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PART FOUR: LIVE MUSIC

CHAPTER NINE

KEEP YER YA YAS IN - CENSORSHIP OF LIVE MUSIC

Live music moves pop censorship from the private to the public. Listening to pop at home is a private matter, television is too, radio crosses the boundary, but live music is undeniably public. This poses a series of potential problems and offence that recorded music does not face. Partly this reflects the highly regulated nature of live pop, which further blurs any distinction between regulation and censorship. Problems with live music start with finding a venue. This venue is likely to be covered by various local bye laws on safety, fire, drinking etc. The added ingredient of a gathered audience means that complaints and moves against live pop tend to be more common than those against its recorded form.

Objections can be made to the choice of venue, noise, the behaviour of the crowd - before, during and after gigs, artists' stage antics and lastly, and possibly leastly, the content of the songs themselves. Objectors can range from local residents (who are in many ways the added censorial component here), through to councils and the police. Bans can be imposed before a gig, so it never takes place, or after it - so that a venue won't book certain acts again they or their fans "misbehave" during a gig.

Here I shall look at various bans on live shows and the censorial agencies behind them. I shall concentrate on indoor venues here and on outdoor events in the next chapter. I will look at bans by various venues over the years and again contend that

ensorial actions are to a large extent determined by contemporary events. The control of live music again blurs any distinction between censorship and regulation(1). I will end by examining two agencies which contribute to such blurring - local authorities and the police.

It needs asking at this point if the restricting of live pop even constitutes censorship. My answer is a somewhat guarded "yes". Whilst local bye laws may not have censorial intent, their result can often be censorious. For example, an attempt in the 1970s by Leeds council to introduce a decibel limit at gigs was altruistic in intent, but censorial in that it prevented some bands from being able to play the city. Frith has written that: 'At the centre of Afro-American music is the performance.'⁽²⁾ In this respect to deny performance is to perform the most censorious act of all, but Britain has not been short of such censorship⁽³⁾.

Venues

Problems surrounding venues come into two main categories. Firstly there is the problem of setting up a venue that is suitable for live popular music. This involves various regulations, health, fire and safety directives which can be imposed by local councils⁽¹⁾ and possibly having to overcome objections by local residents who might not welcome noise in their neighbourhood, or the "undesirable" elements some popular music events are held to attract. We may characterise these problems as generally being

those of the venue owners(2).

Britain has a lack of purpose-built pop venues(3). Gigs still take place in pubs, clubs, theatres and halls which are unsuitable for them, which can contribute to the opposition some of them have faced. An example of such opposition was the attempt by the well-established Mean Fiddler group(4) to open a former Music Hall, The Grand, at London's Clapham Junction. It took over two years to overcome objections from local residents and Wandsworth Council before the venue finally opened in December 1991(5).

Problems can continue once the venue is open. Local authorities keep a sharp eye on venues and can close down those whose activities they disapprove of. For example, in May 1978 London's Roundhouse, home to many 60s "happenings", stopped presenting gigs after a series of a run-ins over noise with the GLC(6) and in April 1990 the Fulham Greyhound, a regular gig for new bands, closed because it was unable to renew its drinks licence(7). Venues often operate with censorious eyes upon them, another example of the importance of locality and censorship in Britain. Again the point is not that all regulations are censorship, but that some bye laws further blur any strict demarcation line.

Market censorship can occur when a creeping process of embourgeoisment takes place in venues, in a way analogous to the process that took place in London's Music Halls in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Venues which formerly booked bands may be unwilling to put them on if the venue goes "up market"(8). Since

punk a division in live music between the small, local, club scene and the supergigs in places like Earls Court and the NEC has emerged. The college/university circuit provides an intermediary between these for parts of the year. But the split of popular music into mainstream and periphery is again apparent and entails the marginalisation of certain genres.

Such marginalisation is furthered by the bookings policies some venues pursue. This brings forth the second set of problems - those faced mainly by the promoter, often concerning venues objecting to certain acts. For example, in July 1971 Slade found it hard to get gigs because they were skinheads(9). The Town and Country II faced criticism over its bookings policy in 1989 when it appeared to go "up market" and excluded bands it had previously been happy to book(10). More ominously bands with overtly political messages have been victims of venue censorship. In response to this, Crass took matters into their own hands. After suffering venue bans, they invaded the closed Rainbow Theatre in London in December 1982 and squatted for long enough to play a gig with other anarchist bands(11). They did this because: 'We simply haven't been able to get any club work in London'(12). Crass estimated that a third of their planned gigs were censored and never took place(13). In March 1987 the anarchist band Conflict claimed to be 'unofficially banned'(14) from venues in London.

The banning of particular genres of music by venues has been a regular feature of live censorship, often centring on concerns about audience behaviour. An example of this was reports of venues

refusing to book rap bands in the late 1980s(15). But such actions are nothing new. The Brighton Dome often banned acts in the early 1970s because of fans' behaviour. It banned Mott The Hoople after their fans had damaged seats at the venue(16) and in June 1973 it banned David Bowie and Led Zeppelin because fans had damaged the building during gigs(17). But venues themselves have often had problems with the authorities, as I shall now illustrate.

Night-Clubbing?

Consumption of live pop in Britain often takes place in night clubs which can either put on bands or use discotheques, which effectively use records as live music, or a substitute for it. The history of such clubs is one of a struggle for the control of leisure and of censorship. I have already noted the restrictions venues can face and these also apply to night clubs. Such restrictions generally seem to have an air of "commonsense" about them - but there have also been many occasions when the strict enforcement of such regulations has been used by local authorities as an excuse to crack down on activities which they have disapproved of and which had pop as their epicentre. Again the thin line between regulation and censorship becomes blurred.

