the audience(4). One result was a policy where "culture" and "entertainment" were put into two diametrically opposed camps. Barnard describes how, under Reith, the three types of contemporary pop - light, pop and dance band - were placed aesthetically under the superior realm of classical and 'represented entertainment rather than culture.'(5) Music was **either "entertainment" or "culture"** and never the twain shall meet. The importance of this divide is that its legacy continues today(6).

The BBC operated a dual form of censorship from the start and, again, this continues today. The most obvious form of censorship, outright banning, is, paradoxically, the least common. The second is, arguably, the more insidious. This is the ignoring, or marginalisation, of certain genres.

I shall deal with the issue of direct bans on records in some detail when I examine the role of Radio One. Here it is enough to note that the BBC was always wary of upsetting the public. There were periodic examples both of forms of censorship from the start.

Up until 1929 vocal choruses and the announcement of titles by dance bands was forbidden and "scat" singing was banned in 1936(7). The term "hot jazz" was forbidden in the 1930s(8). The war saw greater control and bans for such records as "Santa Claus Is Bringing You Home For Christmas" and "Deep In The Heart Of Texas", the latter because listeners in munitions factories were wont to stop work and join in with the clapping at the appropriate time(9).

The other form of censorship, ignoring or marginalising certain genres, was also prevalent. In the early 1930s, notes Chambers, 'jazz was excluded from the BBC'(10), Briggs reports that **all** pop was carefully vetted for offence in the 1940s(11) and Barnard writes that, in the 1950's: 'Rock 'n' roll was held at arm's length by the BBC'(12). In the early 1960s the BBC deemed American Rhythm and Blues 'unsuitable for British audiences'(13) and Mosco and Hind claim that 'black music has received a consistently raw deal on radio.'(14) Rock and roll was kept out, skiffle welcomed(15). This is what one might term a very British form of censorship. It is censorship not by banning(16), but by exclusion. This carries on in the exclusion of genres like folk, reggae and jazz from Radio One - partly due to lack of time, but often because of the continued perception of the two audiences(17).

The war saw radio split into the Home Service and the Forces Network. In 1945 the Home Service continued, the Forces Network became the Light Programme and a new service, the Third Programme was introduced in 1946. The Third Programme came to incorporate Network 3, which became the Music Programme in 1964. Whilst the BBC

initially kept its monopoly, the post war period saw a slow movement towards privatising broadcasting, accelerated by the arrival of commercial television in 1954, which returned debates over whether broadcasting should be publicly or commercially financed to the political agenda. Up to this point the BBC had faced only limited opposition in the form of Radio Luxembourg which began broadcasting to Britain in 1933, but, as it only broadcast in the evenings, was never a real threat to One in 1967(18).

The BBC's emphasis on high culture meant that it was ill-prepared for the arrival of rock and roll(19), and subsequently the rise of The Beatles, both of which led to a dramatic increase in interest in popular culture. It was prone to accusations of being out of touch with a substantial section of the listening public. The amount of records it could play was also limited by its "needletime" agreement, negotiated by the Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) who collected royalty payments due for the playing of particular recordings.

"Needletime" was based on the principle that the use of recorded music meant a corresponding lack of work for "live" musicians. It was designed to protect musicians' employment and to ensure that royalties were paid for the use of recorded material and dated from the 1920s(20). Chapman argues that whilst pop had a low place in the BBC's list of priorities, its response to rock 'n' roll was further hampered by "needletime" which allowed only 28 hours a week for records(21). Whatever its intent, needletime **did** contribute to a lessening of pop on the BBC. Radio One initially

had to share an allocation of seven hours a day for records with Radio Two. Although One was able to broadcast 24 hours a day from 1 May 1991, "needletime" has an important place in the history of pop on the radio - showing the continual battle that took place over what, and for how long, listeners got to hear.

Throughout this time listeners had recourse to complaint via various committees and programmes but then, as now, little, if any, control over content. As noted elsewhere(22), it is to the credit of Whitehouse that she initiated debate on the accountability of the BBC. The BBC became detached from its audience and thus vulnerable to attack from those who were more in touch. This attack came from pirates.

Pop Radio Fights The Law - Pirate Radio

Although the main period of the pirates - 1964 to 1967(1) - mostly falls outside the years covered by this thesis, some understanding of them is necessary in order to appraise the role of One, which followed(2). But avoiding mythologising the pirates - which not all commentators have done - is important. Although their silencing is certainly an example of direct government control and censoring of pop, this was **not** a case of a golden age of pop radio being crushed by a faceless bureaucratic government. Chapman notes that **any** government would have had to close them down, none could have tolerated continued flouting of the law(3).

John Peel believes that the pirates, with their forced

cheerfulness and superficiality, 'militated **against** an appreciation of pop as anything other than a background sound.'(4) For Chapman, whilst the pirates can be credited with catering for a disenfranchised pop audience: 'It is a major misconception about the pirates... that they were merely "floating juke boxes", playing a non-stop diet of pop... there was in fact always a great deal of diversity in the pirates' programming.'(5) The myth is of "doing it for the kids", the overwhelming reality was of profit-motivated entrepreneurs aiming for the highest possible audience and playing whatever would attract the adult listeners the advertisers sought. But Chapman also notes that the pirates often covered the black music that the BBC was then ignoring(6).

None of the 21 pirates active from 1964 to 1967 was national and most aimed at the lucrative south east market. Many sought legitimation, which meant, says Chapman, that: 'some pirates constructed for themselves codes of behaviour every bit as restrictive as those observed by the legal broadcasters.'(7) That the pirates represented a different type of autocracy, rather than any step towards democratic pop broadcasting, is evidenced by Peel's comment that, in comparison to One, 'there were more disciplines on London, they banned more records'(8). One example was "Pink Floyd's "Arnold Layne", banned by London for being "smutty"(9). Tony Blackburn says that Caroline 'Was very heavily controlled. We didn't have any say in the records we played'(10). Overall, suggests Chapman, 'Radio London played a gatekeeper role every bit as selectively and severely as the BBC.'(11)

Caroline started broadcasting on Good Friday, 29 March, 1964 and the other main pirate, London, began on December 23. Outside of their owners and listeners initial reaction to the pirates was almost uniformly hostile. Criticism centred on interference with emergency service wavelengths, not paying royalties(12), lowering broadcasting standards and so on. Tribune attacked them as populist opportunists, Conservative MP Robin Cooke as potential broadcasters of Communist and Fascist propaganda(13). The press, fearing loss of advertising revenue was also hostile, as was, not surprisingly, the BBC.

Soon demands for government action grew, although Labour MP Hugh Jenkins, realised that: 'If the BBC had met needs, the pirates would never have arisen.'(14) The Minister responsible for broadcasting, Postmaster General Tony Benn, claimed in March 1966 that 'the BBC had exposed itself to private competition by policy refusal to meet what most people wanted.'(15) Benn moved to Technology before moves against the pirates were completed, but his successor, Edward Short apparently took more delight in taking on the pirates(16).

Pressure for action grew in the wake of the publicity surrounding the death of Radio City owner Reg Calvert on 11 June 1966 in a shooting related to a dispute with another pirate company, with possible underworld involvement(17). This provided an incentive for the government to move and a Bill outlawing broadcasting from offshore rigs and supplying them was published on 2 July 1966, gained Royal Assent on 14 July and became law on

midnight 14 August 1967.

Before the Act became law the government had used the 1947 Wireless Telegraphy Act to harass the pirates resident in sea forts. By the time the 1967 Act came into force only Caroline was putting up much resistance. One began broadcasting six weeks later - although the Labour government of the day would not acknowledge the link between these two events.

The question remains as to whether the banning of the pirates was **the** most significant censorial action that has taken place in the history of popular music in Britain thus far, or whether one should be more cautious with that assignation. At the time The Raver column in MM saw the demise of the pirates as part of a wider campaign against pop(18), but on balance it appears that, whilst one form of pop expression was undoubtedly outlawed, fans lost little that was innovative or informative. The pirates' output was primarily mainstream and seekers after more jazz or folk, for example, would have been disappointed. The needs of advertisers, not fans, were foremost in the minds of most pirate operators.

Payola was common, if not rife. Towards the end Caroline became little more than an outlet for records on the Major Minor label, run by one of its executives, Phil Solomon(19). The last Radio London chart contained 18 records that had yet to be released(20). Chapman notes that The Small Faces and The Jimi Hendrix Experience benefited from payola(21), although he admits that it only affected the lower part of the chart and that its 'effect on the Top 20 was negligible'(22). But payola undermined

any positive contribution the pirates may have made.

But 1967 was not the end of the pirates. 1968 saw an all-night vigil held outside GPO offices in London(23) and a rally for Free radio was held in Trafalgar Square in August 1969(24). The 1970s saw only sporadic pirate activity(25) - but included the jailing, under the 1967 Act, of John Jackson-Hunter, a Liverpool DJ who had displayed a Caroline sticker on his car windscreen. Refusing to pay a fine of £500 for advertising the station, he went to jail for 60 days(26). 1977 saw a convention celebrating ten years since the pirates' demise(27) and by the early 1980s pirates were again being heard. By now One was well entrenched and the principle of commercial radio had been conceded with the arrival of the ILRs in 1973. However there some sections of the pop audience who felt that their radio needs were still not being met.

The new pirates operated on the mainland and were primarily based in an area the original pirates never succeeded in properly reaching - London(28). They were also more fan-orientated than the 1960s pirates in that they covered a wider range of musical genres. By 1983 they attracted favourable reports in the music press(29). The 1984 Telecommunications Act ended many of them as the DTI stepped up raids and prosecutions. Despite this London-based Solar claimed an audience of 1.45 Million for its weekend broadcasts(30).

The most successful pirate of the mid 1980s was Laser, an American media-backed station began broadcasting to the UK in May 1984. It circumvented the 1967 Act by broadcasting from international waters. A purely commercial enterprise, it claimed an

audience of 5 million in November 1984(31). But payola raised its head with allegations that the station was charging £65 a day for plays on its independent show(32).

By the late 1980s pirates were again common in London(33) and some, following the 1990 Broadcasting Act's provisions for more commercial radio stations, made the step from piracy to legality. Kiss FM is a paradigmatic case. Motivations for piracy varied, but many of them catered for a gap in the market - be it for hip-hop, as in London's LWR or a local community radio such as London Greek Radio. The censorial point about all this is that many felt themselves compelled into piracy by the legal stations ignoring their musical tastes.

They also suffered problems similar to those that plagued their predecessors. Apart from government action, there have also been various reports of damage done by rivals(34) and of payola. In 1988 Amrik Rai, manager of Krush, admitted that he spent £400 getting the group's "House Arrest" single - which made the Top 5 in the chart - six weeks blanket coverage on various London pirates, saying it was 'worth every penny'(35). Again this was attributed to a need for alternative outlets as Capital and One failed to meet a demand for a specific genre of music - in this case club-based dance music. Radio One's failings were specifically mentioned here and we should now turn our attention to Britain's most important radio station.

"The Station of **Which** Nation?" - The Role of Radio One

Radio One was born as the monopoly station of British pop on 30 September 1967. By 1992 it had 22.4% of the British radio audience, with 16.5 million people listening for at least five minutes a week(1). In 1967 MM welcomed it by proclaiming that: 'Britain's music fans can't lose. They'll get music all day every day.'(2) The following week it heralded One's launch as 'the day that the establishment finally admitted that the majority of the population is under 30 and that most of them would rather hear Procol Harum than Max Jaffa.'(3) Radio One seemed off to a flying start - although some noted that it played less black music than the pirates(4).

But complaints from within the pop world about the state of One were not slow in coming. Problems centred around its lack of autonomy, as it had to share its 7 hours a day of "needletime" with Radio Two(5). Some DJs were hardly hip. It is often recalled how Tony Blackburn opened up Radio One with the Move's "Flowers In The Rain", it is less seldom noted that the next DJ on Radio One was family entertainer Leslie Crowther. In-house BBC bands continued to do cover versions of hits(6) and listeners were treated to daily songs and recipes from MOR crooner Jimmy Young. Radio One lost all autonomy at night when it joined Radio Two at 7.30pm until its closedown at 2am. Within three weeks of its launch this middle of the road approach attracted complaints in MM(7). Radio One was hardly a relinquishment of BBC power to that of youth and by

December MM was asking if the BBC establishment was out to deliberately undermine it(8).

However audience response, numerically, was good and One was not afraid to court controversy, as shown by a John Peel programme of 21 September 1968 on the contentious issue of censorship and pop lyrics. But it was continually accused of being out of touch, not youth-orientated enough(9) and of concentration on singles when the pop audience was moving towards albums. Crucially, its monopoly position was attacked. Lack of competition was cited as the reason for it being out of touch and MM advocated commercial radio(10). Again the censorial point was often that One was ignoring certain genres.

In April 1970 One got more autonomy from Two during the week and was given a new progressive rock show(11). Again a Reithian divide was apparent. The Sounds Of The Seventies programme that followed was on in the evening - "rock" began to find its marginal niche, away from the daytime diet of "pop". Partly this reflected an actual divide as the broadsheet press began to review progressive LPs and the music press, aided by industry marketing, began to distinguish "pop groups" (entertainment) from "rock bands" (culture). Moreover, Chapman contends that: 'Progressive rock was a recognisable part of the BBC middle-class cultural and intellectual milieu in a way that, say, soul or reggae could never have been and enjoyed a monopoly on promotion that was denied most forms of black music.'(12) If progressive rock was on the sidelines, reggae was denied all access to the game.

Meanwhile the battle was on for One's continued existence. Conservative victory in the 1970 general election meant that free-market arguments about broadcasting were again heard. Rumours circulated that One would be replaced by commercial radio(13). One's defence was to point to its popularity, noting that Blackburn's Breakfast Show had an audience of 8 million(14). This defence continued a Reithian divide in that it defended the public broadcasting of pop in terms of entertainment, not cultural, value.

But One survived as the government opted for the introduction of local, rather than national, commercial radio. The BBC used Radio Two, not One, to counter the ILRs, getting it 15 hours more a week needletime, whilst One got none. Cutbacks at the BBC meant that One once again joined Two during the day in early 1975, although this change was reversed later in the year. After eight years of One, many still questioned the BBC's commitment to the station. Former One DJ Stuart Henry took the view that the BBC 'never really took Radio One into their hearts.. the BBC has always thought Radio One is a wee bit **common**, a wee bit **dirty** and a wee bit **plebeian**.' The problem was that rock 'shits and pees in places that Aunty Maud wouldn't like, whereas the BBC is irrevocably with good taste.'(15) Henry was pointing out that pop had been foisted upon the BBC and was **not** its cultural priority. When cutbacks came One was always at the forefront. A subtle form of censorship via denial of resources was in play.

The 1977 Annan Report criticised One for being too chart-orientated and recommended that it increase the range of its

output. By this time punk was creating pop history - much of which went unrecorded by One. Whilst Peel championed it, punk was excluded from daytime One. It was abrasive and hard listening, not the background sounds One envisaged for its daytime audience. Radio One didn't overtly ban many punk records, its censorship was again the more subtle one of ignoring and marginalising.

But punk had made One look out of touch and Barnard reports that its staff 'wore their hipness on their sleeves'(16) after 1977. It got greater autonomy on January 1979 when it was further separated from Two - between 6am and midnight. But in March 1980 it was reported that One was cutting its airtime because BBC economics meant it couldn't afford PPL fees(17). However by the end of the 1980s One was established as the most listened to popular music station in Britain and it moved to 24 hours a day broadcasting in May 1991. Various changes took place in its structure, but it continued to be chart-orientated and face allegations of ignoring certain genres of music. In part this was due to the widely held orthodoxy at One of a strict division between daytime and night audiences which I shall now examine.

Radio One's Two Audiences

Radio One upheld its Reithian heritage via a notion of two audiences, one which wishes to be "entertained" whilst they are at work (inside, or outside, the home) and one which comes home from work (or, importantly, an educational institution) and seeks

"cultural" experience via the less mainstream music which can be played at night. Whilst artists, such as Prince, who cross this divide show its arbitrariness, it has important ramifications. The two audiences, One argues, require different styles of programmes and music. Former Controller Derek Chinnery characterised the divide as being 'between programmes of background music and those of "music that perhaps requires **more actual listening** rather than being a background to other activities.'"(1) This has had the net effect of ghettoising certain types of music. What matters to the vast majority of the audience is what gets played in the day and this invariably centres upon the chart. The evening slots are defined precisely by their commitment to non-chart music.

The belief that the audience is divisible into two has deep roots at One, going back as far as 1967(2). Radio One reflected an apparent divide between rock and pop by producing a Reithian split of daytime fodder for the masses and more thoughtful programmes for aesthetes in the evenings. Chinnery said of progressive rock: 'I don't believe that there is anything to be gained by playing it on mainstream radio'.(3) So One separated out certain genres of music, rather than incorporating them into daytime schedules(4).

Chinnery's successor as Controller, Johnny Beerling, shared this view, believing radio's value to be that 'it's a secondary activity' and that 'the majority of people who want new music and serious presentation aren't there during the day.'(5) So, Barnard explains that: 'Radio 1 categorises popular music as **either** easy listening background music **or** as a culturally valid, quasi

classical music requiring isolation to the periphery of the schedules, both in deference to its assumed superiority to standard pop fare and to prevent it disrupting mainstream programming.'(6)

But the whole question of a passive daytime audience is a contentious one (especially as unemployed aesthetes listen in) that One would simply not take on board. Its philosophy is "Ratings by day, reputation by night"(7). The censorial problem is that this involves a denial of certain genres plays during the day. For example, Beerling said that black funk records 'don't generally sound good on radio'(8). Punk, hip hop, hardcore thrash and rap, most world music etc are all deemed unsuitable for daytime One. It is **not** the case that One panders to the charts (although they form a backdrop to much of what it does), but it **is** the case that such genres don't get the daytime coverage they may merit simply because they do not fit in with One's idea of a "station sound". This subtle form of censorship helps perpetuate the myth of some popular music being pap and some culturally valid and plays into the hands of those who see all pop as pap. One result is that when censorship of pop **does** occur it is not held to be as serious as if, for example, novels are censored.

This is not to deny the good that One has done. Its indulgences with Peel over the years have been admirable. It is unlikely that a commercial station, based on selling audiences to advertisers, could have been so indulgent. The issue still remains, however, as to why music of the highly varied styles that Peel plays is put out in a ghetto slot, which has long been a complaint

of fans(9). The demarcation of pop and rock on One in March 1971 was shown by an advertisement for an LP by "heavy" band Marsupilami in MM which carried the caption: "It'll never make the Jimmy Young Show", in order to boost its credibility(10).