The drugs scare of 1967 saw a police clamp down on London clubs as a minor moral panic ensued. One result was the introduction of a Bill which resulted in the Private Places of Entertainment Act and introduced a licensing system for any private

entertainment done for financial gain(1). It aimed to crack down on drug-usage in clubs, but the restrictions imposed on attendances in the name of safety led Peter Stringfellow, then running the Mojo Club in Sheffield, to say that he thought that 'this bill could mean the end of a lot of clubs'(2). A measure that had been aimed at lifestyle was also effectively censorial.

Further evidence of this was the closure of one of London's most famous underground clubs, UFO, in October 1967. It was forced to move out of its original Tottenham Court Road premises after the News of The World ran an "orgy" story which resulted in the club's landlord evicting it. A subsequent move to The Roundhouse was killed off by high rents(3). The raids continued and their impact is shown by the fact that the same MM that carried details of one on London's Middle Earth also carried an advert for the club saying that: 'Club rules and regulations will be strictly enforced'(4).

Like the hippie/underground scene, punk also witnessed its share of club closures. Manchester's Electric Circus, which twice played host to The Sex Pistols on their ill-fated "Anarchy" tour, had to close in August 1977 after attendance restrictions made the venue uneconomic(5). It re-opened at a new site, where it limited its punk promotions to one a night a week(6). The following year London's leading punk venue The Roxy in Covent Garden closed after its new owners were refused a music and dancing licence renewal(7).

Clubs in the regions continued to have problems. Erics, the leading punk venue in Liverpool, ran into trouble with the police over the amount of non-members being signed-in. Despite a protest

march and the support of local MP David Alton the club was closed in April 1980(8). Police objections also surfaced again with the most famous club of the 1990s - Manchester's Hacienda.

This opened in 1982 and was owned by members of New Order and Factory Records owner Tony Wilson. Initially it was somewhat unsuccessful, but in the late 1980s it became a centre for the acid-house scene in the north. By May 1990 the police were set to object to renewal of the Hacienda's licence on the grounds that it was being used as a centre for drug taking. A publicity campaign followed, including support from the city's council leader and mayor, and resulted in the venue winning a six months reprieve in January 1991. By September it had won its battle to stay open, but with a much stricter door policy(9).

Thus far I have looked at regulation of clubs as a form of censorship, but the chains which own various clubs have had their own censorial policies. In 1967 Top Rank banned The Move from its venues because their stage act included chopping up televisions and effigies of Hitler(10). This was lifted the following year after the band dropped the part of their show which featured explosives. Rank executives had previously labelled the band's act 'obscene and destructive'(11). With punk Rank treated each case on its merits, although The Sex Pistols were banned(12). Clash manager Bernie Rhodes said in 1977: 'You phone up Rank or Mecca and say you want the Clash for the Hammersmith Palais and... see how quick the phone goes down'(13).

Indeed Mecca does seem to have been stricter than Rank over

the years. In 1969 it banned Max Romeo from gigs at its Tottenham Royal and Purley Orchid venues because of the lyrics to his "Wet Dream" hit(14) and in 1972 it banned The Sweet after allegations of "obscenity" at a Portsmouth gig in March, but relented later in the year(15). In 1977 Mecca announced that:

'There is no way in which we would allow punk groups to play in our venues. We want to avoid pitfalls and our attitude is that these bands are undesirable. We wouldn't agree to them playing private functions at any of our halls.'(16)

Even in 1978, as many venues came to terms with punk, the Mecca-owned Lyceum still banned bookings by The Sex Pistols, The Adverts, The Stranglers and The Damned(17). It also imposed, then repealed, a ban on Generation X at its Coventry Locarno venue(18). Later the Mecca-owned Nottingham Tiffanys was one of the many venues to put a ban on Sham 69(19). Its censorial inclinations continued with acid-house in the late 1980s. After an acid-house night at its Birmingham Powerhouse Venue attracted sensationalist reports in the local press, a Mecca spokesman confirmed that all such events had now been banned: 'We will not be connected in any way with events of this nature.. That is corporate policy.'(20) So another vibrant pop movement had to look beyond Mecca to find its spiritual home.

Other chains also adopted censorial policies as they saw fit. In 1977 the Trust House Forte chain banned The Stranglers from its Manchester Belle Vue with venue leisure director Dudley Heath saying: 'we were informed by London headquarters that it's now

company policy to have no punk at any of our venues.'(21) Their Pavilion venue in Colwyn Bay also banned the Buzzcocks in the same year(22). The following year The Moss Empire chain banned Magazine from appearing at their Drury Lane Theatre as, according to Moss' head office, they verged 'on the punk and we couldn't risk the reputation of the theatre.'(23)

The cases here illustrate that there has been a continual set of negotiations about the circumstances under which live pop can be enjoyed. It is **not** the case that the authorities, or venues, have continually sought to clamp down on pop, but it **is** the case that their actions, whatever their intent, have often resulted in censorship via a lessening of the amount of venues available to play in, a lack of space for pop to grow in. But throughout these years the college and university circuit has acted as an intermediary in the step from pub to stadium status, but this circuit also had its own set of restrictions.

Rock Doesn't Always Go To College

By the late 1960s the college circuit was of established importance(1). But one problem that has constantly plagued the college and university circuit is that of what to do about **non-college** members. Should the general public be allowed in or not? Different colleges have dealt with the problem in different ways, restricting access or denying it totally to non-members. Those who chose exclusion effectively censored part of the pop audience, as

the very people whose taxes paid for the colleges are often denied access to entertainments within them.

A number of bands have vetoed colleges that refused admission to the general public. In February 1971 the Rolling Stones threatened to call off gigs at Manchester and Strathclyde Universities because of their students only policy(2). The latter venue also saw the cancellation of Clash gig in November 1978. Band member Joe Strummer tried to buy an advance ticket for it and after he was refused the gig was called off(3). In mitigation it was pointed out that student unions often had their hands tied by college authorities or **local** bye-laws(4).

But other bands took a similar stance and The Stranglers refused an Exeter University gig for this reason in 1979(5). The Merton Parkas pulled out of a Chelsea College gig in October 1979 at the last moment after being told it was student only(6). But the process was reciprocal. When The Sex Pistols offered to play, under the name of The Spots, at Reading University in 1977, and thus give the students a rare chance of seeing the band the SU turned them down - because of possible damage to the venue and adverse reaction from the press(7).

Here the morality of the press was acceded to, but SUs have had a history of moral objections of their own. Along with Labour councils, they have been one of the few places in Britain where the the left has had a chance to implement its particular brand of censorship(8). In March 1976 a Conference of College Social Secretaries voted 'to urge unions to ban all performances by go-go

dancers, strippers or any other artists who exploit sex, which has become a common feature of some rock band's performances'(9). However, I could find no bans arising out of this policy.

The next attempted ban again concerns The Stranglers and came in October 1978 after the band walked off 15 minutes into a gig at Surrey University which was being filmed for the BBC's Rock Goes To College series. The band claimed to have been confronted with a student only gig which they had not expected and were opposed to in principle(10). Some Surrey students then tried to get the band banned from the college circuit, apparently with some initial success(11). However within a month NME reported that 'several universities are willing and keen to book them'(12).

Student anger was also the motivational force behind another attempted ban in October 1988. This concerned a gig by American hardcore band Rapeman (named after a Japanese Comic hero who "punishes" wrong-doing men and women by raping them) at Leeds Polytechnic. Leeds was one of the the Yorkshire Ripper's haunts and the band's name aroused the understandable anger of many women at the Poly who lobbied its SU to call the gig off. The SU claimed that when the band was booked in the previous summer when it was known merely to be Steve Albini's new, un-named, band - an allegation the promoter refuted. He also denied that he and Albini were promoting rape(13).

The SU felt the name contravened its anti-sexist policy and tried to cancel the concert, whilst the Poly's director called for a boycott(14). But the promoters, Ice, threatened to sue for breach

of contract and the gig had to go ahead. The SU then implemented a policy of non-cooperation by, for example, ensuring that the bars stayed shut(15). The gig went ahead, but was picketed from Leeds Rape Crisis Centre and the Socialist Worker Student Society.

Colleges, or elements within them, still sought to control the types of acts allowed to play their halls or the material they played. Birdland allegedly only got one college gig after signing a contract containing a clause stipulating that they would not play their version of Patti Smith's "Rock 'N' Roll Nigger"(16). In November 1990 Blur's merchandise stall at Warwick University was attacked by feminists because of a promotional poster which featured a naked woman astride a hippopotamus - the presence of which the band claimed proved the poster to be a joke. The SU had allegedly tried to prevent the band using the poster and barred those wearing hippo t-shirts from entry to the gig(17).

The next case again centred on Leeds Polytechnic SU who banned the band First Offence in June 1991 after they had made racist and homophobic remarks in an NME interview(18). A month later it was reported that the band 'have been outlawed from 37 college venues following their suggestion... that homosexuals should be forced to identify themselves with armbands.'(19).

This is far removed from the first example of college censorship I found, when the Principal of Farnham School of Art in Surrey halted Redd Sullivan and Martin Windsor's rendition of "She Was Poor But She was Honest"(20). By 1989 colleges dealt with bands like Fugazi, whom the London School Of Oriental Studies, previously

a centre for such hardcore gigs, banned in November 1989(21). By this time cutbacks in grants and SU funding meant that college gigs were under more threat from lack of finance than they from direct censorship. But colleges have exercised censorship and have witnessed bands using censorship upon them. They have been a microcosm of the live pop music scene as a whole. This can also be said of particular venues, to whom I shall now turn.

The Royal Albert Hall - Classical Censorship?

The RAH's first foray in to the world of popular music was an NME Poll Winners Concert in February 1955. It also hosted a Pop Proms with Marty Wilde, Jim Dale and others in 1958(1). Problems began when it staged a Rock Proms series in July 1969. The last night of this series featured The Who and Chuck Berry. At the end of Berry's act the audience stormed the stage, leading to a ban on rock and roll gigs at the venue. Hall manager Frank Mundy explained that: 'It's not the artists we object to, but the hoodlums they attract'(2).

Audience behaviour proved to be of perennial concern to the Hall. This, along with its other problems, lyrical content and stage antics, reflect the main reasons for concert bans. This justifies some examination of the Hall's bans. The first one is also the only one where the RAH objected to stage antics. It placed a ban on Nice in June 1968 after they burnt an American flag as they climaxed their set with a version of Leonard Bernstein's

"America"(3). Keyboardist Keith Emerson subsequently found that his new band Emerson, Lake and Palmer were also covered by the ban(4).

The RAH never had a blanket ban on pop, but it introduced a highly selective vetting process and so denied access to the country's most prestigious venue to many leading pop musicians. So in February 1970, whilst the general feeling was that rock was banned following the Berry incident, a CBS-backed Sounds of The Seventies package was allowed to play(5).

But objections to potential audiences continued. In November 1970 Ten Years After were unable to book the Hall after their fans had caused trouble at a previous gig there. The RAH confirmed that: 'A ban does apply to some groups where we've had trouble'(6). On 10 March 1971 James Brown performed at the Hall, and was subsequently banned after audience disturbances. Mundy said: 'I've never seen such unpleasant people', as Brown's audience, and explained that: 'We have nothing against the artist.. but it would seem that some concerts attract a certain type of audience.... at this concert women's handbags were being snatched from them and stewards were threatened with violence'(7). Isaac Hayes was subsequently prevented from playing the Hall in December as it was felt that his audience would be similar to Brown's(8). The ban on two black artists has racial overtones, but Mott The Hoople were also banned from the Hall in July 1971 because of their fans' behaviour(9).