Radio One has always had problems in covering the spectrum of popular music. In 1968 programme chief Robin Scott said his main problem was deciding 'to what extent does (a genre)... warrant a specialist programme'(11) and Beerling also commented on the problems of minority music(12). But neither of them envisaged a more eclectic selection of music as a viable alternative - the "station sound" was to be sacrosanct.

Various artists suffered. In the late 1970s Grass, a band with a major cult following, were ignored(13). In the mid 1980s Matt Johnson of The The and Marc Almond complained that even after they had had hits One ignored the follow-up single(14). Alan McGee, head of the Creation independent label, complained in 1988 that: 'None of our bands has ever been on daytime Radio One... It's patronising and safe'(15) and Martin Gore of Depeche Mode said: 'We've never been banned, just relegated to the evening shows'(16).

But Radio One's demarcation strategy has not always met with audience approval. In May 1976 5,000 Teds marched to One and demanded a greater representation of rock and roll. This led to a 13 week series called "It's Rock and Roll"(17). A later campaign on commercial radio stations was less successful(18). In August 1986 Gary Numan fans picketed Radio One to protest at the lack of airplay he was receiving(19).

These two examples reflect a concern that One has continually censored by exclusion a number of musicians and genres. Where it hasn't omitted them it has often put them into ghetto spots, partly because of its (mis)conception of having to cater for two audiences, rather than believing that pop is capable of being a valid cultural medium at any time of the day. It is not argued that Radio Three's audience is so divided, and so should have classical music only at night, so why is this "fact" accepted for One? A tendency to promote "chart friendly" material over pop which is made for albums is apparent. This tendency finds expression in the next area I shall examine - that of the playlist.

Deciding Who Gets On - The Radio One Playlist(1)

Street has commented that, whilst bans may be interesting: 'What is of greater concern are the records that disappear before they even reach the public'(2). The playlist is often where records "disappear" and getting on it has been described as 'as good as having your number come up on the roulette table'(3) - such is its importance to a record's success. In 1992 One's playlist operated on its daytime shows during the week from 4am to 7pm and consisted of half of the music in those shows. It had three parts - A, B and C. The A list consisted of 20 records which got around 15 plays a week, the B list was 20 records to get around 10 plays and the C list up to 10 records which got a few plays a week.

It was first introduced on to One in 1973 in order to combat

the launch of the ILRs and a feeling that chart hits were being heard too infrequently(4). Since then it has undergone various modifications(5), during which One has continually sought to underplay its importance to an artist's chances of commercial success. In 1992 it was drawn up once a week, with input from various producers, DJs, secretaries etc with a wide range of tastes, under the supervision of playlist committee chair, Paul Robinson. In this sense One is much more democratic than commercial stations where one person, the Controller, often draws up the list(6). The defining parameters of what gets on are somewhat intangible, but even a Number One hit is not always enough to guarantee it, as Iron Maiden found in January 1991 when their "Bring Your Daughter To The Slaughter", got to that position but was not playlisted by One.

Contrarily, getting Radio One plays **has** helped records success. In 1971 Tony Blackburn's continual playing of Diana Ross' "I'm Still Waiting" was vital in getting Motown to release it and make it a Number One hit. In 1981 Fred Wedlock's "The Oldest Swinger In Town" got a general release on the Rocket label following repeated exposure on the Noel Edmonds Show. Several other examples could be included and this often none-too-subtle form of patronage is of censorial importance as it again leads to the promotion of certain genres at the expense of others. One may draw up its playlist more democratically than the commercial stations, but its in-house values appear so entrenched that real innovation is impossible.

To a certain extent what goes into decisions with regard to playlisting is an intangible quality - Robinson has talked of a "gut feeling"(7), but the importance is that it restricts the daily fayre of the pop audience and is designed by people whose overriding criterion is to make the "station sound" as appealing as possible to the greatest number of people. This will automatically exclude genres such as hardcore rap and punk whose artists often set out to aggravate by their sound(8). The playlist is an agenda-setting item in British pop and remains contentious more for what it excludes than for what it includes - a situation which appears unlikely to improve if One is forced more and more into playing the ratings game. But what of bans themselves?

Banned On The One(1)

I have delayed this section not because I regard it as unimportant - on the contrary I believe that each banned record is in a sense a cultural landmark - but because I agree with Street and Barnard(2) that the more insidious processes of ignoring and marginalisation of genres is more important on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, the most obvious public manifestation of disapproval is actual bans and detailed attention to them is therefore needed. Whilst outright bans are rare, their net effect has often been to show what British society was concerned about at particular times, again linking censorship to contemporary events. Some concerns last for years, others seem quaint in retrospect. Thus the ban on The

Beatles "A Day In The Life" seems absurd when taken out of the context of increasing concern about the recreational use of drugs in 1967, but the ban on Wings' "Give Ireland Back To The Irish" is more understandable, if no more defensible, in the context of continuing conflict in the north of that country.

What strikes the casual observer of censorship on One is that their apparent inconsistency. This is true of censorship in general, but rather than attribute it here to the mysteries of BBC bureaucracy, it may be better to account for it by considering changing social mores (although One has been inconsistent **within** particular times as well as **between** them). This is not to say that records deemed offensive in one age will **automatically** be seen as innocent in another, but to reiterate that the boundaries of acceptability are constantly changing. Bans on Judge Dread records may appear laughable in 1993, but *homophobia, for example, may be less tolerated than previously*(3). It is within this context of changing social mores that One has to work. It has to make sometimes difficult decisions about what its audience will accept **now**(4) - without worrying what researchers and academics make of it in posterity.

The simplest way of approaching bans is to group them under broad subject areas and I shall do this here. The main areas I shall be concerned with are sex, politics, advertising, drugs, general "offence" and children. Whilst all these areas are of continuing concern, the degree to which they are prominent varies along with the social context within which they are observed. They

overlap and their own boundaries of acceptability constantly change. In this respect they may be the paradigmatic case of censorship's link to contemporary mores and, often, events. It should also be noted that "censorship" here includes playing records only after the 9pm "watershed" and carefully placing them, as well as outright bans

I Don't Want Your Sex

The first record banned by Radio One was Scott Walker's cover of the Jacques Brel's "Jacky" in December 1967(1). Ironically it came just a month after the BBC had denied a ban on The Mindbenders' "Schoolgirl", which dealt with teenage pregnancy, by saying: 'We never ban records. The question of plays is at the discretion of individual producers.'(2) "Jacky" was banned because it was deemed "bawdy" in containing references to "authentic queers" and "phoney virgins" (3). It led to a protest by Walker's fans outside Broadcasting House at which a placard bearing the words "bring back the pirates" was seen(4). The record was later deemed suitable for only night time scheduling(5). In 1991 Marc Almond covered the song and received daytime plays without having any problems.

In 1969 One banned Max Romeo's "Wet Dream", which contained the chorus: "Lie down girl let me push it up, push it up, lie down". The BBC at first denied it had banned the record(6), despite it having received no airplay and reaching the charts via its

popularity in the clubs. Later it became apparent that it ~~had~~ been banned and it was reported that Alan Freeman wouldn't even mention the record's title when giving the chart rundown, referring to it simply as "a record by Max Romeo"(7).

The same year One banned, retrospectively, the Peter Sarstedt song "Take Off Your Clothes". A taped version of the song was broadcast on the lunchtime Radio One Club in July 1969. After several complaints a BBC spokesman said: 'It should never have been broadcast. We are very sorry. The tape was played in error. It will not be played again.'(8)

The most infamous ban of 1969, that of Serge Gainsbourg's and Jane Birkin's "Je T'Aime", again concerned sex. The record consisted of a harmonium back-beat with heavy breathing over it and again the BBC was coy about declaring the ban. Initially it said that: 'There is no list of banned records, and producers make their own decisions about what to play.' Later this was amended to a position that: 'The record is not considered suitable for play'(9). As it neared the top of the charts the BBC got positively edgy and announced that it would not allow it on Top of the Pops, even if it got to Number 1 and a plan was initiated to play the instrumental version by Sounds Nice should that happen(10). This proved unnecessary as it peaked at Number two. In December 1974, when the song was released for the third time, the BBC announced that it did not plan to playlist it(11).

By 1972 the BBC's nervousness had shown few signs of receding. In this year Judge Dread began releasing a series of

suitably-amended nursery rhymes with a reggae back-beat, which told seaside-postcard style stories. He began with "Big Six" and went up to "Big Ten" and all were banned by the BBC. Dread saw himself as in the Max Miller tradition(12), but this was a tradition One had no intention of endorsing. Dread enjoyed chart success from September 1972 ("Big Six") to August 1976 ("Y Viva Suspenders"), all with little or no play from One. The records were risqué, but seldom obscene (swearing was present only in double-entendres). That they were not heard on One is hardly cultural deprivation - but it did mean a veto on a very popular artist.

Sex was also the reason behind another ban in 1972 - that on Wings' "Hi Hi Hi"(13). Although often seen as being a ban based on drug references(14) (the chorus talks of getting "High High High"), the lines the BBC initially objected were of a sexual nature and spoke of lying on a bed, with a "body gun" and of "doing it" "like a rabbit"(15). MM wrote that: 'it is difficult to see who, among those who listen to enjoy popular music could find anything offensive in the song.'(16) Indeed, the record seems innocuous now, but MM here saw One's audience and the pop audience as being the same thing, which is not necessarily the case. The "pop audience" may have been broad-minded, but the BBC obviously felt that One's was not.

The possible consequences of sex were also kept from One's audience. In August 1973 Procol Harum's "Souvenir of London", which dealt with VD, was banned. The band got round this by promoting the B side, "Toujours L'Amour", to the A side(17). The inconsistency

here was that John Peel had appeared on a Radio Four programme to discuss VD, as was mentioned in the Oz trial(18). Apparently a Radio One DJ could appear on daytime radio elsewhere in the BBC to talk about VD, but pop groups could not address the issue in their songs. One's audience was thus being treated as being immature in more ways than one.

1975 saw heavy breathing return with the orgasmic cries of Donna Summer on her "Love To Love You Baby" single - which Radio Luxembourg played, as it had "Je T'Aime"(19). Again the BBC was reluctant to use the word "ban". Radio One and Two Controller Charles McClelland said that: 'We certainly never use the word "ban" anyway' and that: 'The official policy with records of this nature is that there is no policy - each record is treated purely and simply on its own merits.'(20) He thought that it might get evening plays, but none seems to have occurred. Again inconsistency was apparent as at this time One played both The Who's suggestive "Squeeze Box" and R & J Stone's proclamation that "We Do It". The Summer ban appeared to be purely on the grounds of explicitness. It was noted that 'it seems that as you leave the slightest room for doubt and don't reach orgasm you'll be okay.'(21) But at the same time Capital banned 10CC's "Head Room", because of its theme of masturbation and mention of 'a flick of the wrist'(22).

Punk lyrics were little concerned with sex(23) and so caused few problems in that area, although there are claims that in May 1977 The Stranglers' "Peaches" was banned from One's daytime shows because some lyrics were "unsuitable"(24). There was also no play

for the Buzzcocks' "Orgasm Addict"(25) or X-Ray Spex's "Oh Bondage! Up Yours!"(26). Ivor Biggun's ode to onanism, "The Winkers Song", also reached the charts in 1978 without the benefit of Radio One plays(27). But the main censorship that punk suffered was being marginalised and played only on the "specialist" weekend and evening programmes(28).

Thus far problems with sex had concerned heterosexuality, but homosexuality caused still more problems. When The Tom Robinson Band released its live EP "Rising Free" in February 1978 One gave prominence to the track "Don't Take No For An Answer" and so avoided playing the EP's pivotal track, "Glad To Be Gay", which Capital freely played(29). Again explicitness appeared to be the problem, as The Village People's more discrete gay celebration "YMCA" received One's endorsement later in the year(30).

Rape was the centre of an alleged ban in 1982 when the Special AKA's "The Boiler", which dealt with the subject was dropped by One, after a few evening plays, in the wake of a judge's remarks that a rape victim was guilty of contributory negligence by hitch-hiking alone at night(31) - again an example of contemporary events affecting the censorial climate.

But homosexuality was the subject of the most infamous ban of the 1980s - Frankie Goes To Hollywood's "Relax". This ban was on a record by a band with overtly gay imagery, who advised listeners to: "Relax when you want to come." The campaign against it was initiated by DJ Mike Read, but embarrassing for One because they had played a key role in the band's rise to prominence, giving them

sessions and playing the record some 70 times prior to the ban. Radio One producer Stuart Grundy later described the ban as 'a **terrible** mistake'(32). It was sanctioned by then Controller Chinnery who took a personal dislike to the record after Read started the campaign(33). The euphemism had initially passed Chinnery by, as he said that he only belatedly found out that the song was about fellatio and ejaculation and 'when the performers themselves confirmed it was referring to these sexual aberrations then it didn't seem to me appropriate that we should play it all.'(34) Perhaps Frankie shouldn't say so much.

George Michael was next to encounter One's periodic puritanism with "I Want Your Sex" in June 1987, which was deemed suitable only for broadcasting after 9pm. Beerling explained that: 'we feel this goes too far for daytime radio'(35). A similar restriction was placed on The Tams' "There Ain't Nothing Like Shaggin'" - even though the record was about a dance craze and the word objected to does not have the connotations in America that it does in Britain. After several complaints One explained that: 'If members of the public are offended by the lyric of a song... we have to take a decision about whether we want to offend them. In this case we don't.'(36) Again there is a debate here about the audience's perception of what was acceptable, as the ILRs played the song during the day. Presumably they either felt their audience wouldn't be offended, or were not worried by that possibility.

By 1991 the word "sex" at least was more acceptable to One's sensibilities. In that year Salt 'N' Pepa's "Let's Talk About Sex"

(complete with its tongue in cheek line "Yo Pep, I don't think they're gonna play this on the radio"), Billy Bragg's "Sexuality", La Tour's "People Are Still Having Sex"(37) and Color Me Badd's "I Want To Sex You Up" all received their fair share of daytime plays on One.

Overall there **has** been a movement towards liberalisation in sexual matters, as shown by the playing of "Jacky" in 1991 after its ban in 1967 and by "Relax" now being acceptable(38). But this has by no means been a free for all, nor has it all been one way traffic. One reserves the right to demarcate and thus swearing is still out of bounds in the day and restricted to the night time shows (39). It is no longer as prudish as it was in 1967, but, perhaps understandably, it is not a sexual libertine. Apprehension remains as common as endorsement.

Left On The Shelf - Radio One's Political Bans

The BBC was always wary of political records, banning, for example, Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction" in 1965(1). Prior to this it had had more problems with sacrilegious records than with political ones(2). One's concern with political records began with Wings' "Give Ireland Back to The Irish" which was released, in the aftermath of Derry's Bloody Sunday, in February 1972. The song's title is self-explanatory and the fact that the censorial climate is linked to current affairs is shown by the fact that, as Ireland remains in the headlines, the record was as unlikely to get played

in 1992 as it was in 1972(3). Indeed the likelihood of being banned has **increased** with the government's introduction of a ban on broadcasting statements of organisations supporting terrorism in November 1988. This was shown in the summer of 1991 when radio Merseyside DJ Spencer Leigh was given strict "no songs on Ireland" instruction as he prepared a special programme on censorship(4).

On its original release the title was not allowed to be mentioned as chart run downs were being given(5). Linda McCartney saw the ban as 'symptomatic of Britain **at this moment**, with the miners' strike, Ireland and Rhodesia.'(6) However there appears to have been a hierarchy of sensibilities, as the BBC did not ban a pro-miners record by John and The City Lights(7).

But Ireland was more problematic and in the same month as The Wings' ban One banned McGuinness Flint's anti-internment song, "Let The People Go". Writer Tom McGuinness described this as 'straight forward political censorship'(8) - which indeed it was. But it seemed that as long as records didn't make an overtly political point about Ireland they were acceptable, as the BBC did **not** ban "Belfast '71" by Allan Taylor, which was also released at this time(9). So why the differentiation? Because, said BBC publicist, Rodney Collins: 'The McCartney and McGuinness-Flint records take a definite political standpoint. "Belfast '71" merely comments on the sadness of the situation.'(10)

An air of political cowardice, presented as neutrality, surrounds these bans. "Give Ireland Back To The Irish" is, in its own way, as much a peace anthem as anything else, reflecting a view

that peace will only come once Ireland is given back to the Irish. To declare the desire for Irish unity is in this sense also to declare a desire for peace. "Let The People Go" is much about freedom as it is politics. But whilst it was permitted to describe the "sadness", which is presumably apolitical, of the Irish situation, it was apparently **not** permissible to apportion blame. The BBC later freely played The Special AKA's "Free Nelson Mandela" - but South Africa is a long way away, Ireland is on the doorstep.

Here the BBC interpreted an "impartial" role as being one which vetoed opinions that apportioned blame. A more balanced approach might have been to play **all** the records and thus give as many views as possible. The Charter's requirement of impartiality does **not** necessarily mean a duty to ban unpopular opinions - again showing the importance of the way the BBC **interprets** its charter. The vetoing of "Give Ireland Back To The Irish" meant that the BBC contributed to a stifling of debate on arguably the most important issue in British politics long before the government ban of November 1988. It would be an exaggeration to say that the record could have altered the feelings of those involved, but it **might** have contributed to an understanding of the situation. Instead the BBC chose to stifle dissent, something its charter does **not** require.

The same argument about stifling dissent also applies to the next two bans. Both concern The Sex Pistols and both again show that censorial sensibilities are often atuned to contemporary events. The first ban came immediatley after the Grundy interview

in December 1976(11), which left the Pistols with a high public profile. As the press bayed for blood, One announced that the band's first single, "Anarchy In The UK", would not be played on its daytime shows(12). The logic of this is hard to follow. If, as One claimed, music is merely background in the day, then the record could have been played and few listeners would have even realised who it was. By playing it at night when people were, supposedly, actually **listening** to One increased the chances of offending listeners - the alleged differences in audiences notwithstanding. So Peel played it to his **listening** audience, but daytime DJs were denied the chance to play it to an audience who would have allegedly just treated it as background noise.

This is reflected in the words of then BBC Chairman Michael Swann, who said that:

'The BBC does not as a general rule place an outright ban on the broadcasting of any record... (with "Anarchy") the senior people responsible for the programmes on Radios 1 and 2 decided that it should not be broadcast during the daytime or early evening, when audiences are of extremely varied types of people and much listening is casual. We did not think it right that the content of this record should be suddenly thrust on these audiences. It was thought, however, that it might be played in a late-night programme which has a specialized audience and a serious and respected presenter in John Peel. We were reasonably confident that his comments would place the record in its correct perspective and that, in any case, the members of his particular audience, on

the whole a pretty sophisticated collection of listeners, would be capable of forming their own conclusions about it.'(13)

This is a splendid example of Reithian elitism. The "casual" listeners must not have this record "thrust on" them, but the "sophisticated" evening listener can take it all in their stride and even form their **own** conclusions! Presumably the BBC could form daytime listeners' opinions for them.