These decisions soon attracted the attention of the music press. MM asked: 'Is it all a Right Wing plot?'(10) and linked the Hall's bans with another "attack" on live rock - the Night

Assemblies Bill - which was then before Parliament(11). Mundy said that Shirley Bassey did not fit the RAH's definition of pop, as 'she doesn't cause the sort of hooliganism we get from others'(12). This pointed the finger at the audiences, but aesthetic judgements also clouded the issue. Speaking of the New Seekers, who had recently played the Hall, Mundy said that:

'I suppose some people would say they're pop. They're gifted artists, and attract a different sort of audience'(13).

The implication seemed to be that "gifted" musicians attracted responsible audiences, but rock and soul bands, who were presumably not "gifted", attracted the flotsam and jetsam of society. John Smith of John Smith Entertainments commented of the RAH that: 'they don't like the music and they don't like its followers'(14). Rather than try to understand the music, they sought to undermine it.

Mundy didn't even think the matter was one for public debate. He told MM: 'It doesn't concern you.. It's not for you to say in your paper whether we will accept X and refuse Y. **It's nothing to do with you.** It's a confidential matter between us and the promoters who seek to book the hall'(15).

This is the arrogance of the censor who has been asked to account for his actions. The RAH was left to the nation, and it was denying certain popular artists the use of its facilities - but Mundy still felt that it didn't have a duty to explain why and showed irritation at being called to account. In 1992 my letter requesting details of current booking policy went unanswered.

In many ways the RAH's decisions were understandable. Its patrons and staff, were often middle-aged volunteers, who didn't understand pop, or, more importantly, its audience. Evidence suggests that what was common practice at other gigs, such as dancing, standing and shouting was seen as outrageous behaviour by the RAH. Staff **were** threatened and violence occurred, but rather than try to remedy the situation by, for example, better security, the Hall closed its doors to certain artists.

Concern about behaviour is understandable and the Hall can be excused for panicking a little and over-reacting. But it also sought a more worrying form of censorship, vetoing acts whose repertoire it did not like. Indeed it seems to be the one venue that has exercised a concerted campaign against the lyrical content of shows. In March 1971 it denied a booking to Funkadelic. In order to get the booking promoter John Sullivan played two tracks - "Free Your Mind and Your Ass Will Follow" and a funk version of "The Lord's Prayer" to booking manager, Marion Herrod, who took exception to the songs and refused the booking - a decision Mundy described as 'right and proper'(16).

RAH President Sir Louis Gluckstein said 'commonsense'(17) guided its decisions and: 'When you've got a group that's going to produce a pop version of the Lord's Prayer and a number like "Free Your Mind and Your Ass Will Follow" then we are in a situation where we think that this... could lead to disturbances... We are not applying an unreasonable censorship'(18). He also pointed out the possibility of the Hall being deemed to have broken the 1968

Theatres Act by putting on an "obscene" show.

So the RAH accepted an unproven causal claim. But it still felt its censorship to be of the "reasonable" sort and so continued to implement it. In November 1972 it banned a charity performance of the rock opera "Tommy" featuring the London Symphony Orchestra on the grounds that the story was 'unsavoury'(19). The gig eventually took place at a less censorious Rainbow. In February 1974 Caravan were banned from performing with the New Symphonia Orchestra purely and simply for falling within RAH's definition of rock(20). Captain Beefheart was rejected a month later for being 'heavy rock' - a decision again made after the Hall had been played some the artist concerned's material(21).

The most infamous case of the RAH censoring the content of a show was the banning of a performance by Frank Zappa's "200 Motels" by Zappa, the Mothers Of Invention and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on 8 February 1971. The Hall vetoed the concert on the day it was due to take place, when musicians who arrived for an afternoon rehearsal of the show found notices saying the concert had been cancelled.

The Hall justified its ban by saying that the script was "obscene"(22). Again the decision to ban the concert was made by Marion Herrod(23). Amongst the words that were objected to were "brassiere" and "crap"(24). The show itself contained material dealing with groupies and songs such as "Half a Dozen Provocative Squats" and "Penis Dimensions". This was enough to see a ban implemented.

Zappa, who had already played the Hall twice, had to pay the Philharmonic musicians for their rehearsal time, which left him out of pocket. He therefore tried to sue the Crown, as owners of the Hall, for breach of contract. The case finally came to court in April 1975. The Hall's lawyers apparently tried to turn the case into an obscenity trial(25). The net result was to give more publicity to Zappa's work than allowing the concert to go ahead would have done. The RAH's censorship was counter-productive. But, whilst the judge ruled that the content of the show did not fall within the legal definition of "obscenity", it appears that Zappa's case fell as it was not legally possible to sue the Crown for breach of contract - despite the fact it had obviously done so(26).

This case highlights the problems of allowing a council of unelected members to dictate policy within a public institution. Gluckstein described "200 Motels" as "filth"(27) and pointed out the many letters and messages of support for his stance, including a Commons motion by six MPs. But the net result was the censoring of a major rock artist.

Meanwhile the Hall carried on booking middle of the road pop acts like Cliff Richard(28) and The Hollies(29). In 1981 it allowed the new-wave Elvis Costello in. By 1992 it apparently treated each case on its merits and allowed Eric Clapton to set records for its longest residency. But its censorious past is undoubted, and it appears likely that it will continue to take up the mantle of censor as and when it sees fit. But at least no one suggested that

it cease its musical activities. Mainstream rock venues seldom enjoy this security, as the next example illustrates.

No Sleep At Hammersmith?

By 1992 the Rank-owned Hammersmith Odeon (renamed The Apollo in 1992) was one of the most prestigious London gigs, as shown by the staging of the annual Brits awards there. But it also has a dichotomous censorial history, having both censored and endured attempts at being censored. Its own censorial actions were again primarily motivated by concerns about audience behaviour. It banned a proposed concert in June 1976 by reggae acts U Roy and The Mighty Diamonds, after trouble at a Bob Marley concert(1). Later it was reported that the Odeon had 'banned all future reggae concerts'(2), but the venue commented only that 'if one was offered to us we would take a long careful look at them before committing ourselves.'(3) It also cancelled the second night of a Stranglers gig in February 1983 after crowd disturbances on the first night(4). Five years later it was reported that the venue had banned all rap acts, after gangs had caused trouble on the tube before and after a Public Enemy/L L Cool J gig in November 1987(5).

It has also sought to influence show content. It banned the band True Life from appearing there again after singer Helen April partially undressed whilst performing their "Sex Slave" song in December 1982(6). It also stopped Little Steven from erecting an anti-apartheid stall at his November 1987 gig until leaflets

criticising Tesco and Shell were removed(7).

But the Odeon also illustrates some of the problems a venue in a highly-populated area can face and has fought various attempts by Hammersmith and Fulham Council and local residents to restrict its activities. This does not constitute censorship per se, but when venues have to fight for their continued existence this can lead to the lessening of outlets for live popular music and de facto, if not de jure, censorship.

In August 1978 the council's Works Executive Committee met. Residents had signed a petition complaining about noise of fans leaving the venue and the leader of the Liberals on the council, Simon Knott, planned to make objections to the licence a condition of his party's support for the minority Tory administration(8). But this move failed when Knott's objections were lodged too late at the GLC(9).

But the residents' campaign continued and the GLC only renewed the venue's licence in March 1983 after it agreed to look into their complaints(10). The next year the Odeon was told by local magistrates not to let lorries unload there late at night - which threatened the viability of concerts(11). A compromise was reached when it agreed not to move equipment between the hours of 11.30pm and 7.30am(12).

All this shows the vulnerability of popular music venues, especially those in built up areas, to regulation which effectively censors. The Odeon survived attempts to close it made by residents who had every right to a decent night's sleep. Here residents acted

as covert censors - however valid their objections. But other objections have fallen into the three groups I mentioned above, namely objections to song content, stage, antics and concerns about crowd behaviour. I shall now deal with each of these in turn.

The Song Not The Singer - Objections To Song Content

This is by far the rarest form of censorship of live music in Britain(1). Gigs have seldom been cancelled because of song content, illustrating the fact that British censors rarely mind is said (or sung) but can often take offence to the way in which it is done. The Zappa, RAH and Max Romeo cases are exceptional and generally content has not been a problem, but there have been one or two other examples.

In July 1970 Edinburgh's Usher Hall considered banning "underground" bands after complaints from the city's leading ticket agency and the police. Mr W Dickson of the ticket agency explained that: 'This is violent music and it brings out the worst behaviour in some grown ups who should know better.'(2) This is one of the few examples that I found of beat - as opposed to lyrics - being objected to, although it echoes comments by the RAH's President, Gluckstein, that at some rock concerts 'people seem to take leave of their senses'(3) - here because of the music itself, rather than the antics of the musicians.

Censorship because of lyrical content occurred when Kevin Coyne's "Babble" production at London's Stratford Theatre Royal was

called off in July 1979, following sensationalist press reports over some of the songs which contained references to the Moors Murderers. This led Newham council to withdraw its support(4). The show later went ahead at the Oval House where it received favourable reviews(5).

Other performers have found themselves in trouble after swearing on stage. Slade's Noddy Holder was 'charged with using obscene language' after a gig at Glasgow's Green Playhouse in May 1972(6). In September 1989 punk poetess Joolz was convicted of the same offence whilst performing at an anti-fascist rally in Leeds, although she later successfully appealed against the decision(7). But such incidents are rare and an example of the liberalism that generally surrounds content of material is evidenced by the fact that Jayne County was able to embark on a "Fuck Off 1983 Tour" in August of that year(8). What is more common are objections to bands' antics on stage.

Caught In The Act

The sexual element of many rock shows has always caused concern for moral guardians, as when PJ Proby's trouser-splitting performances got him banned from many concert halls in the early 1960s(1). When Jimi Hendrix toured with the Walker Brothers in 1967 the tour's operators told him to clean up his act, which they deemed "too suggestive"(2). In December of the same year Move singer Carl Wayne toured with Hendrix and was warned by managers of

Moss Empires in Blackpool and Manchester that his act was "obscene" and that they would bring down the curtain on him if they thought his act became unacceptable(3). In 1973 the London Palladium, who turned down a booking for Frank Zappa in 1970(4), didn't even give American all women band Fanny the chance to be "obscene", banning their show because it was heavy rock and their clothes were "too sexy"(5).

Alice Cooper claimed to have been banned by British venues because of his act, which featured mock executions(6), but I can find no record of this. However, he set a precedent for theatrical performances which was taken up by the next victims of censorship - The Tubes, whose act featured semi-nude women and songs like "Don't Touch Me There". Whilst there was much speculation on their arrival in Britain in 1977 that many venues would ban them, the only ban was in Portsmouth where councillors objected to a bondage sequence and swearing in the show. An offer to cut both was rejected, as councillors decided the band was 'unsuitable for Portsmouth'(7).

I deal with punk separately below, but in its wake came bands whose antics were much more down to earth, but equally liable to censorship. Splodgenessabounds' exploits included trouser-dropping, egg-throwing and dropping flour on people's heads, which got them banned from a number of venues, including Deptford Albany(8). Their messy antics were mirrored in the early and mid 1980s by King Kurt whose gigs saw much egg and flour-throwing. This did not endear them to a number of venues, including Birketts in Leeds and Blackpool, who banned them(9).