The next ban was more overtly political and concerned the band's "God Save The Queen" single. The fact that it was released to tie in with the Jubilee celebrations is crucial in understanding the reaction to it(14). It embarrassed the establishment to have a record apparently calling the queen a "fascist" and a "moron" high in the charts at a time when all the nation was supposedly celebrating 25 years of her reign.

On its release the BBC banned it for being in "gross bad taste" and thus contrary to its Charter, although Peel stuck his neck out and played it twice(15). Others followed the BBC's example and banned the single. The importance of a major contemporary event, Jubilee Week, to the censorial climate is highlighted by BBC spokesman's comment that: 'If it had been at any other time of the year, we might have given it the occasional play.'(16)

"God Save The Queen"'s cultural significance was to represent another side of Britain to the one which the media presented. There were strong rumours that sales figures were falsified to deny it the No 1 spot in Jubilee Week(17) - a highly censorial action - such was the reaction against it. Here again the BBC stifled voices

of dissent. In order to present a (false) picture of a nation united in Royal celebration the single was banned.

As Savage notes: "'God Save The Queen" was the only anti-Jubilee protest, the only rallying call for those who didn't agree with the Queen'(18). It was this voice, of a significant, disenfranchised, minority that the BBC silenced. As the country edged its way towards Thatcherism the BBC had begun censoring dissenting voices. Fifteen years later and out of the Jubilee context the ban appears ridiculous - Spitting Image have, after all, insulted the monarchy in many more ways - but at the time the ban was a highly significant political event. McLaren said the band then released the tamer "Pretty Vacant" to see if the BBC would play **anything** by them(19).

By 1981 One was still wary in the political arena. Its legal department advised Heaven 17 that their hit "We Don't Need This Fascist Groove Thing" libelled American President Ronald Reagan by describing him as a "fascist". This led to the BBC dropping it and to IBA stations banning an advertisement for it. In response the band recorded a special radio version of the song with the lyrics "Reagan, Fascist Guard" changed to "Stateside cowboy guard". But by then it was already slipping down the chart(20).

Two years later, and with the Falklands War over for a year, One showed that it was not just records that it censored. The Icicle Works recorded a session for Peter Powell's evening show which included the song "Gun Boys". But before its broadcast they had to change the line "Remember when the Argies" to "Do you

remember when" and change "So Margaret sent the fleet in" to "And so they sent the fleet in"(21). Again being politically impartial was interpreted as not broadcasting controversial views. The BBC had also banned Julie Covington's "Don't Cry For Me Argentina" during the war itself(22) and Alan Hull's anti-Falklands war single "Malvinas Melody" was also avoided by all radio stations in 1983(23).

Thus far election campaigns had not featured as a contemporary event that would affect pop radio's censorial climate - but this changed in 1987. In the run up to the general election One decided not to play The Blow Monkeys anti-Thatcher single "(Celebrate) The Day After You". A spokesman said that: 'We are not a political organisation and we have to strike a balance in the run up to the general election.'(24) Later One said that: 'The BBC Charter obliges us to refrain from political bias. We're not playing it in the run up to the general election due to its political bias... All the records we are playing now have no political bias.'(25)

However, this was **not** the case. At that time the BBC was playing Labi Sifre's anti-apartheid song "Something Inside (So Strong)" as well as That Petrol Emotion's anti-plastic bullets "Big Decision". A somewhat narrow definition of "political bias" was being employed. Again voices of dissent were being stifled. RCA soon decided to withdraw the single, effectively killing it(26).

In October of the same year One was accused of political cowardice, when the band Baby A claimed that they had been told

that the station wouldn't play their "No Respect" single as it was "politically extreme". The record criticised government policy towards Britain's youth and institutions such as the CBI, MSC and SPG. Phil Ross, producer of One's Janice Long show, said; 'The BBC has to be even handed. If there was a record that said the Labour Party was a bad thing I would think twice before playing that as well.'(27) The record got no airplay and the band faded from sight. Other political records encountered similar ignorals. Steel Pulse's "KKK" 'was ignored by Radio 1' despite charting in 1978(28) and Paul Weller said of his 1984 single in aid of the miners' strike, "Soul Deep": 'They ignored it... which is a lot more effective than banning it.'(29) It is also, of course, harder for the researcher to document! But by far the most publicised ban of the 1990s thus far was initiated not by One but by BBC Radio Training.

This was the infamous list of records that was apparently banned during The Gulf War. It included such innocuous songs as Aha's "Hunting High and Low", Queen's "Flash" and Donny Osmond's "Soldier of Love" (and is included overleaf). It led to much press comment and to a protest "sing-in" outside Broadcasting House on February 9, organised by Musicians Against The War(30).

Radio Training's Tom Neale wrote to the Independent saying that there was: 'No ban - no record declared "unsuitable" - nothing except an attempt to save 37 hard pressed stations around the country (ie the BBC's local radio network) some time and ensure proper care is taken not to cause unnecessary offence.'(31) This seems to be the case and it is worth noting that this **was** a time of

GERRY, JOHN K, MONTY, MAUREEN, UPFRONT, KENNY JOHNSON,
 SPENCER, BILLY B., BILLY MAHER, ROGER LYON, ROGER SUMMERSKILL,
 ROGER HILL, SPORT: ROGER, MARCUS, ROB, ALAN JACKSON, PHIL HILTON,

GULF DISCS: Please think carefully before playing anything of this nature which might upset our listeners. This has been sent to us by Training Unit in London. *Jenny*

ABBA Waterloo
 Under Attack

AHA Hunting High and low
 ALARM 68 Guns

ANIMALS We got to get out of this place
 ARRIVAL I will survive

JOAN BAEZ The night they drove old Dixie down
 BANGLES Walk like an Egyptian
 BEATLES Back in the USSR
 PAT BENATAR Love is a battlefield
 BIG COUNTRY Fields of fire
 BLONDIE Atomic
 BOOMTOWN RATS Don't Like Mondays
 BROOK BROS Warpaint
 CRAZY ..BROWN Fire
 KATE BUSH Army Dreamers

CHER Bang Bang (My baby shot me down)
 ERIC CLAPTON I shot the Sheriff
 PHIL COLLINS In the air tonight
 ELVIS COSTELLO Olivers army
 CUTTING CREW I just died in your arms tonight

SKEETER DAVIS End of the world
 DESMOND DEKKER Israelites
 DIRE STRAITS Brothers in arms
 DURAN DURAN View to a kill

JOSE FELICIANO Light my fire
 FIRST CHOICE Armed and extremely dangerous
 ROBERTA FLACK Killing me softly
 FRANKIE ... Two Tribes

EDDIE GRANT Living on the frontline
 Give me hope Joanna

ELTON JOHN Sat. nights alright for fighting
 & MILLIE JACKSON Act of War
 J HATES JAZZ I don't want to be a hero

JOHN LENNON Give peace a chance
 Imagine
 JONA LEWIE Stop the cavalry
 LULU Boom bang a bang

McGUINNESS FLINT	When I'm dead and gone
BOB MARLEY	Buffalo soldier
MARIA MULDAUR	Midnight at the Oasis
MASH	Suicide is painless
MIKE / MECHANICS	Silent running
RICK NELSON	Fools rush in
NICOLE	A little peace
BILLY OCEAN	When the going gets tough
DONNY OSMOND	Soldier of love
PAPER LACE	Billy don't be a hero
QUEEN	Killer queen
	Flash
MARTHA REEVES	Forget Me not
B A ROBERTSON	Bang bang
TOM ROBINSON	War baby
KENNY ROGERS	Ruby (don't take your love to Town)
SPANDAU BALLETT	I'll fly for you
SPECIALS	Ghost Town
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	I'm on fire
EDWIN STARR	War
STATUS QUO	In the army now
	Burnin' bridgaes
CAT STEVENS	I'm goona get me a gun
ROD STEWART	Sailing
DONNA SUMMER	State of Independence
TEARS FOR FEARS	Everybody wants to RULE the world
TEMPTATIONS	Ball of confusion
10 CC	Rubber Bullets
STEVIE WONDER	Heaven help us all

great sensitivity. For example, the playing of one of the records on the list - Paper Lace's "Billy Don't Be A Hero" - immediately after a Gulf bulletin on the Simon Bates Show lead to 110 complaints to the BBC(32).

But it is also clear that whilst the list was meant as a guideline it became a de facto ban within parts of the BBC. For example, whilst One contributed to the war effort by sending Simon Bates out to do his show in the Gulf(33) - which it saw as being impartial - it would **not** have played Lennon's "Give Peace A Chance" - despite the fact that it **is** an impartial record, like "Belfast '71", and on no particular side other than that of peace.

The Rolling Stones also found their "High Wire" single, which criticised governments who sold arms to Iraq, didn't get the amount of airplay they might usually expect. Beerling commented that if One played it: 'I can see the headlines now. It would be another case of the leftie BBC supporting the enemies of freedom.'(34) This is an interesting revelation of the constant censorial pressure One is under and came at a time of much Tory criticism of the BBC. There were also allegations that Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine's "Bloodsports For All", which dealt with racism in the army, was vetoed during the conflict(35) and The Happy Mondays had to omit the lines "Gonna build an airforce base/Gonna blow up your race" from their "Loose fit" single because of the war(36).

Wartime is obviously a time of great political sensitivity, but One has a history of interpreting political impartiality as being whatever is favourable to the government of the day. Its

political cowardice means it has contributed to a denial of airtime to minority opinions. Pop often has a radical edge and it is this edge that One, by overt censorship and covert marginalisation, has undermined and ignored. Pop can be confrontational, the politics of One are generally compliant. In November 1992 DJ Mark Goodier announced that he would be playing The Senseless Things' "Homophobic Asshole" single every evening on his programme(37) - it might be asking for too much to hope that such sentiments be heard in the day in future.

Ad Nauseam?

Radio One's compliant politics does **not** mean, however, that it has always been eager to oil the wheels of capitalism, as the BBC has constantly sought to distance itself from records which promote products, although, paradoxically, the records One uses are effectively adverts for the record companies who market them. The BBC is also keen to promote its own products like books, videos, records etc. But once it had been decided that the BBC was not to be commercially funded the Corporation embarked upon a definite "hands off" policy towards all mentions of commercial products on records.

In the 1950s this reached an almost illogical extreme. Johnny Bond's "Hot Road Lincoln" had to become "Hot Rod Jalopy" to get BBC plays and The Playmates' had to change the words of their "Beep Beep" novelty hit from "Cadillac" and "Nash Rambler" to "limousine"

and "bubble car"(1). In the period I am primarily concerned with there have been various changes to lyrics and various bannings.

The first ban concerning advertising came in April 1968 when Pink Floyd had to change a lyric in "It Would Be So Nice" from "Evening Standard" to "Daily Standard"(2). Again a level of inconsistency was apparent, as a few months previously the BBC had quite happily been playing The Scaffold's "Thank You Very Much" which contained a reference to the Sunday Times.

In 1970 The Kinks had to change the lyric of "Lola" from "Coca Cola" to "Cherry Cola" to get on One(3): Ironically, The New Seekers' hit "I'd Like To Teach The World to Sing" which was being used, with a slight lyric change, to advertise Coke in 1971/72 was freely played by One, but banned by commercial stations(4). Paul Simon fell foul of the "No Ads" veto with "Kodachrome" (held to be an advert for Kodak), the B side of "Mother and Child Reunion" and February 1973 saw the banning of Dr.Hook's "Cover of the Rolling Stone"(5) - despite the fact that the magazine was hardly available in Britain at the time. A subsequent version that substituted the words "Radio Times" for "Rolling Stone" was also banned - thus enabling One to keep up its veneer of impartiality. Fifteen years on Pop Will Eat Itself found they had to re-record "Def Con One" and edit out the numerous references to "Big Mac"s in order to get played on One(6).

But the BBC's most embarrassing moments with advertising have come when it has given too much exposure to its own products and thus become liable to accusations of bias. In 1975 a record on BBC

Records by Gibraltar band Buddy called "Rock Around The Rock" was banned by the BBC after BBC Records had announced that it would get: "Full support from BBC and local radio"(7). The same year a proposed playing of Mike Oldfield's new "Ommadawn" album was cancelled after Virgin Records indicated this in an advert(8).

The problems One has had with records mentioning commercial products are those that a public corporation, funded by licence fee, faced in dealing with commercial enterprises. By 1992 advertisers avoided potential bans by using pop "classics" in television adverts and thus linking product and song in the minds of listeners, a more insidious practice than mentioning product in songs. But a product One seldom mentioned was drugs.

No Ecstasy at The BBC

In 1967, during the run up to the start of One, the BBC banned a Beatles track for the only time. This was "A Day In The Life", from "Sergeant Pepper". Again contemporary events are relevant, namely the year's moral panic over drugs(1). The track has a dream like, or drug trip like, quality to it and a nervous BBC banned it(2). This might be understandable, but inconsistency again reared its head. The track "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds", with the tell-tale initials, LSD, was not banned.

BBC nervousness towards drugs-related tracks characterised the late 1960s, with songs such as The Byrds' "Eight Miles High", Canned Heat's "Amphetamine Annie" and The Rolling Stones' "Mother's

Little Helper" all being banned(3). In 1967 it also banned The Game's anti-drugs single "The Addicted Man"(4) and The Rolling Stones' "We Love You"(5).

In July 1970 One banned Daddy Longlegs' "High Again" for referring to stimulants - an accusation which the band's label, Warner Bros, denied(6). A letter to MM asked why this record was banned whilst Mungo Jerry's "In The Summertime", which apparently condoned another illegal activity - drinking and driving - was continually played(7). An explanation may be the fact that, whilst drinking and driving is not now socially acceptable, it was and remains, more so than recreational drug-usage.

The next drug related ban came a year later when Mungo Jerry's "Have A Whiff On Me", part of a maxi-single on which "Lady Rose" was the lead track, was banned. Their label, Pye, later reissued the single without the offending track on, thus allowing "Lady Rose" to go on the airwaves untainted. At this time the BBC was allegedly adopting a new, tougher, policy towards drug references. Douglas Muggerridge, head of Radios One and Two, said:

'It's going to be our policy to be very tough on this sort of thing. The track "Have A Whiff On Me" is quite definitely banned.

The BBC does not ban records lightly and every doubtful case is scrutinised very carefully before a decision is taken. We have a duty to the public to avoid in every possible way any action that would lead to the encouragement of drug taking.'(8) The BBC later admitted mistakenly playing the track, as part of a live broadcast, whilst it was still banned(9).

The quote attributes **causal** consequences to listening to a record. It says: "We can't play this or people will take more drugs" - a proposition for which it might be hard pushed to find hard evidence. It is also an act of moral cowardice. Peel said 'I think the BBC's reason for doing this is not because of any belief in moral standards but to stop any feedback from the public in the form of letters.'(10)

Why Wings' "Hi Hi Hi" was banned in 1972 remains unclear(11), but certainly the drug-related title didn't help its cause. Radio One's concern about drug-related records waned at the start of the 1970s - a reflection, partly, of the decline in releases of that nature and partly of the BBC's more subtle method of ignoring those that were released. But in the late 1980s drugs returned as a major issue, with the rise of acid-house music and the rave scene which I examine elsewhere(12). One's initial reaction was to keep the music at a distance. Certainly ravers heard little of their music on daytime One(13). But, as the scene grew and acid-house records began to make the charts it became increasingly hard to ignore.

Almost inevitably controversy surrounded aspects of One's coverage of this music. In October 1988 D-Mob reached Number 1 with their single "We Call It Acieed". But One's reaction to it was - at best - ambivalent. It was the only record going up the chart not playlisted for the week up to the 14 of October. A spokesman explained that this was 'because we felt it wasn't right for the mood of some programmes such as the breakfast show.'(14) Although **this** record received numerous plays from individual producers, the

reaction to acid in general recalled the days of punk. Like punk, acid was not primarily censored by banning, but by ignorals and marginalisation. Radio One tarnished its hipper image here and, partly because of the two audience divide, became out of touch. It also failed its audience by not keeping up with the latest in pop.

But the censorial pressure One is under was illustrated when it was censored by the BSC for **not** banning The Shamen's "Ebenezer Goode" in November 1992. The record's chorus contained the line "Ezer's good" (=Es [ecstasy pills] are good) which One thought was "sufficiently ambiguous" to permit daytime plays. However the BSC upheld a complaint against it and One was held to have broken recommendations that they should not broadcast material which encourages 'tolerance towards the taking of drugs... (especially) in programmes expecting to attract large numbers of young people'(15). Here One offended, something it generally avoids.

The Great Offender?

Bans by One on the grounds of offence have included John's Children's "Desdemona", for the line "lift up your skirt and fly"(1), Napoleon XIV's "They're Coming To Take Me Away", for being about insanity(2), The Group's "Bovver Boys", for mocking football violence(3) and Al Stewart's "Love Chronicles", for the word "fucking"(4). Swearing remains the most complained about facet of British broadcasting(5) and so, unsurprisingly, One has kept a daytime veto on records containing it. For example, John Lennon

could expect no plays for "Working Class Hero", with its plethora of "fucking"s, in 1970 and Ice T's and NWA's swearing-filled albums pass One by - apart from the odd play late at night. These omissions would hardly seem to merit the word "ban", so obvious does it seem that to play records containing swearing during the day is to invite trouble. Nevertheless, the BBC **has** banned records specifically because of swearing, although the boundaries of acceptability have constantly shifted.

In December 1971 One claimed **not** to be banning Bob Dylan's "George Jackson" single, despite it containing the word "shit". A spokesman said that: 'There has only been about nine single records ever banned by the BBC and it has got to be pretty bad for us to ban it. We ban LP tracks more often, but not so many singles are banned.'(6) The BBC were true to their word and a later report said that the record was not banned it although it was vetoed by the Jimmy Young show and Junior Choice(7). A BBC publicity officer explained that: 'We did not bleep the word "shit" - we would not tamper with a record.'(8)

But by 1974 it appeared the word "shit" was unacceptable on One. In January that year 10CC were forced to re-record their single "The Worst Band In The World" to get plays on One. The phrase "we don't give a shit" became "we don't give up" and the phrase "up yours, up mine, up everybody's" was changed to "I'm yours, I'm mine, I'm everybody's". The original lyrics remained on singles in the shops(9). Radio One also banned The Goodies ode to flatulence, "Blowing Off", in 1976(10).

The word "shit" left the BBC with egg on its face in May 1979 when a BBC spokesman said that no respectable station would play The Cash Pussies "99 Percent Is Shit" - when Peel had already done so(11). So this word fell into disrepute at the BBC and it was changed to "spit" on Monty Python's "Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life" hit in 1991, but the word "bugger" stayed in on a record that One played at all times of the day. Whoever decides that "shit" is not acceptable and "bugger" is it is not the hapless listener, who merely gets the outcome of such decisions.

A record that One **did** ban because of swearing in 1973 was "Hello DJ" by American country singer Don Bowman, a one-sided conversation of a listener phoning in to request his favourite record. It contained several bleeped out words - which was enough for the BBC to ban it(12). More recently One has had problems when covering "live" concerts such as Madonna's stream of "fucks" on One during a live concert at Wembley in July 1990, which caused a number of complaints(13).

But swearing does not have a monopoly on "offence". Several records have failed to get One airplay because they have been deemed offensive to a hypothetical listener, including many of the records already noted. Punk epitomised this and in July 1978 One did not play The Sex Pistols/Ronnie Biggs single "No One Is Innocent" - which was held to be offensive as it included lines in praise of, amongst others, Myra Hindley and Martin Boorman(14).

Sometimes "offence" can be a passing phenomenon related to contemporary events. For example, during The Gulf War some artists

temporarily changed their names in order not to cause offence (and so get radio play). Massive Attack became Massive for their "Unfinished Symphony" single and Tim Simenon dropped his Bomb The Bass monicker for his own name on his "Love So True" single. At the same time My Jealous God dropped plans to release "Petrol Bomb" as a single, releasing "Watching" instead(15). Other artists have not been able to stop releases which later received limited airplay because they had unfortunate references. The Darling Buds released "Hit The Ground" just prior to a spate of plane crashes in Britain in January 1989 and The Smiths' "Stop Me If You've Heard This One Before" contained a reference to mass murder which coincided with the Hungerford Massacre in 1987. In these circumstances limited airplay was, to say the least, understandable. The last type of censorship that I shall examine here is that of banning or limiting plays of records because children may be listening

Child's (No) Play

In March 1970 The Equals' "Soul Brother Clifford" was banned from plays on One's children's show, Junior Choice, for containing the lines "Sister Virgin you're an old cow."

Producer Harry Walters explained that: 'My thinking is this: A school kid goes to school on Monday and calls the teacher an old cow. The teacher blames the parents, then the youngster says he heard the expression on Junior Choice.'(1) This comment is interesting as it once again endows pop with a causal ability. The

underlying idea is that the record will **cause** children to swear, or at least there is a sufficient possibility for this to necessitate it being put out of harm's way. This overly paternal approach has often characterised One's programming policy.

In 1974 the BBC noted the 'heavy responsibility' on producers of children's programmes, saying that 'great care' was used in selecting records for Junior Choice. Topics generally examined were 'references to drugs or drug-taking, obscenities or explicit references to sex.' All 'doubtful' releases were checked and 'the BBC does not hesitate to institute a ban, although such action is not necessarily made public, because experience has shown that this is a sure way of winning publicity for an undesirable record.'(2)

In 1976, when commenting on the ban on Donna Summer's "Love To Love You Baby", Charles McClelland said that: 'If a record is basically offensive to a family audience, then it shouldn't be played to a family audience.'(3) Thus notions of the family and, implicitly, childhood, were again used to justify a ban. An equation of childhood with innocence and thus needing defence from pop's excesses, is postulated. This view ultimately rests on Whitehousean notions of "commonsense" and "responsibility". Here what children most need protecting from is sex, in all its forms. This was specifically spelt out in June 1987 when Beerling gave his reasons for only playing George Michael's "I Want Your Sex" after 9pm. He said that: 'The lyric and nature of the record is too sexually explicit for the massive Radio One daytime airplay which a George Michael single would normally receive.'

George's following includes many impressionable young girls and many of their parents would take exception to the broadcasting of the disc on Radio One.'(4)

Again the comments are illuminating and the partial banning of the record reflects a societal concern - in this case the sexuality of young girls. (Beerling apparently thought young **boys** to be in less danger). Lines such as "Sex is natural/ sex is good/ Not everybody does it/ But everybody should" were deemed as unacceptable for a young audience. One's paternalism again led to interpret the BBC charter on its more censorial side.

But One still displays a somewhat inconsistent attitude. I listed above various records with a high sexual content that it played during the day in 1991. Whilst he denied an allegation that Color Me Badd's "I Want To Sex You Up" was barred from the Breakfast Show, Paul Robinson, said that, rather than being playlisted, La Tour's "People Are Still Having Sex", was 'carefully placed by producers at times when children weren't listening. So it wasn't .. played in school lunch hours, it was played after 2 O'Clock.. when they were back in the classroom.'(5) Again the logic was hard to follow. A record expressing a commitment to "sexing you up" was played all day, one commenting upon the fact that people were doing just that had to be kept away from school children on their lunch breaks. This is less commonsense than nonsense.

Radio One operates a rough watershed time of 9pm. After this time it was possible that more risque records might be heard. From personal experience it is certainly the case that the odd "fuck" is

not unknown on John Peel, although not usually until after midnight. But words like "motherfucker" rarely get aired, which cuts down greatly on the amount of rap that One can play. Mentioning Peel leads into another area that needs attention - the role of various DJs in censoring records at One.

"Hey, Mr DJ, Please Play My Song"

Whilst generally not as important a "gatekeeper"(1) as their producers, DJs are in positions of power and able to promote or deride certain music. They are agenda-setters and instances of them setting a censorial agenda should be noted here.

Radio One's most popular DJ in the early years was Tony Blackburn, whose quote that: 'There's no time to listen to heavy music in the morning'(2) illustrates how One marginalised certain genres. Blackburn also labelled "God Save the Queen" 'a disgraceful record (which) makes me ashamed of the music industry'(3), which shows the limited amount of artistic licence Blackburn allowed(4).

Blackburn hosted One's Breakfast show, which developed a tradition of producing censorial DJs. Mike Read was to play an important part in getting "Relax" banned in 1984. After playing it several times Read refused to play the record in the chart rundown on his show and began a campaign to get it banned by One. He felt that 'the lyrics are overtly obscene'(5) - again the rule appeared to be if you want to be sexual don't be **overtly** sexual. Read's status was a factor in the ban and, according to NME: 'Radio 1

press officer Nick Underwood admitted that had a DJ of lesser standing objected to the single it wouldn't have been banned.'(6)

Read's successor on the Breakfast Show, Mike Smith, was also involved in censorial action, although less successfully. In July 1986, whilst on a review programme, Smith took off the Jesus and Mary Chain single, "Some Candy Talking", in mid-play because he believed the "candy" in the title referred to cocaine(7). The link with contemporary events here is that Boy George's drug problems were then being featured heavily in the tabloid press. Smith asked: "Why give any more publicity to a subject which is in danger of becoming acceptable'(8). After taking the unusual step of consulting Peel, Beerling decided **not** to ban the single(9).

Various DJs made anti Beastie Boys moves in 1987(10), but one of One's more conservative DJs, Simon Bates, defended acid-house from press attacks in 1988 and was hounded by the tabloid press for doing so(11). But the Sun used One DJ Peter Powell to condemn the craze as "mass organized zombiedom"(12). Meanwhile One's selection policy for DJs is also revealing. Not until 1992 did a black DJ get a regular show(13) and not until 1993 was a woman, Jacki Brambles, given a regular daytime show. Marginalisation can affect sexes and races, as well as genres. Others can have more luck.

Getting Away With It

Before finishing with One's censorship it is worth noting a few of the "ones that got away". Here the inconsistencies I

referred to in the beginning become apparent. Lou Reed's "Walk on The Wild Side"(1973) with its talk of transvestites and "giving head" got played(1), as did Sylvia's "Pillow Talk" - which contained its fair share of heavy breathing and was not only regularly played but also made Blackburn's Single of the Week in July 1973(2). In 1991 The Divinyls paen to female masturbation, "I Touch Myself" also passed unhindered.

Drug references in Hendrix's "Purple Haze", The Plastic Ono Band's "Cold Turkey" and Eric Clapton's version of J.J.Cale's "Cocaine" have passed unhindered. Desmond Dekker's 1969 Number One contains the words "my wife and kids they fuck off and leave me", albeit in a heavy West Indian accent(3). One played it without flinching. The Kinks's "Apeman" also contains a reference to the air "fucking up my eyes"(4) and The Pixies' "Planet of Sound" refers to "fucking around"(5) - both got played by One.

There are countless other records that **might** have caused offence, but which One either played in ignorance or took a positive decision to play. The point is not that One is keen to censor, on the contrary it goes out of its way **not** to ban things - knowing the risks of looking foolish, giving artists extra publicity and of the dangers of falling for a record company "scam". Neither does it have a monopoly on radio censorship of pop.

Commercial Censorship?

A Conservative government ended the BBC's monopoly by passing the Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972 which set up the IBA and gave it authority to licence commercial Independent Local Radio (ILRs), the first of which, Capital and LBC, began broadcasting in October 1973. In 1992 there were 105 such stations in Britain(1). Although initially paying lip-service to meeting local community needs, Capital essentially provided competition for One **not** on the basis on diversification, but on the grounds of being better at doing more or less the same(2). Since then the situation has changed only inasmuch as there are a great many more ILRs competing along similar lines, with more specialist stations such as Kiss FM and Jazz FM coming in the 1990s and the first national commercial pop station, Virgin, with its AOR approach, arriving in April 1993.

As they are regionally based, the independents seldom make the headlines in the way that One does, as any bans make regional, not national, news(3). They target audiences and so censorship here is more by market than by overt bannings. But their impact has been seen as negative DJs committed to a more diverse service on One. In 1975, after two years of ILRs, Bob Harris complained that since their start 'the BBC has hardened into a David Hamilton/Tony Blackburn way of doing things'(4). Commercial radio was bringing greater uniformity rather than innovation. Peel was never optimistic about the commercials and in 1970 said that with One 'there is no doubt you get more freedom than you would with

commercial radio.'(5) Experience seemed to vindicate his views so that in 1978 he commented that: 'If you see Radio One as conservative, most of the commercials are the National Front.'(6)

Certainly the IBA showed that "commercial" did not have to equate with "liberal". In 1976 it banned both adverts for, and the playing of, Peter Tosh's pro-cannabis anthem, "Legalise It". A spokesman said: 'We don't like to use the word banned. But we have told the stations that the record cannot be played because it promotes drug use'(7). Come punk, Capital censored The Sex Pistols more than One did. In December 1976 it didn't play "Anarchy In The UK" as Controller Aidan Day said 'I don't think it's very good.'(8) When "God Save The Queen" was released the ILRs refused an advertisement for it that featured the song mixed with the national anthem(9). The IBA then ruled that the single contravened Section 41a of the Sound Broadcasting Act, which dealt with taste and decency, and instructed the commercial stations not to play it(10).

Capital kept up its opposition to the Pistols with their subsequent releases, dropping the band's "Pretty Vacant" single from 5 to 40 in its charts in the space of a week in August 1977. This was totally unrelated to sales or listener choice, as the chart was compiled solely by the Controller, Day(11). The station was alone in banning the band's fourth single, "Holidays In The Sun", in November 1977 for comparing Belsen to a holiday camp(12). It later simply ignored The Pistols' single with Ronnie Biggs, "No One Is Innocent" because: 'Biggs glorifies evil.'(13) The IBA also banned The Physicals' "All Sexed Up" EP in 1978(14).

In the Biggs case Capital followed One, who also ignored the single without banning it outright. But commercial stations **have** consistently differed with One on the issue of banning records. This has resulted in two public bodies - the BBC and the (then) IBA and (now) Radio Authority holding different views over what constitutes indecent or offensive material. For example, in 1987 when One banned The Blow Monkeys "(Celebrate) The Day After You" Manchester's Radio Picadilly also banned it, but Capital and some other ILRs carried on playing it - without complaint(15).

However later in the year the IBA was accused of censorship by the back door when it instructed the ILRs to seek legal advice before playing the Billy Bragg/Oyster Band single "Ballad of A Spycatcher" in the wake of former-spy Colin Wallace's controversial memoirs(16). The BBC had already played extracts of the record. But the commercial stations proved more liberal later in the same year when they carried on playing The Tams' "There Ain't Nothing Like Shaggin'" during the day after One had banned it from daytime shows(17).

Generally the commercials have appeared more willing than One to take risks on records of a sexual nature, but less willing to take risks on more political material - possibly fearful of government opposition to licence renewal(18). Thus the IBA was quick to ban The Pogues "Birmingham Six", which detailed the Six's innocence and the disadvantages suffered by Irish people in English courts, after the government's ban on broadcasting material supporting "terrorist" organisations in November 1988. The IBA

commented that: 'We think these allegations might support, solicit or invite support for an organisation provided by the Home Secretary's notice.'(19) That Petrol Emotion, who had previously commented on the Irish situation, had their "Cellophane" single banned by the IBA in December 1988, despite it containing no direct references to Ireland(20). In November LBC had prevented the journalist Paul Foot playing his favourite song, the 1798 song, "Kelly the Boy from Killane" as all political songs by The Dubliners were forbidden. "The Ould Triangle" was substituted(21). The caution commercial stations show in political areas was again shown in the aforementioned Jazz FM/Giles Peterson case(22).

But on commercial radio the market censors most. Liz Kershaw, former Radio One DJ, has written of her surprise, when at commercials, 'of the extent to which the advertisers may exercise their financial muscle in dictating the editorial content of programmes.'(23) Greater emphasis on the market should not be seen as ensuring greater diversity, but greater subordination to the needs of advertisers. This raises issues of future censorship, which I shall address in the conclusion to this chapter.

Conclusion

The bannings, restrictions and marginalisations that I have noted in this chapter have one thing in common - they were all initiated without consulting those in whose name they were being done. Censorial decisions about popular music radio have taken

place without the active participation of fans. The very people the music is being aimed at have been denied access to decisions over what they get to hear, with some demonstrating or taking the path of illegality in order to get a genre of music played. Government initiatives have given listeners more bodies to complain to and more stations to listen to, but continued the denial of any participation in editorial and programme content decisions. Thus when irritating bans are made fans can complain, but are denied participation in decisions over further bans.

* At One decisions on what to play and what to ignore ultimately rest in the hands of the Controller, under the control of unelected BBC governors(1), who are in turn accountable to the Heritage Secretary and so to parliament - a highly indirect form of democracy. This is a cause for concern, as is the fact that unelected bodies still rule the broadcasting roost under a government determined that boundaries of "taste and decency" are ever more tightly drawn. The government's proposals of November 1992 included a chapter on 'Making The BBC Accountable'(2) and suggested new viewer and listener councils, but cynics might suggest that a government which has centralised power and trodden on civil liberties will be loathe to give any real power to the people the "services" are allegedly being supplied for. Pop fans are still likely to be denied input into decisions over what they get to hear. Unfortunately the centralisation of media ownership that is now going on, despite some government attempts at limitation (for example there are limits on the amount of radio

stations an individual person or company can own, but these are constantly being challenged) will not give audiences more say in what they hear. Censorship, direct and via marginalisation or exclusion, will be exercised with profits, not musical criterion, in mind.

The history of censorship on One itself, though limited, is illustrative of a number of things. Firstly an air of well intentioned paternalism pervades throughout. A **genuine** desire not to offend is ever-present. One prides itself on its professionalism and responsibility, but this "responsibility" has often led it to attribute causal effects to popular music which are, to say the least, contentious. "Offence" in matters like swearing can be assumed (the broadcasters' own surveys bear this out), the causal relationship between drug taking, or sexual promiscuity and pop is a much more complex issue and, by erring on the side of caution, One has, whatever its intent, often given credence to those to see pop as a causal source of some of society's problems. Paternalism labels as deviant those who reject pater.

The second feature of One's censorial policy has been to show the anti-democratic nature of censorship. Censorship is inherently anti-democratic - debate carries the danger of legitimising the very thing you are trying to stifle. Radio One has seldom seen fit to debate its bannings and the BBC's thirty year rule on seeing documents relating to censorship, which **may** make sense in programmes which affect national security, is ridiculous when dealing with pop(3). The actual banning process appears chaotic(4),

but the pop audience which pays for One has a **right** to know who is making censorial decisions on its behalf. If those taking such decisions feel embarrassed about the public knowing about them, they should be replaced by people with the courage of their censorial convictions.

Artists who are banned have never had the right of appeal, something which, despite the fact that a long drawn out process may kill the "buzz" surrounding a particular record, would be a step forward. Listener representation could also contribute to a more diverse and less censorial Radio One. The Local Radio Workshop suggested that a more democratic BBC would have been in a better position to defend itself from the initial wave of commercial radio(5) and it is apparent that a genuinely populist One, with listener participation, would be in a better position to see off the latest arguments over privatisation(6). Privatisation itself could only, be undertaken for reasons of dogma as privatising Radios One and Two would cut £4 off the licence fee, not enough to bribe the electorate, but enough to placate right wing ideologues. In 1992 Morrison's reported that One's audience was 'passionate' about it(7), such passion should not be unrequited.

The last point about One's censorial policy over the years has been that it underlines once again the relationship between censorial action and contemporary events. Banned records are in this sense a social barometer. They can reflect what society is concerned about at a particular time. This can vary from moral panics over drugs to the problems of war, and from sex to politics.

One has played a role in the stifling of unpopular or controversial voices, citing the need for "impartiality" as its reason. This is not simply a case of the state stamping out dissident opinion, but a far more subtle one of restricting, via a public corporation, counter-hegemonic views. Radio One's political compliance can be assumed. So well does it understand its role and its ultimate reliance upon its political masters that whilst One may occasionally rock the audience, it seldom rocks the boat.

But it would be churlish not to note the many good things One does. It has tried to meet demands of minorities within tight budgetary constraints and has given various genres like rap and the indie-rock their own shows, an indulgence the commercials can rarely afford. Radio One may marginalise by catering for two audiences(8), but the commercials cater for only one - the advertiser. One also plays a far wider range of music than its commercial competitors and Grundy claims that 'in any one week Radio One will play a minimum of two thousand different songs, but a commercial radio station... (has) a job to make four hundred'(9). Thus if One marginalises, commercials often exclude completely.