In 1991 American band GWAR, a modern-day Tubes, toured Britain. Their act included: 'Mock decapitations, torture and castration' - all done in a suitably over the top manner. This led to the cancellation of gigs in Manchester, Bournemouth and London after sections of the press, again a key player, alerted local councillors to the nature of the shows(10). A gig at London's Astoria was called after Westminster Council wrote to the venue and warned 'that the stage show could break **local** licensing laws regarding obscenity'(11) - again showing the locally mediated nature of British censorship. But, as in the Crass and Anti Nowhere League legal cases, it appears that censors erred in taken the show literally, as the band explained that: 'We parody the demonic images used by Heavy Metal groups.'(12)

Acts have also been banned on the grounds of safety. The outstanding case here concerns American band The Plasmatics who were due to make their Hammersmith Odeon debut On Friday 8 August 1980. Their show included detonating a car on stage with rocket flares. This aroused the attention of the GLC's Fire Department who banned the show on the day it was due to take place. Stiff, the band's label, blamed the show's cancellation on the GLC's decision not to make its visit earlier(13).

In March 1984 Whitesnake were obliged to to give a demonstration of their firework show to Leeds councillors before permission was given to use them in their Queens Hall gig(14). In October of the same year avant garde band SPK, whose act included live welding, sparked a "riot" at the ICA when fire officers

imposed restrictions on this and the band therefore had to leave the stage after two numbers(15).

Councils are, naturally, very aware of safety regulations, but bands performing in Britain **have** been denied the right to perform their usual show on British stages. The point is that popular music fans in various parts of the country have been denied the chance to see artists because their acts have been deemed unsuitable. Of more concern to the fans, however, is that far more often it has been them, rather than the acts, that have been used as a reason to call off, or oppose, gigs.

Ain't Misbehaving?

The behaviour of fans at pop events has continually dogged the authorities. In 1952 Newcastle City Hall banned a Johnny Dankworth and Nat King Cole concert because: 'Jazz audiences are rowdy'(1). Initial problems around rock concerned films like "Rock Around The Clock", as there were no live gigs by American stars until the late 1950s. Martin and Segrave report various disturbances in 1956 throughout Britain after youths began singing songs in the streets after seeing the film or became restless after being prevented from jiving in cinemas(2). By 1964 Britain had witnessed Beatlemania and disturbances at various Rolling Stones concerts(3).

Whilst thousands of gigs have taken place without trouble since 1967 there has been a continual, if intermittent, censoring

of live gigs. Often venues have refused or cancelled bookings because of fears about how the artists' fans would behave, some becoming so embittered by their experiences that they have left the pop field. For example, in August 1971 Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall banned concerts by 'pop or beat groups' because of audience behaviour at previous gigs(4).

Other venues allowed the reputations of bands' fans to precede them. This has concerned acts right across the popular music spectrum. In May 1975 The Bay City Rollers were banned by Sunderland's Empire Theatre - because it feared uncontrollable fans following the death, from a heart attack, of a Manchester policeman as he tried to control a crowd of Rollers fans(5). The Clash's June 1978 gig at London Edmonton's Picket Lock was cancelled after local resident concern about 'a distasteful audience'(6). Bristol Hippodrome called off a Rainbow gig in January 1980 because of fears of 'the crowd reaction'(7) and Prince was apparently unable to book Earls Court in 1987 as local residents objected to the type of audience he might attract(8). Somewhat more understandably, in the same year Irish Republican band The Wolfstones had a gig at Edinburgh Playhouse cancelled as it coincided with the day that Celtic's arch rivals Rangers won the Scottish football championship and sectarian violence was feared(9).

Individual venues continued to reject bookings from bands whose fans it objected to. As noted above, in December 1988 Camden's Town and Country Club changed its booking policy. It refused a booking by Sonic Youth and also said that bands like the

Guana Batz and The Swans would no longer be welcomed, citing fans' behaviour as the reason(10). In March 1989 the policy was confirmed and the Jesus and Mary Chain, Psychic TV, Fields of The Nephilium and My Bloody Valentine were added to the list of pariahs. Embourgeoisment was apparent here as whilst the venue's manager argued that: 'We are not trying to be arbiters of public taste', he added that 'We... want to get a decent image for this venue.'(11) Excluding acts because of their fans appeared to be an integral part of this "decent image".

The early 1970s had seen a rash of venues banning acts after their fans had been over-enthusiastic, rather than actually malicious. In December 1970 Deep Purple were banned from booking Manchester's Free Trade Hall as their fans 'were not considered suitable for the Hall'. This followed a Croydon Fairfields Hall gig at which the crowd's foot-stomping had caused worries that the balcony might collapse(12).

Mott The Hoople found themselves banned from Cheltenham Town Hall and Brighton Dome because dancing by their fans had damaged seats(13). Osibisa were also banned from the Brighton Dome for the excessive dancing of their fans in 1972(14). In 1974 Slade were banned from Edinburgh Usher Hall because of the behaviour of their fans(15). But other bands seemed to relish the destruction their fans could wreak, with Status Quo's Rick Parfitt commenting of a Liverpool Empire gig that 'all those busted chairs signify a good time.'(16)

This helps show that many of the bans arose from genuine

concern on behalf of venues, rather than any bloody-mindedness. In April 1975 NME ran a special report about damage that was being done at gigs(17) and Laing also notes pre-punk violence(18). By the late 1970s, as punk declined and Thatcherism rose, violence at gigs was became much more common. There has always been, as at all public events, incidents of violence at gigs(19), but as punk declined so did behaviour at gigs. Bob Geldof was attacked on stage at The Music Machine in June 1977(20), April 1978 saw bands refusing to play Newcastle again after violent incidents(21), and the year also saw trouble at London gigs of bands like The Lurkers and Clayson and The Argonauts(22).