Unfortunately the future does not look bright. Apart from vestiges of Thatcherism's "Victorian values" hanging over the moral outlook of the Conservative Party, the pop fan can have little confidence in a government which, in turning down a bid from Rock FM for a licence for a non-pop station, could see no difference between rock and pop and decided they were the same as both went "thump thump thump"(10). It is farcical that the fate of the future

of pop broadcasting in Britain lies in the hands of such people. Audience figures are to be given precedence over cultural contribution and if One survives in its present form, it will be under ever-more pressure to play the ratings game. The outlook for minority musical tastes under such a regime would be perilous. The fate of Jazz FM, which soon had to broaden its output, may be illustrative here(11). I am **not** advocating the funding of more specialist stations and thus a further demarcation of the pop audience, merely illustrating that once "minority" musical genres are forced to compete for listeners they soon risk elimination if they stick strictly to their chosen genre. Radio One may marginalise certain genres, the market could swamp them completely. The free market has **never** been a guarantee of musical, or any other, diversity(12). The way Capital sought the **same** audience as Radio One bears witness to this.

Ultimately I am ambivalent about One. Admiration for the wide range it seeks to play, couples with annoyance at its own rigid view of audience demarcation. Despair at the illogicality of its censorial decisions mixes with respect for its professionalism and attempts at social "responsibility". The arrival of Virgin as the first national commercial station has hardly been encouraging. An AOR format seems destined to stifle rather than stimulate new pop. Nostalgia and the market seem set to censor via exclusion(13). One at least demonstrates a sense of pop music's cultural worth, commercial stations see it as a means to the wealth of their shareholders.

Radio One's own future seems precarious. The BBC's Director General declined to give assurances about its future in November 1992(14) and the organisation said its future plans include: 'Little or no room for radio programmes which consist of non-stop Top 40 music.'(15) Radio One was not even mentioned by name in the BBC's Extending Choice document which outlined the Corporation's future plans in 1992(16). The new head of BBC radio, Liz Forgan, has said that the BBC is 'committed to Radios 1 and 2 in their present form'(17), but as One is based primarily on singles - a format which appears in decline(18) - a change in orientation seems inevitable. Radio One has been caught up in the BBC's attempt to go upmarket in order to distinguish itself from the commercial networks and so avoid duplication of services, as it is obliged to by the government(19). The departure of Beerling in July 1993, 'not entirely voluntarily' according to one source(20) and the appointment of new head, Matthew Bannister(21), signals an a new broom approach(22). One manifestation of this has been moves to incorporate more documentaries and chat shows at the expense of music - again leading to censorship via denial of resources. Whatever the religious programme "The Big Holy One" was about, it was not the provision of a more comprehensive pop service(23).

Here I have outlined the history, censorial and otherwise, of popular music radio in Britain. That history has undergone a crucial phase with the arrival of Virgin. In many ways 1992 is a good place to end the story, as it is likely to be the last year of One's almost unchallenged supremacy. The future, for better or

worse, seems to lie with the market and thus a different form of censorship. Writing in The Guardian in May 1992 Michael Billington said that: 'Public sector broadcasting is one of the few things that continues to make it worth living in Britain.'⁽²⁴⁾ It may be too much to hope that in 25 years time, with Radio One 50 years old, we will be able to say the same about national commercial pop radio. But you can always switch on the television.....

Notes: Introduction

- (1) See Negus, 1992, p101 for the importance of British and American radio.
- (2) NME 31/390
- (3) Chambers, 1986, p164.
- (4) NME 30/3/91.
- (5) See Negus, 1992, pp 108-110.
- (6) See Barnard, 1989, p1.

An Overview

- (1) For an outline of British radio history see MM 30/1/93.
- (2) Hind and Mosco, 1985, p7.
- (3) ibid p8.
- (4) ibid p8
- (5) Barnard, 1991, p8.
- (6) See pp198-202 above.
- (7) See Barnard, 1989, pp 10 and 13.
- (8) Chapman, 1992, p9.
- (9) See Barnard, 1989, pp 22 and 27.

- (10) Chambers, 1986, p140.
- (11) See Briggs, 1985, p249 and 1979, pp761 and 762.
- (12) Barnard, 1989, p37.
- (13) Eliot, 1987, p131.
- (14) Hind and Mosco, 1985, p19.
- (15) Barnard, 1989, pp 36-38.
- (16) The BBC has become far too subtle for this and as sensitive to accusations of censorship as it is to the need not to offend. My enquiries about the possibility of being able to confirm or deny any BBC "bans" in the period the thesis covers was met with a reply that: 'internal papers of the BBC later than 1962 are not open for outside research' (BBC Written Archives Centre, 1991). A thirty year rule appears to apply, so my main research source was press reports.
- (17) See pp198-202 above.
- (18) Briggs, 1979, p757 notes that Luxembourg played more pop records than the BBC at this time.
- (19) For other early rock 'n' roll records banned by the BBC see Barnard, 1989, pp37/38 and Martin and Segrave, 1986, pp70 and 72.
- (20) See Barnard, 1985, pp16 and 27.
- (21) See Chapman, 1992, p43.
- (22) See, for example, Whitehouse, 1982, pp71-87.

Pirate Radio

- (1) Radio Caroline carried on until March 1968 when it was raided by Dutch authorities and closed down. It made, and continues to make, sporadic appearances since then.

- (2) Morrison, 1992, p104 notes there would have been no Radio One without the pirates.
- (3) Chapman, 1993.
- (4) Barnard, 1989, p49. Emphasis in original.
- (5) Chapman, 1992, p66. Nutall, 1970, p121 also characterises the pirates as money-making exercises, but Wyman, 1991, p278 claims they helped pop become anti-establishment.
- (6) Chapman, 1993.
- (7) Chapman, 1992, p51.
- (8) Barnard, 1989, p48.
- (9) Record Hunter, Vox May 1991.
- (10) Wale, 1972, p297.
- (11) Chapman, 1992, p208.
- (12) Benn's concerns in 1965 were the danger to shipping and the breach of copyright - see Times 17/3/65. For parliamentary debates on the pirates see Hansard 15/2/67 and 30/6/67.
- (13) See Chapman, 1992, pp33 and 34. Chapman also list six reasons why the pirates were opposed on pages 32-33.
- (14) Hind and Mosco, 1985, p12.
- (15) Chapman, 1992, p37.
- (16) See ibid for Short's "zeal".
- (17) See ibid pp168-174 for further details.
- (18) See MM 14/10/67.
- (19) See Chapman, 1992, p115.
- (20) ibid p194
- (21) ibid p207.

- (22) ibid p208.
- (23) Hind and Mosco, 1985, p14.
- (24) MM 14/6/69 and 9/8/69.
- (25) For a personal account of an attempt to re-launch Caroline in 1973 see Noakes, 1984. See Harrigan, 1975, for more on 1970s pirates. Chapman, 1993, noted that most of the 70's pirates were soul-based because that was a genre One was ignoring. NME of 4/4/92 reported the re-emergence of Caroline.
- (26) See NME 31/1/76, 14/2/76 and 10/12/77.
- (27) See NME 13/8/77.
- (28) See Hind and Mosco, 1985, for the new pirates.
- (29) See NME 13/3/82, 31/7/82 and 15/1/83.
- (30) NME 23/5/85.
- (31) Hind and Mosco, 1985, p115.
- (32) Barnard, 1989, p180.
- (33) See NME 20/6/87, 9/4/88, 5/11/88 and 17/3/90.
- (34) See NME 5/11/88.
- (35) NME 23/1/88.

The Station of Which Nation?

- (1) Guardian 30/1/93. For more on One's importance see Negus, 1992, pp110-114.
- (2) MM 30/9/67.
- (3) MM 7/10/67.
- (4) See Gillett, 1983, p376. For an early attack on One see Nightingale, 1967.
- (5) Barnard, 1989, p53.

- (6) Peel remembers the Northern Dance Orchestra doing a version of "Purple Haze". See Chapman, 1992, p244.
- (7) See MM 21/10/67.
- (8) MM 16/12/67.
- (9) MM 5/10/68, 12 and 19/10/68.
- (10) MM 21/6/69.
- (11) MM 24/1/70 and 14/3/70.
- (12) Chapman, 1992, p272.
- (13) See MM 2/1/71.
- (14) See MM 9/1/71.
- (15) NME 18/1/77. Emphasis in original.
- (16) See Barnard, 1989, p124. For a review of One's first decade see Bradshaw, 1977.
- (17) NME 15/3/80.

One's Two Audiences

- (1) Barnard, 1989, pp56/7.
- (2) See Barnard, 1989, p56 and Chapman, 1992, p247.
- (3) Barnard, 1989, p54.
- (4) See ibid p54. This attitude may now be changing, see NME 25/9/93 and 9/10/93 and Guardian 28/9/93.
- (5) NME 16/11/88. Janice Long agreed with this outlook, see NME 23/4/88, as did Stuart Grundy, 1991.
- (6) Barnard, 1989, p116.
- (7) Grundy, 1991, and Barnard, 1989, p163. But Morrison, 1992, pp77 and 78 noted that people appreciate the fact that the type of music changes in the evening.

- (8) NME 16/11/85.
- (9) For example see letters page of MM 13/12/69.
- (10) See MM 6/3/71.
- (11) MM 2/3/68.
- (12) Beerling has said: 'We have 18 million listeners and I think at some time every single one of them has written to me saying his or her minority is being ignored.' Today 4/4/91.
- (13) See letters page of NME 10/11/79.
- (14) NME 1/11/6.
- (15) NME 12/11/88.
- (16) NME 17/2/90.
- (17) NME 22/5/76 and 14/8/76.
- (18) NME 6/8/77.
- (19) NME 16 August 1986.

Deciding Who Gets On - One's Playlist

- (1) See Negus, 1993, pp63-67 for attempts to get on this list. Q editor Phil Sutcliffe has said that bands felt that not getting on the list was a form of censorship, Radio One, 1993c.
- (2) Street, 1985, p116.
- (3) Sounds 4/8/87.
- (4) Barnard, 1989, p119.
- (5) See MM 9 and 16/3/74, NME 16/3/80, Barnard, 1989, p119, NME 17/5/86 and NME 16/3/91 for various changes to the playlist.
- (6) See Barnard, 1989, pp128-133.
- (7) P.Robinson, 1991.
- (8) Gillett, 1983, p xi notes that radio can't play anything too

interruptive. In September 1985 there were strong allegations that One was ignoring black music, see Heslam, 1990, p411 and NME 26/10/85. Cosgrove, 1989, accused One of 'massive and sometimes racist indifference' to acid-house. But at least Britain has escapes the Canadian system which obliges broadcasters to include a high percentage of Canadian acts in their shows. See, for example, NME 5/10/91 p4.

Banned on The One

(1) A methodological problem with this research is that of deciding what actually constitutes a "banned" record. Grundy, 1991, warned me that 'a lot of the bans that you read about are not bans at all - they are the publicity people going out of their way to try and engineer a bit of interest in something that might not otherwise be of great interest.' See NME 26/9/92 p62 for an example of this.

I have tried to be as rigorous as possible when deeming a record to be banned. If any case is misrepresented I can only apologise and say that I have tried, within constraints of time, to be as accurate as possible. I am satisfied that any record I cited in depth was indeed banned or, at a minimum, given only selective plays. The fuss around bans at least shows what subjects were contentious at a given time.

(2) See Street, 1986, pp115 and 116 and Barnard, 1989, p120 for playlisting decisions being more important than bans.

(3) See, for example, p390 below.

(4) One has spoken of judging by 'the **current** climate' (my emphasis) - see Longrigg, 1991. Beerling repeated this view on

Radio One, 1993c.

I Don't Want Your Sex

- (1) MM 9/12/67.
- (2) MM 11/11/67. For 1950s bans see Chapman, 1992, p37.
- (3) MM 9 and 12/12/67.
- (4) MM 16/12/67.
- (5) ibid
- (6) MM 5/7/69. See this for Romeo's explanation of the song.
- (7) MM 16/8/69 and Sounds 10/1/87.
- (8) MM 26/7/69.
- (9) MM 16/8/69.
- (10) MM 4/10/69.
- (11) NME 28/12/74.
- (12) See MM 16/12/72.
- (13) See Vox January 1993.
- (14) Carr and Tyler, 1975. p103.
- (15) MM 21/12/72. On Radio One, 1993b, McCartney claimed the lyric was "polygon".
- (16) ibid.
- (17) MM 18/8/73.
- (18) See Palmer, 1971, p162.
- (19) MM 21/2/76.
- (20) ibid
- (21) ibid
- (22) ibid
- (23) Frith, 1983, p243 noted that: 'Punk was the first form of

youth music not to rest on love songs.'

(24) Sounds 17/5/80.

(25) Savage, 1991a, p407.

(26) Laing, 1985, p67.

(27) NME 26/8/78.

(28) See Laing, 1985, p35. But One was better than commercials who, argues Frith, 1983, p125, ignored punk because it was aimed at the under 20s who were not good advertising fodder.

(29) See NME 25/2/78. See pp99/100 above for more on "Glad to Be Gay".

(30) See Sounds 2/12/78.

(31) See NME 16/1/82.

(32) Grundy, 1991.

(33) Grundy, 1991. Radio One, 1993a, presented the decision as a muddled one where the BBC were swept along by the pace of events.

(34) Street, 1986, p115.

(35) Heslam, 1990, p431. See ppp230/231 and p278 for more on the ban on George Michael's "Sex".

(36) NME 5/12/87.

(37) This record was strategically "placed" in the daytime schedule so as to avoid being played at times when schoolchildren were listening, P.Robinson, 1991.

(38) "Relax" was freely played on it re-release in 1993.

(39) See pp226-229 above.

Left on The Shelf?

(1) O'Higgins, 1972, p133.

- (2) See Briggs, 1979, p761.
- (3) A snippet of the song was played on Radio One, 1993c.
- (4) Leigh, 1991.
- (5) See MM 11/3/72.
- (6) MM 26/2/72. Emphasis mine.
- (7) MM 21/2/76.
- (8) MM 26/2/72.
- (9) MM 11/3/72.
- (10) ibid
- (11) See pp284/285 below. On 2/12/76, the day after the interview, the Daily Telegraph reported the banning of "Anarchy".
- (12) NME 11/12/76.
- (13) Whitehouse, 1977, p39.
- (14) See Savage, 1991a, pp347 and 351.
- (15) See ibid p349.
- (16) NME 11/6/7.
- (17) See Savage, 1991a, p364. McLaren repeated the claim in Radio One, 1993b. Other victims of chart fixing include Crass whose album "Christ The album" entered the chart at 26 in the summer of 1982, only to fall out of the Top 100 the following week, a 'statistical impossibility' according to Music Master, 1990, p28. The Dead Kennedys "Too Drunk To Fuck" was also a victim of chart fixing and kept out of the top 30 to prevent embarrassment to TOTP presenters during chart run-down, Radio One 1993b and Gilliam, 1991. For chart-hyping see Street, 1986, p117, MM 1/4/67, NME 11/10/88, 25/10/88, 22/11/88, 25/4/89 and Vox August 1992 p32 and October

- 1992 p6. For a history of the chart see Lister, 1992.
- (18) Savage, 1991a, pp352/353
- (19) ibid p377.
- (20) NME 4/4/81 and Heslam, 1990, p352.
- (21) NME 27/8/83.
- (22) Personal recollection.
- (23) See McSmith, 1983.
- (24) NME 23/5/87.
- (25) NME 30/5/87.
- (26) See NME 13/6/87.
- (27) NME 31/10/87.
- (28) Street, 1986, p118.
- (29) Denselow, 1989, p214.
- (30) See IOC Vol20 Nos4/5 April/May 1991 p54. Article 19 also noted the "ban" in their Stop Press Issue 1 15 February 1992.
- (31) Independent 2/2/91.
- (32) Grundy, 1991. In a similar vein Portsmouth's Radio Victory banned Blondie's "Island of Lost Dreams" during the Falklands War, Radio One, 1993b.
- (33) NME 1/9/90. For favourite requests by troops in the Gulf see Independent 27 January 1991.
- (34) Beerling in Sunday Times 17/2/91.
- (35) See NME 2/2/91.
- (36) NME 16/2/91.
- (37) NME 28/11/92.

Ad Nauseam

- (1) Sounds 10/1/87.
- (2) MM 6/4/68 and Record Hunter, Vox May 1991.
- (3) Heslam, 1990, p313.
- (4) MM 28/2/76.
- (5) NME 15/10/77.
- (6) NME 23/7/88.
- (7) NME 17/5/75.
- (8) NME 1/11/75.

No Ecstasy at The BBC

- (1) See pp12/13 above.
- (2) MM 27/5/67.
- (3) MM 28/2/76.
- (4) O'Higgins, 1972, p133. See also pp85/86 above and pp 265/266.
- (5) Street, 1986, p114.
- (6) MM 18/7/70.
- (7) MM 8/8/70.
- (8) MM 29/5/71.
- (9) MM 11/3/72.
- (10) MM 29/5/71.
- (11) See p208 above.
- (12) See pp416-439 below.
- (13) See Cosgrove, 1989, on the almost racist attitude to dance.
- (14) NME 29/10/88.
- (15) BSC Complaints Bulletin No22 November 1992 p10.

The Great Offender?

- (1) Wale, 1972, p124.
- (2) MM 28/2/76.
- (3) MM 16/12/72.
- (4) Laing, 1985, p75.
- (5) See Phil Redmond, Guardian, 28/10/91 p31.
- (6) MM 18/12/71.
- (7) MM 11/3/72.
- (8) ibid
- (9) MM 19/1/74.
- (10) Daily Mirror 18/12/76.
- (11) NME 19/5/79.
- (12) MM 9/5/73.
- (13) NME 4/8/90. See Independent 21/7/90 for comment on this.
- (14) See NME 15/7/78 and Sounds 7/7/84.
- (15) NME 2/2/91.

Child's No Play

- (1) MM 28/3/70.
- (2) All quotes BBC, 1974, p7.
- (3) MM 21/2/76.
- (4) NME 6/6/87 and see Daily Mirror 23/5/87.
- (5) P.Robinson, 1991.

Hey Mister DJ

- (1) See Frith, 1983, pp117-119 for DJs as "gatekeepers".
- (2) MM 24/10/70.
- (3) NME 1/2/86. See also Wood, 1988.

- (4) See NME 20/10/78 for more attacks on punk by Blackburn.
- (5) NME 21/1/84.
- (6) ibid
- (7) See Cooper, 1986.
- (8) See Smith's letter in reply, Guardian 29/7/86.
- (9) Barnard, 1989, pp120/121.
- (10) NME 23/5/87.
- (11) See NME 29/10/88 and 19/11/88.
- (12) Q October 1988. See also p568 below for how the press uses celebrities in censorial campaigns.
- (13) See NME 9/12/92.