Much of this violence had political overtones. The National Front had tried to make overtures to punk(23), but had generally been rebuffed - as was evidenced by the rise of Rock Against Racism (RAR). The Angelic Upstarts were targeted by far-right agitators and had gigs in Wolverhampton(24) and London's Nashville(25) disrupted. But Sham 69 suffered most. There are many accounts of their gigs being disrupted. Their leader, Jimmy Pursey, played RAR gigs, but the band courted right-wing sympathy by playing "Land of Hope and Glory" and "The Dambusters March" as a prelude to gigs(26). Even their "final" gig at London's Rainbow, (their first in the capital for some time as, according to Pursey, 'we couldn't get a gig in town'[27]), ended in chaos as a stage invasion after twenty minutes stopped the gig(28).

But the most explosive gig of this era came in July 1981, during a summer of riots in Britain's cities, and again had strong

political overtones. It was staged at the Hamborough Tavern in the London Borough of Southall, which has a large Asian population, and featured The Business, The Four Skins and The Last Resort. All were Oi bands. The gig saw the bussing in to the area of coach loads of skinheads, who apparently provoked local Asian youths. A riot ensued and the pub was burnt down. Not surprisingly a backlash against Oi followed(29). The Cockney Rejects, another Oi band, cancelled a forthcoming tour, and the Angelic Upstarts cancelled a Middlesborough gig(30).

There are numerous other examples of violence, often politically-inspired, that could be mentioned. I have included details of it here simply to illustrate the problems that can sometimes confront live pop. Such incidents are rare, but they can create understandable caution on behalf of venues. Censorship via exclusion from venues has to be seen in this context. Fans can, and have, caused trouble and certain acts have developed reputations for attracting troublesome fans and have suffered in consequence. But should such bands be excluded the voice of pop becomes muffled(31). Such muffling reached a peak in 1977.

Punk and Disorderly?

Punk merits a special section here as the most censored pop genre during the time I am concerned with. Such censorship included exclusion from many venues. Although bands were seldom, with the possible exception of The Sex Pistols, banned outright from

performing, punk gigs were subjected to a degree of censorship unparalleled in British popular music history, with Laing noting 'the series of concert cancellations and acts of censorship that occurred in the early months of 1977.'⁽¹⁾ I shall deal with a number of examples here.

I shall **not** go into any detailed analysis of **why** punk provoked this censorship⁽²⁾ but, rather, detail examples of it and characterise punk as an example of pop's potent ability to expose society's anxieties. It also vividly illustrates the fact that popular music is often problematic because of its total disregard for the classic liberal divide of public and private. Thus Laing writes that: 'while "private" consumption of punk was encouraged by the release and promotion of records, its "public" space was severely restricted through lack of airplay and through lack of large halls to play in.'⁽³⁾

Punk was also far from innocent, as it consciously seized on society's taboos and flaunted them. Bondage gear and rubber wear, T-shirts featuring the Cambridge rapist and swastikas were all paraded. Punk's nihilistic edge often surfaced. An early incident that was to make venue owners wary of the movement came on 21 September 1976 at London's 100 Club where Malcolm McLaren had organised a two day punk festival. The second night saw the smashing of a glass, during The Damned's set, which resulted in a young girl losing an eye. It also resulted in the banning of punk from the club⁽⁴⁾.

An aura of violence was present in punk from the off. The Sex

Pistols in particular courted and practised violence and early gigs saw scuffles with audiences(5). However, by the middle of November 1976 a punk package tour featuring America's Ramones and Talking Heads and The Sex Pistols was announced(6). The American acts soon withdrew, to be replaced by The Clash and The Damned(7). This tour was the ill-fated "Anarchy In The UK" tour of which only four of the original eighteen dates were played(8).

The reason for the cancellations was the Grundy interview(9). This was the pivotal incident in punk's progress. The loss of a girl's eye was page 7 news, swearing on television at tea time made the front page. Marsh comments that: 'In the wake of this rubbish (Grundy), something very close to a temporary nationwide hysteria set in at the prospect of the Sex Pistols spreading their influence around the country during their much publicised tour.'(10) Laing talks of a "'moral panic" surrounding the music, its exponents and their audiences following the Bill Grundy incident.'(11)

Post-Grundy punk was out of bounds for many venues. In August 1977 Robson wrote that Manchester's Electric Circus was 'one of the few places in the north west where live punk music is allowed at all.'(12) But what of the fans' behaviour? The Circus' manager told Robson that: 'So far as trouble is concerned, I've seen more in working men's clubs.'(13), which undermines any idea that all punk meant violence.

But unorthodox behaviour at punk gigs, such as swearing and pogoing made many promoters nervous(14). Such feelings were sometimes further fuelled by occasional outbreaks of violence at

punk gigs - not always originating from the punks themselves. In June 1977 a gig by the Adverts and The Damned at Lincoln Drill Hall was attacked by non-punks(15). In July rumours of a GLC "blacklist" of bands who would not be allowed permission to play in the city spread(16). A clash of subcultures, between Teds and punks, became widely reported by a press that did much to encourage the rivalry(17). Track Records tried to, organise a gig with Shakin' Stevens and The Sunsets, a rock 'n' roll band and American punk band Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers in order to bring the sides together, but were unable to get a venue to stage it(18).

By January 1978, says Savage: 'Theatrical violence became real violence' as punk ripped itself apart(19). Nevertheless the music business had found it could accommodate most punk. In December 1977 leading promoter Harvey Goldsmith promoted many gigs on a Buzzcocks tour(20). Laing points out that: 'One of the most significant achievements of punk was its ability to lay bear the operations of power in the leisure apparatus.'(21) In the live arena this involved the revelation that councils and venues had the power to deny a section of the pop audience the live experience of the music. For a period of almost nine months - dating from the Pistols' appearance on Today on 1 December 1976 through the Jubilee period of June 1977 to the following couple of months - the announcement of a major punk gig would be followed by speculation as to whether it would actually take place. This affected many of punk's leading lights, as I shall now illustrate.