Getting Away With It

- (1) According to Radio One 1993a "Walk on the Wild Side" was eventually vetoed some years later.
- (2) MM 14/7/73.
- (3) I am grateful to Spencer Leigh for this reference.
- (4) I am grateful to Robert Chapman for this reference..
- (5) NME 15/2/93.

Commercial Censorship?

- (1) See Negus, 1993, p63.
- (2) See Local Radio Workshop, 1983.
- (3) One example of this was Radio Piccadilly's 1981 ban on The Freshies' "I'm In Love With The Girl on The Virgin Megastore Check Out Desk", which was set in Manchester, became popular locally, but broke IBA rules on advertising and was banned. It received plays again when "Virgin" was changed to "a certain". Radio One, 1993a.

- (4) NME 20/12/75.
- (5) MM 8/7/70.
- (6) NME 2/9/78.
- (7) MM 2/10/76.
- (8) NME 11/12/76.
- (9) See NME 4/6/77.
- (10) See NME 11/6/77.
- (11) See NME 13/8/77.
- (12) NME 7/1/78.
- (13) NME 15/7/78.
- (14) NME 23/12/78.
- (15) NME 23 and 30/5/87.
- (16) NME 31/10/87. See NME 17/10/87 for the BBC passing this song.
- (17) NME 5/12/87.
- (18) See LBC losing their licence in Guardian 4/9/93.
- (19) NME 19/11/88
- (20) IOC Vol 19 No 9, October 1990 p4.
- (21) IOC Vol 18 No2 February 1989 p8.
- (22) See pp180/181 above.
- (23) Kershaw, 1992. See the Radio Authority Bulletins No 6 p10 and No 7 p7 for upheld complaints against "obscene" records.

Conclusion

- (1) For the attitude of BBC governors see Fiddick, 1993.
- (2) National Heritage Department, 1992, pp 36-41.
- (3) See reference 16 p246 and reference 1 p251.
- (4) This is judging by Radio One, 1993a.

- (5) Local Radio Workshop, 1983, p105.
- (6) The Radio Authority has persistently called for One to be privatised. See Independent 29/4/92, Guardian 16/4/93 and Vox June 1993. But it now fears that this would take the ILR's advertising revenue, see Guardian 27/9/93. The Adam Smith Institute has also called for One to be privatised, see Guardian 9/2/93, as has the European Policy Forum, see Independent 23/11/92. The BBC told the 1977 Annan Committee on Broadcasting that an end to funding from the licence fee would hit minority programmes. Grundy and Robinson, 1991, also expressed these fears to me.
- (7) Morrison, 1992, p100. See also Independent 27/10/92.
- (8) For marginalisation see Guardian of 3/12/76 where One talked of playing records only according to "music merit" but that some punk was 'arguably not in this category'. On Radio One, 1993c, Beerling said that not playing records did not amount to censorship, but this is a simplification of the issue.
- (9) Grundy, 1991.
- (10) See Hansard, Lords 23/5/91. The definition is from Home Office Minister Lord Ferres. The government ruled that: 'Pop music includes rock and other types of modern music which are characterised by a strong rhythmic element and which rely on electronic amplification for their performance.' NME 20/10/90.
- (11) See Guardian 10/9/91. The Radio Authority's Complaints Bulletins 3 and 4 also have references to complaints from listeners about Jazz FM changing its remit - none were upheld.
- (12) Former Home Secretary Kenneth Baker noted his fear of the

market by saying that it shouldn't be allowed total freedom in broadcasting as : 'You can't go on having more and more pop stations', Observer 16/2/92.

(13) Virgin began broadcasting at 12.15 pm on Friday 30/4/93. For questions about its viability and future see Culf, 1993 P.Harding, 1993 and Durrant, 1993. For early reactions see Guardian 1/5/93, Gaisford, 1993 and Hanks, 1993a. The response One was a series of press adverts extolling its virtues. On Radio One, 1993c, Music Week editor Steve Redmond talked of 'musical censorship' resulting if opening up the market led to less choice. For changes in Virgin's format see Vox November 1993 p6.

(14) See Guardian and Independent 27/11/92.

(15) BBC, 1992, as quoted in Guardian 27/11/92.

(16) M.M.Hall, 1993, p18.

(17) Guardian 18/2/93.

(18) See Cosgrove, 1988a. For a contrary view see E.Bell, 1993.

(19) See Observer 1/11/92.

(20) M.M.Hall, 1993.

(21) See Guardian 22/7/93.

(22) See Guardian 28/9/93 and Culf, 1993a.

(23) For a reaction to One's "The Big Holy One" see Independent 27/4/93. Morrison, 1992, also says that no pop station could even to attempt to cover the whole of pop, which begs questions about why One is seemingly to narrow its scope, given that it is supposed to serve the needs of all fans.

(24) Billington, 1992.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OB-SEEN?: CENSORSHIP AND TELEVISED POP

Television moves pop broadcasting from a purely aural form, to a mixture of aural and visual and the introduction noted many instances of television censorship. Television provides the opportunity for artists to offend by their actions, as well as by their words. The fact that televised pop has often been used as "family" entertainment also creates a more censorious environment, with the BBC's long-running Top of The Pops (TOTP) exemplifying this. The relationship between pop and television has always been fraught with difficulty, but television has also been important in spreading pop's message. Several moments of television have passed into pop legend: Presley only being shown from the waist up on America's Ed Sullivan Show in 1956, Hendrix stopping a performance of "Hey Joe" on The Lulu Show to burst into a Cream tribute in January 1969(1), The Sex Pistols/Grundy interview in 1976 and the Live Aid concert of 1985 are all parts of that legend and provide some of pop's more romantic moments.

The rise of video pop has made pop increasingly visual and the battle for television exposure has arguably become more important than live gigs and plays on One(2). A plethora of shows can now take the pop fan through the night and MTV is slowly building up a British audience, but initially television was wary of showing pop at all. Early pop shows like Ready Steady Go, The 6.5 Special and Oh Boy! were often oases in a pop desert and

carefully controlled by their elder patrons(3). For much of the time this thesis covers the **only** regular shows for popular music on BBC television were TOTP and The Old Grey Whistle Test (OGWT) - the latter of which occupied a marginal space at the end of the BBC 2 schedule akin to that given to Peel on One. Television again brings forth various forms of censorship - including banning, exclusion and marginalisation.

Here I shall outline the story of pop on British television and look in particular at examples where pop has been held to have overstepped the mark, especially with regard to children(4). I shall begin with a few notes on pop and television in general, then look at the censorial histories of the BBC, the independent network and Channel 4 before ending with some examples of the problems caused by video.

Pop on The Box

Lennon writes that: 'British broadcasting has always had a Nanny relationship with its viewers'(1) and nowhere has Nanny held greater sway than in televised pop. At best pop has been seen as cheap entertainment, at worst a potential source of harm. Harker argues that late 1950s shows such as 6.5 Special (BBC) and Oh Boy! (ITV) show that televised pop in the UK was 'conservative from day one'(2), but it might be better to see televised pop in Britain as representing a missed opportunity(3). It has been consigned to either "family", "children's" and "specialist" spots and seldom

been given prime time spots. It has thus been denied cultural space. It has also been treated with suspicion and its potential for getting out of hand was soon noticed, as early 6.5 Special performances by Wee Willie Harris led to questions being asked in Parliament, where the BBC was accused of promoting "teenage decadence"(4).

When pop started to get more serious British television struggled to cope. By the late sixties the music press often commented on the lamentable state of tv pop, which was typified by exclusion and/or sterile, patronising, formats. In 1970 letters in MM complained that BBC 2's only pop show, Disco 2, had a late night "ghetto" slot - often after midnight(5). Its 1971 successor, the OGWT, suffered similar problems. In September 1970 MM's report on the state of tv pop concluded that it was inadequate both in terms of quality and quantity(6). By 1972 things were little better - the BBC's coverage of pop was limited to the chart-orientated TOTP, the marginalised OGWT and Sounds For Saturday. Independent viewers had only The Dave Cash Radio Show(7). Wale wrote in 1972 that: 'Television has increasingly found pop more difficult to come to terms with.'(8) Frequently it didn't even try to.

(Throughout the 1970s TOTP and the OGWT held sway. The arrival of Channel 4 in 1982 and various regional initiatives on ITV gave limited competition, but the BBC continued to rule the pop roost.)

By the late 1980s, as satellite television entered Britain, pop was again used to provide cheap entertainment. Programmes that have tried to show pop's cultural worth have tended to be one-offs such

as South Bank Show and Horizon specials. BBC 2's last excursion into pop in 1992, The Late Show: Later, was first broadcast on 8 October 1992 at 11.55pm - the same "ghetto" slot the OGWT was often consigned to. Little appears to have changed.

Moreover, censorship problems have constantly plagued televised pop history and I have noted its marginalisation and how it has often been used as children's entertainment(9), which creates an inherently censorious climate, but pop has also been caught up in a general debate on the nefarious effects of television. I alluded to the debate on mass culture in the introduction and suffice to say here that Whitehouse(10) has blamed television for many of society's problems and its defenders have denied this and pointed out its social value as an educator, and so on. Televised pop again engendered unproven causal allegations and cries of "protect the kids". Often this has centred on Britain's largest cultural organisation.

Pop and The Beeb - Licenced To Kill?

(The BBC launched Britain's first regular pop show, Hit Parade, in 1952(1), Cool For Cats followed in 1956, but it is the 6.5 Special, which began in February 1957, that is best remembered. Producer Jack Good went on to make Oh Boy! for ITV, and is a seminal figure in British television pop. (Two years later, on 1 June 1959, Juke Box Jury, began its initial twelve year run.) This programme gives us the first censorial action in televised pop during the

period I'm concerned with. Again (the 1967 drug scare is relevant as it was against this backdrop that the panel on the programme first condemned and then withdrew The Game's "The Addicted Man"(2). EMI subsequently withdrew the single and tried to restrict its sales - despite the fact that it was an **anti** drugs record. Television here effectively "killed" a single before it had had a chance to start(3). It appears that the BBC here interpreted its obligation not to offend as being not to discuss a drugs-related record early in the evening - Juke Box Jury again being shown at "family viewing" time.

TOTP began on 1 January 1964(4), but by the early 1970s it was clearly inadequate to cover a market which was dividing crudely into pop/chart and rock/art sections. This divide was mirrored by a Reithian low/high-brow divide within BBC television. BBC 1 was its populist front, BBC 2 its cultural wing. So 1 got the charts (TOTP) and 2 got the progressive scene (Disco 2, OGWT etc). Here again was censorship via ghettoisation, as the late night spot given to the BBC2 shows in the pre-VCR age prevented much of the rock audience being able to see them. In 1971 MM noted that Disco 2 and TOTP were 'designed to carve up between them the music industry: in polarised terms, the serious aspect versus the more "instant".' It also noted that 'ITV provide relatively no pop opposition.'(5) If the BBC practised censorship via marginalisation, the independent stations used exclusion.

Disco 2's "ghetto" spot(6) also showed that the BBC was resigned to, rather than enthusiastic about, setting up a programme

for "serious" rock fans. By September 1972 it was announced that it was to be replaced by the OGWI(7). Two years later letters were still appearing in MM asking why the OGWI had to go out at 11.55pm(8). The programme not only had a "ghetto" spot, it was also a much smaller budget than the higher-profile TOTP. If pop was to make cultural claims, it seemed destined to do so with only limited help from BBC Television(9).

The OGWI seems to have been free from any major disputes over censorship (perhaps because "serious" rock artists saw no need to "outrage", unlike their pop counterparts). Tasker argues that the show's album-based format militated against it covering punk(10), but archive footage showed in 1992's Sound of The Seventies series shows that some punk did pass the Whistle Test. But elsewhere in pop the BBC found itself embroiled in censorial controversy.

In the run up to the 1979 general election it postponed a showing of a BBC 2 Omnibus documentary on British reggae poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. The programme, Dread Beat An' Blood, was dropped from its scheduled showing on 5 March "because of its political content" and eventually shown, after the election, on 7 June. In the programme Johnson alleged that elements in the Conservative Party, including Margaret Thatcher, were racist. When asked it they were being censorious, the BBC declined to comment(11). More ominously Birmingham police forbade a showing of the film at the city's Gala cinema on March 17 on the grounds that it was 'liable to incite a riot'(12).)

(In January 1980 BBC 2 was again involved in a censorship

dispute. The Au Pairs recorded the usual two songs for the station's Look Hear youth programme which was broadcast early on Tuesday evenings. One of the songs, the pro-feminist "Come Again", was banned from broadcast, because of the lyrics which dealt with female orgasm. Producer Roger Casstles commented: 'Look we go out at 6.50 on a Tuesday night, we've got a large audience between 11 and 16, and I thought the lyrics were unsuitable... They're basically about faking orgasm... I thought that 7 O'Clock in the evening was not the time for a band to be on television singing about their sexual hang ups.'

He continued: 'my worry was that parents of the under-14s watching would've had **their** say and the programme might well have taken off the air. The popular media just aren't ready for these kind of lyrics yet... If we're gonna get this sort of hassle from you people (the music press), I'm gonna play safe and only book bands from big labels.'(13)

Casstles' remarks merit detailed comment because they reveal several of the implicit censorial demarcation points that producers working with pop timed for the evening had (and still have) to contend within. Firstly there is the watershed. (The song is inappropriate because of the programme's transmission time. Children between 11 and 16 are held not to be a suitable audience for songs about faked orgasms. Furthermore the song is deemed unsuitable because it might illicit an unfavourable response. "Parents", possibly from family-orientated moralist pressure groups, and "the media", by which Casstles presumably meant the

press, might get upset.) Note here that it is **not** that the song might harm or even offend children, but rather their **parents'** complaints, that is the worry. The producer **knows** he has to tread carefully. He has nothing against the song himself, but parents and the media **might** do. Again moral cowardice is shown. The fact that the lyrics would have probably passed the vast majority of the audience by was unimportant - the **potential** response was enough to get the song censored.

The final comment about only booking bands from major labels in future is also revealing in a number of ways. Firstly it incorporates the idea that major labels are able to bring bands into line. The bigger the label, the more "responsible" the artist is the implicit theory (the behaviour of Madonna et al since then may well have disproved this). This involves an implicit bias against "left field" or more independently-minded (both musically and idealistically) artists. If these artists are harder to control it appears that the BBC is less likely to put them on television.

Punk was also kept at arm's length by the BBC, although its early evening Nationwide news programme did a report on the Sex Pistols on 12 November 1976(14), some three weeks before the Grundy debacle(15). This period saw favouritism in pop by regularly featuring artists who had BBC 1 series, such as Vince Hill and Cliff Richard, on TOTP(16).

By 1991 the BBC was involved in televising the BPI's annual Brits awards and Johnathan King took over the running of the event. The Gulf War was on when the Brits were shown in 1991 a strict: *awards*

"Don't mention the war" edict was issued(17). Artists who disobeyed this were subject to censure. Lisa Stansfield was viciously attacked in the press for saying that ending the war would be nicer than her award(18). Sinéad O'Connor also spoke out against the war and refused to attend the Brits. When she won an award for best single King showed a video of Whitney Houston singing "Star Spangle Banner" - a direct slur on O'Connor's decision not to allow the American national anthem to be played at her US gigs. The following year the KLF were cut from the televised highlights after a plan to cover the audience in offal(19).

By then the BBC was busy considering its future. The future of TOTP lay in the balance and minority programmes in general are under threat. The head of BBC's music programmes, Avril McRoy, spoke of introducing more AOR and MOR music(20). With the spectre of market forces haunting the BBC the future for minority musics again appears to be one of censorship via exclusion. But overt censorship is also still on the agenda. In 1993 BBC2's Late Show cut the word "motherfucker" from Rage Against The Machine's "Bullet In The Head"(21). But for years there **was** only one show...

Top of The Pops - Charting Censorship?

From its inception on 1 January 1964 TOTP rose to be a national institution in televised pop. It was always unashamedly chart-orientated. What really mattered was **not** introducing new talent or genres of music, but who was Number One in the charts and

therefore "This week's Top of The Pops". Artists who did not chart were unlikely to get on to TOTP. What this meant, especially as it got far greater resources than the OGWT, was that to get television exposure artists almost **had** to alter material in order to try and crack the charts and thus TOTP. Although the show did have spells of featuring album tracks the charts was always its *raison d'etre*(1). Again this did not entail overt censorship, but marginalisation. This was taken further by TOTP's notion of itself as family entertainment(2) and a broadcasting time of around 7pm, which always militated against it featuring anything from the more extreme parts of popular music. But overt censorship was by no means unusual and resulted in several notable cases.

In 1967, after Mick Jagger and Keith Richard successfully appealed against initial custodial sentences for drug possession, the Stones released "We Love You" to thank fans for their support. Peter Whitehead made a film, featuring a court room scene, for the single. According to Bill Wyman, when TOTP was offered the film and: 'Producer Johnnie Stewart did not consider it suitable for the type of audience that watched the programme.'(3) So it was rejected and TOTP censored to protect audience sensibilities.

Whitehead commented that: 'Pop music today is a socially committed form and the BBC are being irresponsible to ignore what is happening in the whole of the pop business today...Pop is not all sweetness and light, as the programme would like to see it and my film is a valid social comment.'(4) MM accused the BBC of trying to stop pop making political comment(5). But TOTP was at least more

liberal than America's Ed Sullivan Show, where the Stones had had to change the lyrics of their hit of the same year, "Let's Spend The Night Together", to "Let's spend some time together". TOTP played the original version(6).

Drugs again caused problems in September 1968. Sly and The Family Stone were in the charts with "Dance To The Music" and when they came over to tour TOTP decided to have them on. However, as the band went through Heathrow Airport bassist Larry Graham Jnr was arrested and charged with possessing cannabis. Fearing this might set a bad example, TOTP cancelled their booking. A BBC spokesman commented that: 'In the light of the circumstances which occurred at London Airport the day before the show, Johnnie Stewart... did not want to have them on the programme.'(7) There is an element of "guilty until proven innocent" at play here, but Sly Stone was philosophical and said 'I'd have probably done the same thing myself.'(8) *or age 2 and by the*

(As the decade wore to an end sex came to preoccupy pop's TV censors most. MM of 22 February 1969 carried a letter complaining of "suggestive" lyrics and films being used on the programme(9). TOTP banned The Kinks' "Plastic Man" because it contained the word "Bum". It suggested the word "thumb" instead, despite the fact the song had already been played on television's Dee Time and got plays on One(10). This is an example of the discrepancies between TOTP and One's censorial policy over the years. These partly reflect BBC inconsistency, but also the different problems caused by aural and visual representations.) TOTP also declined to play Jane Birkin and

Serge Gainsbourg's "Je T'Aime". Heavy breathing was not what the BBC wanted to serve its early evening audiences(11).

(The early 1970s engendered more sexual confusion as glam artists like David Bowie toyed with "gender-bending". Bowie's film for his "John I'm Only Dancing" single in October 1972 featured him "interpreting" the song in an "ethereal" way and his manager, Tony DeFries, claimed TOTP rejected it on the grounds of it 'not being to their taste'.) This was denied by BBC publicity officer Gay Robertson who said that: 'It was not a question of taste. A film has to be acceptable. It is up to the producer whether or not he decides to feature it.'(12) (So a major rising star was denied the opportunity to appear on the nation's top pop television programme, which at this time, commented Wale, could make or break an act(13).) By 1973 TOTP was the **only** prime time tv programme for pop(14) - again an example of censorship by exclusion and marginalisation.)

In 1976 Rod Stewart's "Tonight's The Night" was vetoed by TOTP as unsuitable for its family audience because of its lyrics(15). But it was played by One and featured in a special BBC TV special broadcast at the same time in the evening as TOTP. This record was also mentioned by Whitehouse as one she particularly disapproved of(16).

When it became clear that punk wasn't simply going to go away, TOTP began to have bands like The Jam and The Buzzcocks on. (The Clash "banned" themselves from the show). But it held the line against (The Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen" ~~and thus contributed~~ ^{was} ~~to~~ one of the few overt blanket broadcasting bans seen in British

pop. NME reported that: 'A statement issued jointly by BBC Radio and Television says the Corporation "has no intention of playing the record because it is in gross bad taste."') At TOTP producer Robin Nash commented that the single ^(ml) was "quite unsuitable" for the ^{TOTP} show, although it was mentioned both on radio and TOTP during chart run downs(17).

When The Sex Pistols' released "Pretty Vacant" TOTP showed a film of the band and played the single. However, NME noted that the BBC still received a number of complaints - 'not because of the content of the material, but because certain viewers objected to the Pistols being on TV!'(18).

(The next punk-influenced band to fall foul of TOTP censors were The Gang of Four. In July 1979 they recorded a spot for the show featuring their "At Home He's a Tourist" single. Their appearance was vetoed at the last minute when the BBC objected to the words "rubbers" and "packets". The song is about sexual exploitation in discos and features the lyrics: "Down on the disco floor/They make their profit/From the things they sell/To help you cop off/And the rubbers in your top left pocket."

The band offered to change "rubbers" to "packets" but this was rejected. The BBC suggested it be changed to "rubbish", but the band refused and so were dropped from the show. The BBC's justification for this again reveals the censorial constraints those working in early evening programmes aimed primarily at a "family" audience feel themselves to be under.) The potential reaction of others; rather than any personal misgivings, seems to

have been the motive. BBC press officer Ann Rosenberg said that:

'We felt that the line was not suitable for the young and family audience which is the Top of The Pops audience... "rubbish"... would have been an acceptable compromise for us... What we wanted to do was change the meaning. People, particularly parents, could have taken offence... Changing it to "packets" doesn't change the meaning of the song... Top of the Pops is not only important as a trade programme. It's important for the family.'(19)

(With adverts for condoms commonplace by 1992, it seems hard to credit that a song about them could cause so much fuss, regardless of the scheduled for broadcasting time. Nevertheless Rosenberg's remarks are revealing. The "young" and "family" are to be protected from the word "rubbers" in a manner which Whitehouse could only applaud. A stereotyped view of the family cosily sat around the television in perfect harmony and listening to every syllable is posited. (That contraception may be a suitable topic for "family" viewing is not even considered, despite the fact that it **could** be argued that the song **might** be educational and that, in any case, few of the viewers would have dwelt on the lyrics.)

Rosenburg has no compunction in saying that the BBC sought to change the meaning of the song - a censorial act well within my definition. The band could only appear if they agreed to change their song's meaning. Here censorship did not have to entail a complete ban, but playing a somewhat vague game of chance over what TOTP producers will accept. Occasionally this game might even mean

a bit of underhand activity. In 1980 The Dead Kennedys were allegedly denied a place in the Top 30 with their "Too Drunk To Fuck" single, because of the potential embarrassment to TOTP presenters who would have to skirt round the title when doing the chart run downs(20).

Although bans from TOTP on the grounds of unsuitable lyrics continued, the rise of video in the 1980s saw a corresponding increase in bannings because of unsuitable visual content. In 1981 The Police's video for their "Invisible Sun" single, featuring images of Belfast, was rejected by TOTP. The song was vaguely anti-violence, but the BBC contended that: 'while the lyrics make oblique references to the troubles in Northern Ireland, it does not favour any political or religious group. The film is solely devoted to footage shot in the Province which could be misinterpreted and said to convey meanings which are not present in the lyrics.'(21)

The problem of "misinterpretation" is endemic to any artistic project and is, at best, a flimsy excuse for censorship. Police manager Miles Copeland condemned the BBC as 'petty bureaucrats who are attempting to stifle artistic expression. The video is no different from those seen every day on the BBC news.'(22) Copeland had a point, the BBC was objecting to an anti-violence video and again patronising its audience, but the problem may be that of expectation, people are braced for violence on the news, they may not be similarly prepared for it on TOTP(23).

(Violence was also ^{a real given} the problem with The Rolling Stones' video for their 1983 "Undercover of the Night" single. Set in South ^{J.}

America, it featured Mick Jagger being kidnapped and then shot through the head. This was inter-cut with scenes of an American teenager trying to seduce his girlfriend as they watched the television news. It aimed to show how television had turned the horrors of real violence in South America into entertainment. Britain was the only place in which the video was banned(24). That the sensibilities of children was again the main factor behind this censorship is shown by TOTP producer Michael Hurl1's later remark that: 'I've got two boys aged eight and 12, and the violence in that video was not what I would let my kids see.'(25))

In 1984 TOTP eventually joined in the BBC's banning of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's "Relax". Here Hurl1 commented that: 'When I see all the problems and suffering going on in the world, I find it difficult to get worked up about the banning of a record by the BBC.'(26) This is a legitimate view, but it again has an air of moral cowardice. Censorship of a Number One record is an issue (although **obviously** one which pales against the fate of the starving in Africa). The country's leading cultural organisation banning the country's most popular record is of some import. In this case photos of the band appeared on TOTP, but the video remained banned(27), although the band appeared on the show's Christmas edition.

David Bowie caused the BBC ~~further~~ problems in 1987, His "China Girl" video, featuring him making love on a beach^{his} had been heavily edited by the BBC in 1983, ~~and this time the video for his~~ D. Bowie's "Day In Day Out" featured a woman being assaulted in the back seat

of a car and then chased down a dark alley. Perhaps unsurprisingly, TOTP banned the film. The BBC commented that: 'This video, although not a "nasty" in the recognised sense, was considered unsuitable for screening anywhere in the BBC schedule.'(28)

Again contemporary events are relevant to the censorial climate. The comment about it not being a "nasty" only makes sense in the context over the "nasties" scare and the subsequent Video Recordings Act of 1984.) The "anywhere" epithet is a reminder of how censorship varies according to the expected audience. At this time Hurll was warning video producers of a "new puritanism" at the BBC, from which these events cannot be divorced. NME reported that Hurll had warned: 'that certain graphic content in the past was likely to be turned down this year'(29) - again showing that censorship involves changing parameters, not ever-increasing liberalism.)

Evidence of this "new puritanism" came around the same time when pop's betes noires of the time, The Beastie Boys, had a video banned by TOTP. The "Fight For Your Right To Party" video was initially shown, but later banned after complaints(30). George Michael's "I Want Your Sex" video was also banned by the show in the same year(31).

When the acid-house came to prominence in 1988 TOTP showed its customary caution. D Mob went to Number One with "We Call It Acieed" and appeared on TOTP, but it received a number of complaints, some because band members were wearing "smiley" t-shirts, which were then being associated with ecstasy (again linking censorship to contemporary events) and some because of the

song itself(32).

As the record subsequently went down the charts the issue of it being on again did not arise, but it appears that TOTP had learnt a lesson. A spokesman explained that it had: 'received numerous complaints from upset parents following the appearance of d.mob and have decided that the word acid is not now acceptable in either a lyric or a title'(33). So a particular word was banned, although One continued to play the single, which **they** interpreted as being anti-drugs. It is also alleged that this sort of censorial activity stopped Jolly Roger's "Acid Man" from being a bigger hit than it was(34).

Sex and violence were a perennial concern. In January 1990 Public Enemy's "Welcome To The Terrordome" video was banned by TOTP. It featured the band brandashing machine guns and was vetoed as 'unsuitable for family viewing'(35). TOTP also used a cleaned-up version of Madonna's "Justify My Love" video later in the year, rather than the original one which featured her kissing another woman and various inversions of conventional sex roles(36).

Indeed the programme seems to go out of its way to make its performers comply with mainstream codes of behaviour. During the Gulf War the band Soho were prevented from wearing CND symbols on their clothes on the show(37), which also prevented transvestite Alan Pelay of Gary Clail's band from wearing a dress on air(38). When Erasure covered ABBA's "Take A Chance On Me" on the show in June 1992 the camera avoided Vince Clarke, who was dressed in a bridal gown. In the same year Mark Archer of Altern 8 accused the

programme of censorship by exclusion by favouring live rock over dance music(39). Archer stood as a joke candidate in the 1992 general election, but a po-faced TOTP prevented the band from displaying a "Vote Altern 8" banner on the programme(40). Certainly the decision, taken in 1991, to concentrate on live acts, when dance and video were dominant, was a strange one, whether TOTP was censoring dance by marginalisation still remains a moot point.

(Meanwhile direct bans continued. In February 1992 the Jesus and Mary Chain's "Reverence" was banned because of its lyrics), an amended version of which were played on One. (TOTP explained that: 'Our producer felt that the lyrics "I want to die like Jesus Christ/I want to die on a bed of spikes" were unsuitable for broadcast at 7pm, when children are likely to be watching the programme.'(41)) The same reasoning presumably lay behind TOTP's decision not to play Genesis' "Jesus He Knows Me" later in the year(42). Children again seem to have been used to protect the moral sensibilities of Christians.

1992 also saw the Red Hot Chilli Peppers prevented from going on the show after wanting to perform their "Under the Bridge" single dressed in drag(43). But TOTP refused to ban The Shamen's "Ebenezer Goode" video in September 1992 and the BSC then upheld a complaint against the show for playing it(44). So my history of it ends with it defying censors, rather than playing safe.

(By this time the BBC was debating its future and the future of TOTP was in doubt, especially as it is based on the apparently declining singles market(45). Its chart-orientated format and

concentration on a "family audience" always limited its potential to explore pop's extremes. When this was combined with a notion of a "watershed" time for words like "rubbers" and "bum", as well as for the portrayal of certain acts and topics, a conservative approach was inevitable. TOTP **has** produced some memorable moments of televised pop, but often more by accident than by design. It is, perhaps inevitably given the constraints of its format, still as notable for what it **excludes** as for what it **includes**.) But overt and covert censorship are by no means the prerogative solely of TOTP and the BBC.

The Independent Television Companies - Underselling Pop?

Unlike the BBC, independent television has never had a major long running pop series. With stations now obliged to compete for their franchises every few years, this situation is unlikely to change as few programmes on the independent network are guaranteed an extended run. As it is regionally structured, commercial television's coverage of pop has tended to involve a series of local initiatives, which were then picked up, or not, by other regions. The type of service pop fans received from the independent network thus depended on where they lived - again a reflection of the locally-mediated nature of censorship in British pop. However several shows did get shown nationally on the independent network, and made censorial decisions that had a national impact.

Independent television's first pop programme was Oh Boy!

which began on 15 June 1958. Under the guidance of Jack Good, a respectable form of youth entertainment was nurtured. But the running was not always smooth. In December 1958 an appearance by Cliff Richard on the show was attacked by the NME's Alley Cat columnist as: 'some of the most crude exhibitionism ever seen on British TV... His violent hip-swinging, during an obvious attempt to copy Elvis Presley was revolting - hardly the kind of performance any parent could wish their child to witness.'⁽¹⁾ The Daily Sketch newspaper picked up on these comments and put pressure on Good to make Richard tone down his act, which he subsequently did - again showing the censorial power of the press.

Ready Steady Go was the next independent television pop show of any import and it began on 9 August 1959. Melly credits it with making pop truly national⁽²⁾. Audience behaviour was carefully monitored⁽³⁾ and so was content, so censorial disputes were few. The series finished before the time upon which this thesis concentrates.

Perhaps the first major television pop event during this time on the independent network was the refusal of the Rolling Stones to go on the revolving stage, as was expected of all guests, after their performance on the live Sunday Night at The London Palladium on 22 January 1967⁽⁴⁾. Such minor acts of defiance can make rock legends. However the band censored themselves by playing "She Smiled Sweetly" instead of the more risqué "Let's Spend The Night Together" on the Eamon Andrews Show a few days later⁽⁵⁾.

By the early 1970s there was little pop on the independent

stations. MM found in June 1971 that 'the BBC has an absolute monopoly on how pop music is transmitted to the masses'(6), as ITV only used pop in the context of "family" entertainment shows and the ILRs did not then exist. Otherwise it was the odd regional initiative such as Lift Off With Ayshea, aimed overwhelmingly at a "teenybop" audience. TOTP and the OGWT had few, if any, commercial rivals.

But some independent stations did seek to rock the boat a little. In 1972 Thames television denied that there was a total broadcasting ban on Wings' "Give Ireland Back To The Irish," as they intended to feature it, if Paul McCartney gave their Today programme an interview. Some pointed out that EMI, distributors of the single, were major shareholders in Thames television(7). Meanwhile a BBC report of 1974 revealed that OGWT and TOTP faced no regular opposition from ITV(8).

The fact that children were often the target audience of any pop programmes that ITV **did** show caused problems in November 1976. The Pauline's Quirkies show featured pop, Quirkie and resident band Flintlock and had a transmission time of late afternoon. Some sketches, involving slave auctions and requests for the band to strip upset moralist press commentators. Alan Coren of The Times described this as 'calculated to rot the minds' of its viewers(9). The show's producer defended it as an attempt to de-mystify pop idols and show young girls they didn't have to scream at them(10). Anglia subsequently dropped the show, although Thames, its makers, kept it on, again illustrating the regional nature of

censorship(11). A minor moral panic was underway which soon escalated. But it is important to remember that television was already under scrutiny before the next case came along.

As punk rose some within the commercial network saw its importance, notably Tony Wilson whose So It Goes programme on Granada gave many punk bands their first major television exposure. But it was a different sort of exposure which set in motion possibly the most censorious period thus far in the annals of British pop.

On Friday 1 December 1976 The Sex Pistols appeared on Thames' Today programme as a last minute replacement for Queen. They apparently made the most of Thames' hospitality suite before the interview which was conducted, in less than professional manner, by Bill Grundy. Importantly, it was this interview more than any musical event, which put punk into the public eye. During it Steve Jones said of the £40,000 that EMI had advanced the band: 'We've fucking spent it', and when Rotten said "shit", Grundy asked him to repeat it, which he did. When Grundy made a suggestive comment to Siouxsie Sioux, Jones called him a 'dirty sod', Grundy goaded him by saying: 'Say something outrageous' and Jones responded with: 'You dirty bastard', 'You dirty fucker' and, after Grundy had commented '**what** a clever boy', 'You fucking rotter.'(12)

The press, already agitated by the Quirke show(13), reacted in apoplectic fashion and called for heads to roll. Grundy was suspended and The Pistols eventually sacked by EMI. Thus began a whole series of censorial moves against punk which included banned

gigs and records for The Pistols(14). Their offence had been to break the conventions of television, to swear at **tea time**, 'with the Children and Nan around', as the Daily Mirror put it(15). It was this breach of etiquette that caused the offence(16). Savage writes that: 'The Grundy affair made the Sex Pistols, but it also killed them.'(17) A mere 90 seconds of television, shown only in the London region and thus missed by the vast majority of the population, set in motion censorial actions against pop which had not been seen previously and would not be seen again until raves in the late 1980s. The importance of Grundy is not that it was itself an example of pop censorship, but that it shows how television can be as important for what it provokes as for what it censors.

Laing notes that what was different this time was that previous pop "outrages" had occurred off-screen, this was beamed into the home and so the reaction was magnified(18). Ironically in August 1989 Thames used the incident as part of their twenty fifth anniversary celebrations(19). It must be emphasised here that punk was victimised not for what its records sounded like or even the behaviour of its adherents, although both were widely condemned, but because its leading lights had sworn on television at Six O'Clock in the evening. This is an excellent example of pop's attendant features, rather than the music itself, attracting censorship. After Grundy the independent radio and television network treated the Pistols every bit as censorially as the BBC.

When "God Save the Queen" was released in June 1977 NME reported that the IBA 'have instructed all commercial radio

stations not to play it, claiming it is in breach of Section 41a of the IBA Act (a paragraph concerning bad taste), and ITV will automatically follow suit.'(20) Adverts for the single were also banned. Thus commercial television does not necessarily mean extending consumer choice. The IBA also banned adverts for the band's "Never Mind the Bollocks" album in November 1977(21). Martin and Segrave note that: 'The ITCA's head of copy clearance, Stuart Rutledge... said he had no objection to the ad, "It was the record itself we objected to... Some parts of the lyric are unspeakable."'(22) However the band did get the chance to appear on So It Goes in the same month(23).

Even after their split The Sex Pistols were still censored by ITV. The Revolver show was generally sympathetic to punk and featured many of the bands(24), although it suffered from the lack of a regular time slot and became ghettoised in a late night one(25). It also drew the line at the Pistols record with Ronnie Biggs, "The Biggest Blow". A film of this was due to be shown on the programme in August 1978. Presenter Peter Cook announced the film and then, according NME, viewers saw it 'censored in front of their very eyes'(26). The decision to cut it was taken by Associated Television's director of production, Francis Essex, who claimed that it failed to meet ATV's 'presentation and performance standards.'(27)

This decision was taken by an independent company, not the IBA, which refused to tell ATV to drop the film, despite pleas from Tory MP Jill Knight for them to do so. Revolver producer Mickie

Most explained the ban by saying that: 'ATV decided that it wasn't in the public interest to show film of a convicted criminal living it up with scantily clad-girls on some Rio de Janiero beach. It didn't merit inclusion either artistically or politically for the company.'(28)

The latter comment may have referred to the fact that there could have been objections to its broadcasting licence being renewed if its output had upset powerful interests. This gives an insights into the day-to-day censorial constraints those in television pop work under. The loss of the Biggs film was hardly serious cultural damage, but it does provide further evidence of moral cowardice and of the ability of the market to censor - as no licence would have meant no profits.

Independent television's Saturday morning show for children, Tiswas, joined TOTP in banning the video of The Police's "Invisible Sun"(29) and the IBA also cut The Stone's "Undercover" before allowing independent stations to use it(30). Controversy arose over editorial policy in May 1987 when ITV cut Carlton Edwards' "The Last Rites" out of their recorded highlights of a concert in aid of AIDS charities - despite the fact that it was one of the few played during the concert that actually dealt with AIDS. A spokesman explained that: 'The main provision was that it had to be entertaining. There were a lot of things which were very relevant to the cause but might not have gone down well with the television audience.'(31) So the notion of "entertainment" was used to deny airtime to a song about the very cause the concert was in aid of.

Children were the reason given when independent television's Get Fresh programme decided to ban the video of Kim Wilde's "Say You Really Want Me" later the same year. It featured her on a bed with 4 men who were wearing Boxer shorts. Get Fresh producer Mike Forte described the video as "too naughty" for his show. Wilde's label, MCA, commented that: 'Kim's brother and sister, aged seven and eight, have seen it and they approve.... They don't think it's rude.'(32) But, ITV did and the video remained banned from their children's shows.

1987 was also the year of the Beastie Boys' notoriety. Their bans included one on independent television, whose leading pop show, The Roxy, was aimed at a young audience. It rejected the video for the band's "She's Crafty" single, which featured footage of a previous American tour. Alistair Pirrie, the show's producer, explained that: 'the spectacle of a near-naked woman in a cage being prodded by a group of unpleasant looking youths with beer cans is not the sort of thing to put on the air when a lot of young children are watching.'(33) So again the protection of children was posited, whatever its merits, as a reason for censorship.

The Pogues have encountered a number of censorial problems in their career and were victims of censorship in April 1988 when a Ken Russell film featuring their version of "The Gentleman Soldier" and footage from Northern Ireland was cut from the South Bank show where it was going to be part of the Irish section of an A-Z of British Music. The reason Melvyn Bragg gave for its exclusion again exemplifies how the censorial climate is affected by contemporary

events. The screening was due just after two British soldiers had been killed after driving into a Republican funeral cortege in Belfast and Bragg said the film was: 'about a soldier who takes a girl into a sentry box. Afterwards the girl goes away and the soldier is blown up... I thought that we could not show it in its entirety **after recent events.**'(34)

Contemporary events also shaped the next IBA ban. The 1988 minor moral panic surrounding raves and the use of the ecstasy was underway when Children of The Night recorded a single called "It's A Trip", which Conservative MPs tried to get removed from shops because of its references to acid and ecstasy. It was due to be played on the late night Hit Man and Her programme in November, but the IBA vetoed the song at the last minute. The show's producer explained that: 'It was felt that we'd be treading dangerous water if we used it.'(35) Such unwillingness to "tread dangerous water" often characterises British television pop. The IBA also banned an advertisement by De La Soul for their "Three Feet High and Rising" album in January 1990 because it used the CND symbol, which contravened regulations regarding political publicity(36). Madonna's "Justify My Love" video was also cut.

The ITC does not keep figures on the number of complaints it receives regarding pop videos, so small is the annual amount(37). This paucity appears to be do more down to the fastidiousness of television producers, rather than to any lack of vigilance by Whitehouse et al. When controversy has arisen independent television producers, like those at the BBC, have not been slow to

pull the plug on pop. This has inevitably meant that the popular music scene, parts of which often set out to provoke and to outrage, has often been only cursorily covered by television. Pop has generally been presented as an adjunct of the entertainment industry and therefore as "safe" - its potential to provoke has been underplayed by television. For years TOTP was ~~the~~ major pop television show, now it is being seriously challenged by ITV's Chart Show(38), and may even end because of this(39). The history of ITV's coverage of pop does not indicate that this would lead to any major shift in censorial attitudes. Pop on television will remain chart-orientated, "family", entertainment. But what of the television channel that was specifically set up to provide ~~non~~ mainstream entertainment, how has it treated pop?

The Same Old Story?: The Censoring of Pop on Channel 4

Channel 4 came on air in 1982 with the specific aim of catering for minority tastes which might not otherwise get television coverage(1). It has often had an adventurous programming policy and taken British television into uncharted territory. This has often led it into controversy with the broadcasting authorities, the government and groups like the NVALA. It has also been involved in censorship(2), which has also encompassed pop.

As early as December 1982 the station was caught up in a furore surrounding the Virgin Prunes. The band recorded a gig, for possible broadcast by 4 on its "Whatever You Want" programme,

during which members of the band simulated intercourse and oral sex. A vicar who heard of this complained to Whitehouse, who passed on the information to Home Secretary William Whitelaw. Despite the fact that the film was not scheduled for broadcasting the station found itself at the centre of a censorship row with some Tory MPs signing a Commons motion telling 4 to clean up or get out(3).

The channel's excursion into pop programmes had started on 5 November 1982 with The Tube. This programme went out live on Friday evenings, was 105 minutes long and featured a chaotic mixture of live acts and filmed interviews etc. Despite good reviews(4) it was taken off after presenter Jools Holland referred to the audience as "groovy fuckers" in an advertisement for the programme, just prior to its broadcast. Much confusion and suspicion surrounds the eventual axing of the programme(5). It was replaced by Switch and since then 4 has had a number of pop programmes, including The Word and showing the original Chart Show for independent television.

The Saturday Night Live show featured alternative comedians and music. On a show in April 1988 The Pogues were halfway through their "Birmingham Six" song, referred to earlier(6), when the producer cut to the adverts break. Whether this was direct censorship or merely the scheduled time for the break was a contested point. The show's producer, Geoff Posner, claimed he was merely running to schedule, but the band's manager, Frank Murray, claimed that it was censorship and that the programme had to have two minutes of ad libs at the end to fill in the time left by cutting The Pogues' song(7).

Censorship here is hard to prove, but the contentious nature of the song and its subsequent banning by the IBA arouse suspicions. The Pogues also suffered more of 4's censorship in August of the same year when they refused to show the band's "Fiesta" video on the Chart Show. Again children were the reason given for the censorship. The film included bullfighting, drinking and a wine bottle smashing. Chart Show press officer Frances McPadden explained that 'we have a set of guidelines we have to adhere to because there are children watching. Drinking is one of the things we're not allowed to show.'(8)

But generally 4 has had a more liberal attitude than most of its competitors. Its late night pop programme, The Word, was the only British television channel to show the uncut version of Madonna's "Justify My Love" video(9). It has also avoided major controversies over pop censorship, although the IBA did order it to cut parts of The Stones' "Undercover" video in 1983 before the Tube was allowed to use it for its early evening slot(10). James also allege that 4 stopped them from performing "Live a Life of Love" on the Jonathan Ross Show in 1992 because they held it to be blasphemous(11) - a favourite Whitehouse bogey. But overall 4 has rarely attracted the type of controversy around censoring pop that the other stations have(12). In late 1992 it launched pilots for new series(13).

Videos and satellite television(1)

I have already noted the use of videos by mainstream television, but increasingly MTV and other satellite stations have begun to make in-roads into British television. Cable and satellite television seem likely to take up an ever greater percentage of viewing time and will doubtlessly become embroiled in their own censorship debates, whilst the possibility of the Maastricht Treaty implementing a pan-EEC broadcasting policy could complicate matters still further. Meanwhile the importance of pop videos was shown by the BBC paying a lump sum of £150,000 for their use in 1989(2). Worries over their effects can be seen in TOTP's decision not to show the video for Wang Chung's 1987 hit "Everybody Have Fun Tonight" because the editing technique used in it was held to cause epilepsy(3) and in the eighty complaints TOTP received for showing Michael Jackson grabbing his crotch in his 1991 "Black Or White" video(4).

Thus far censorship rows on the satellites have been rare. Billboard reported that in 1989 the Cable Authority had drawn up a code for pop videos, which, it was said, cause 'more regulatory problems than all other programmes put together'(5). But few censorial problems have occurred. MTV in Europe has rarely been in censorship rows - most of which have occurred in the USA(6). I noted in-house censorship in the chapter on labels(7) and this undoubtedly contributes to the comparative rarity of notable cases(8). Different videos of the same song may be used for

different programmes, depending their broadcasting time(9).

Videos are also used as home entertainment, but thus far video cassettes of rock and pop artists have failed to cause any major censorial rows. All must now be classified under the Video Recordings Act of 1984 and most record companies seem to have succeeded in getting their acts to at least ensure that their videos get a certificate. The only exception I found to this was a video by Nine Inch Nails for their "Happiness In Slavery" track. The video featured American performance artist Bob Flanagan being tortured and pierced by a robotic device. It was refused a certificate by the BBFC and now rests in Island's vaults(10).

The smallness of MTV's audience(11) has meant its censorial problems have not been picked up on by the media. The situation for other satellite and cable stations appears to be the same(12). But as they gather viewers more censorship seems inevitable(13). Pop music has been transmitted by television, but usually in ghetto or children's spots. It has spread pop's message, but often on terms which undermine that message. The visual aspects of pop have alerted the censors and, once alerted, they have acted on behalf of the audience, but seldom consulted them(14). Televised pop has been allowed, but only conditions which have worked against its appreciation as a cultural form. But conditions upon the way in which pop can be consumed have been multiplied once pop leaves home and goes to the concert halls.

Notes: Introduction

- (1) See Tasker, 1982, for details of this.
- (2) Vox March 1993 lists the TOTP producer and the Chart Show owner as joint twelfth most powerful men in British pop.
- (3) See Hall and Jefferson, 1974, p186.
- (4) Children have been a perennial concern for broadcasters. See, for example, BBC, 1974.

Pop On The Box

- (1) Lennon, 1991.
- (2) Harker, 1980, p71. See Hill, 1991 for early British TV pop shows.
- (3) Tasker, 1982, p6.
- (4) B.Welch, 1990, p75. Palmer, 1976, p216 also notes this.
- (5) See MM 6 and 13/6/70.
- (6) See MM 26/9/70.
- (7) See MM 26/10/74.
- (8) Wale, 1972, p306.
- (9) See BBC, 1974.
- (10) See, for example, p441 below.

BBC

- (1) See Hill, 1991, p90.
- (2) See pp12/13 above.
- (3) See pp85/86 and 224 above for more on this single.
- (4) MM 14/1/67. BBC, 1974, p7 lists drugs as a particular problem.
- (5) MM 26/6/71, p31.
- (6) See ibid

- (7) See MM 6 and 13/6/70.
- (8) See MM 25/9/71.
- (9) See remarks by Bob Harris, NME 20/12/75.
- (10) Tasker, 1982, p7.
- (11) NME 14/4/79.
- (12) ibid
- (13) NME 2/2/80.
- (14) Savage, 1991a, p255.
- (15) See pp284/285 above for more on the Sex Pistols and Grundy.
- (16) Street, 1986, p125.
- (17) See NME 16/2/91.
- (18) MM 16/2/91.
- (19) See NME 22 and 29/2/92.
- (20) Independent 10/3/93.
- (21) NME 6/3/93.

Top of The Pops

- (1) The album spot was dropped because it interrupted the show's continuity. See MM 30/6/73.
- (2) See BBC, 1974, p6 for TOTP's family approach and audience breakdown in 1974.
- (3) Wyman, 1991, p541.
- (4) ibid
- (5) MM 26/8/67.
- (6) MM 28/1/67.
- (7) MM 21/9/68.
- (8) ibid

- (9) MM 22/2/69.
- (10) MM 3/5/69.
- (11) MM 4/10/69. See p207 above for more on "Je T'Aime".
- (12) All quotes MM 7/10/72.
- (13) Wale, 1972, p307.
- (14) MM 30/6/73.
- (15) NME 5/6/76.
- (16) See Whitehouse, 1977, pp38/39.
- (17) NME 11/6/77.
- (18) NME 23/7/77.
- (19) NME 30/7/79.
- (20) See p254 above.
- (21) NME 3/10/81.
- (22) ibid
- (23) For problems about audience expectations and broadcasting BSC, 1991. BSC, 1992, p71 speaks of the notion of a "contract" between broadcaster and viewer.
- (24) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p277.
- (25) NME 7/4/84.
- (26) ibid
- (27) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p258.
- (28) NME 4/4/87.
- (29) ibid
- (30) Sounds 4/4/87.
- (31) NME 6/6/87.
- (32) NME 29/10/88.

(33) RM 5/11/88. See also Sun 26/10/88 for details of the ban. Here the band Perfectly Ordinary People claimed to have lost 5 television appearances in the wake of the TOTP ban.

(34) Q January 1989.

(35) NME 27/1/90.

(36) NME 15/12/90.

(37) NME 2/3/91.

(38) NME 27/4/91.

(39) See NME 2/5/92.

(40) NME 25/4/92.

(41) NME 22/2/92.

(42) See Vox December 1992.

(43) NME 21/3/92.

(44) See BSC: Complaints Bulletin No22 November 1992. Radio One, 1993b, said that TOTP producer Stan Appel decided to carry on using the track and ride out the short-term storm rather than banning it, giving it more publicity and prolonging its chart life. See also p226 above.

(45) For speculation over the future of TOTP see Guardian 27/11/92 and Vox 1993. For speculation over the future of singles see Cosgrove, 1988a. For an opposing view see E.Bell, 1993. The Guardian, 27/8/93, reported TOTP's future as assured.

Independent Television

(1) NME 3/2/79.

(2) See Melly, 1989, pp187/188.

(3) Hall and Jefferson, 1975, p188.

- (4) Wyman, 1991, pp478/9 and Record Hunter, Vox August 1992.
- (5) Wyman, 1991, p482.
- (6) MM 26/6/71.
- (7) See MM 25/3/72. It was also alleged the EMI dropped the Sex Pistols in 1977 because it owned half the shares in Thames, the station which broadcast their interview with Bill Grundy.
- (8) See BBC, 1974.
- (9) See Times 7/12/6. The original quote was a few days before.
- (10) See Daily Express 2/12/76.
- (11) See Guardian and Daily Express of 7/12/76 for Anglia dropping the show. See Ryle, 1976, for an attack on the show.
- (12) Savage, 1991a, pp258/9. The interview was recalled in Grundy's obituary in Guardian 11/2/93.
- (13) See, for example, Daily Express 2/12/76 which reports Grundy and Quirke on the same page and thus links the two to show that something was wrong with television.
- (14) See pp214-217, 236 and 334-338 for more Sex Pistols bans.
- (15) Daily Mirror 3/12/76. The Daily Express of 2/12/76 also complained that the Quirke show was shown at "tea time".
- (16) See Laing, 1985, for the myth of family viewing.
- (17) Savage, 1991a, p288.
- (18) See Laing, 1985, p35.
- (19) Savage, 1991a, p263.
- (20) NME 11/6/77.
- (21) See NME 12/11/77.
- (22) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p228.

- (23) NME 26/11/77. So It Goes was dropped after Iggy Pop went on wearing a horse's tail and swore. See Vox January 1992.
- (24) See NME 24/6/78. See Munro, 1979, p166 for ITV being more liberal than the BBC towards punk.
- (25) See Tasker, 1982, p8.
- (26) NME 19/8/78. "The Biggest Blow" is also known as "No One is Innocent". See Savage, 1991a, p563.
- (27) NME 19/8/78.
- (28) ibid
- (29) NME 30/10/81.
- (30) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p277.
- (31) NME 9/5/87.
- (32) NME 15/8/87.
- (33) NME 17/10/87.
- (34) NME 2/4/88. Emphasis mine.
- (35) NME 3/12/88.
- (36) NME 6/1/90 and Vox February 1991
- (37) ITC, 1991.
- (38) For The Chart Show and TOTP compared see Quantick, 1992.
- (39) See The Guardian 16/7/92. For the future of the ITV network see Guardian 10/9/92. For speculation over the future of ITV stations see Guardian 31/12/92 and 2/1/93.

Channel Four

- (1) See Robertson, 1991, p279.
- (2) For examples of 4 censoring see Lennon, 1991, (on films in the Gulf War), Observer 3/3/91 (on being unable to show the film of

penises, "Dick" and cuts to "Sex in Our Time"), Daily Mail 27/4/91 (for complaints being upheld against 4 for some of the programmes in its 1991 season on censorship, "Banned") and Guardian 11/5/91 (where the BSC dismissed a claim against 4 for using swearing in a show about rap lyrics). See Martin and Segrave, 1988, p277 for the IBA asking 4 to cut the Stones' "Undercover".

(3) NME 11/12/82 and IOC Vol 12 No2. April 1983, p44.

(4) See Vox September 1992 for The Tube as a golden age.

(5) Wells, 1991b, claimed that the closing down of The Tube was shrouded in much mystery and the full story has yet to come out.

(6) See pp47 and 237/8 above.

(7) NME 30/4/88.

(8) NME 6/8/88.

(9) NME 15/12/90.

(10) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p277.

(11) See Vox September 1992.

(12) For a review of 10 years of 4 see Observer 1/11/92 and Guardian 2/11/92.

(13) See Vox September 1992.

Video and Satellite

(1) For more on pop and video see Frith, Goodwin and Grossberg, 1993, Goodwin, 1993, R.Green, 1982, Kaplan, 1987 and Wollen, 1986. For videos and censorship see pp104-106 (at record companies) and pp276-278 (on TOTP) above.

(2) NME 24/6/89.

(3) NME 28/2/87.

- (4) Observer 17/11/91.
- (5) Hunter, 1989. See also NME 5/8/88.
- (6) For examples of MTV policy in the US see NME 9/7/83 and 2/6/84 and Gay Times November 1991.
- (7) See pp104-106 above.
- (8) See Negus, 1992, p98. Negus also points out that videos are often made with a world audience in mind, this further limiting the chances that can be taken.
- (9) See Hunter, 1989.
- (10) NME 28/4/92.
- (11) NME of 11/4/92 noted that only 116,593 UK homes had MTV.
- (12) Guardian 23/11/92 put satellite television's share of the audience at 5.7% of the total. BSkyB was criticised for showing films such as "Die Hard II" before the 9pm watershed - see Guardian 13/11/92. See also Independent and Guardian 20/5/93 for the BSC censuring BSkyB for broadcasting violent films too early in the evening.
- (13) Young, 1993, noted that the larger the audience, the more likely the BBC was to censor.
- (14) This may, belatedly, be changing. See Guardian and Independent 28/5/93 for the BBC planning more audience consultation.