The Sex Pistols: By the time of Grundy the band had already

achieved a certain amount of notoriety on the London circuit by picking fights with audience members - an activity allegedly encouraged by McLaren. This saw them banned from London venues like The Nashville and The Marquee(1). They were also soon banned from the 100 Club, the Rock Garden and Dingwalls. By November 1976, **before** Grundy, Savage notes that 'a long list of most of London's smaller venues'(2) had banned them. Post-Grundy the number of bans escalated dramatically.

By the time the broadcast went out a date on the "Anarchy" tour at Lancaster University on 10 December had already been vetoed by the authorities there(3). On 3 December the package went to the University of East Anglia, only to find that the gig had been vetoed by vice chancellor Frank Thistlewaite, who 'because of the recent publicity surrounding the Pistols... could not be satisfied that the event would pass peacefully.'(4) Again the role of the press is notable. Gigs at six other venues were also cancelled on the same day(5). Examples of the link between contemporary events (and press hysteria) were seldom more obvious.

Saturday 4 December brought the most bizarre incidents of all. The tour was due to play Derby Kings Hall and the council's leisure committee demanded that they turn up at 2pm, perform the show, and let councillors decide whether it be allowed for the general public. The elitism here is noteworthy. The would-be censors saw themselves as incorruptible(6), but the Derby public as corruptible. The councillors were denied their censorial opportunity when the band refused to play for them. This helped to

create a mystique around the Pistols which McLaren exploited by issuing a statement that the councillors were 'too old to judge' the band's performance(7). To the actuality of municipal censorship was being added the myth of a generational conflict(8).

The first date played on the tour was on 6 December, at Leeds Poly. The following day it played the Electric Circus in Manchester and a week later they were allowed to play Caerphilly Castle Cinema. Savage describes the scene there: 'shops were shut and pubs were closed and shuttered. The previous week, two Labour councillors had attempted to get an injunction stopping the concert: when that failed, they led a carol-singing protest in the cinema car-park whose participants outnumbered those at the concert inside.'(9) Also at the protest was Pastor John Cooper of the Elim Pentecostal church - the organisation which, via Alex Maloney, was at the forefront of the religious opposition to rock in 1992(10).

Gigs were also played on the 19th (Manchester Electric Circus again), the 20th (Cleethorpes Winter Gardens) and the 22nd (Plymouth Woods Centre). Towns which would not countenance the Pistols' appearance included Newcastle, Bournemouth, Preston, Liverpool, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Dundee, Sheffield, Southend, Guildford, Birmingham, Torquay and London(11). This illustrates at least two points that occur throughout this thesis; the first is pop's power to offend, the second is the often locally-mediated nature of such offence.

Savage says: 'There were very few venues in the country that would still have them'(12). However he also notes that the band

could have played at London's Covent Garden Roxy on 1 January 1977, but McLaren would not allow it as he wanted to spread the false rumour that the Pistols were being banned from performing in London by the GLC(13). It is worth noting that there were **no** reports of trouble at the gigs that were played.

The Pistols' problems in getting live gigs continued throughout 1977. In March NME reported that they were 'banned from appearing in every major city in Britain'(14). On the other hand, as Savage points out, the National Front **were** allowed to play - with a march in the racially sensitive area of Lewisham in London(15). The Pistols **did** play a London gig in April, at the Screen On The Green cinema in Islington. On Jubilee day, 7 June 1977, they played a gig on a boat on the Thames. This was broken up by the Metropolitan Police(16).

In the summer of 1977 the Pistols were toured under the assumed name of SPOTS (Sex Pistols On Tour Secretly). With this name they were able to play Wolverhampton Lafayette on 19 August and on the 24th they played Doncaster Outlook Club as The Tax Exiles. They also played Middlesbrough and Scarborough on this tour. But these gigs only went ahead because the band didn't reveal their identity until the last minute. A bizarre consequence of this secrecy came in Maidstone in September when unknown band Dirt had to play in front of the town's councillors to prove they were **not** The Pistols before permission was given for a gig in the town(17).

By December the Pistols were preparing on tour again. A series of semi-secret gigs were undertaken, with venues only

announced at the last minute. Towns who vetoed the band on this occasion included Wolverhampton, Birkenhead, Bristol and Rochdale(18). Gigs played were in Keighly, Cromer, Newport (Shropshire) and Huddersfield - none of them at mainstream venues. The last gig was a benefit for striking firemen and their children and was the last gig the band ever played in Britain. It took place on Christmas Day 1977.

The ability of punk to expose those behind censorial decisions was never more evident than on this last tour. Virgin placed an advert in the music press of 17 December listing various letters refusing the band permission to play venues. These included Rank's comment of 26 October 1977 that: 'the Board have stated quite clearly that we are not able to allow the band to play in any of our venues.'(17) Other banning letters came from the GLC, Cambridge, Bath, North Wolds and Derby councils. In January 1978 NME carried a story outlining the Pistols' bans from Dundee and Aberdeen. By then the band were in America and falling apart. Rotten left and they never played Britain again. The Pistols' case was the most extreme, but not exceptional for the times.

The Clash: This band was also on the ill-fated "Anarchy " tour and so suffered the most explicit example of censorship of live punk. They were also involved in two early incidents that helped to tarnish punk's image. The first was at their gig at the ICA in October 1976 at which Shane O'Hooligan (later Shane MacGowan of The Pogues) had part of his earlobe bitten off by a female fan(1). The second came at The Rainbow in May 1977 when punk had

the riot of its own that The Clash has sung of and over 200 seats were smashed - leading to further bans on punk at various venues and still more tabloid headlines(2).

At this time Bernie Rhodes, the band's manager said that: 'You talk about getting banned and if that actually happened it would make everything simple. You either play or you don't. But in situations like this you don't even know what's going on. You're being allowed to play but you still get problems, you still get harassed.'(3) This is characteristic of British censorship, which often takes the form of discouragement and marginalisation, rather than blanket bans. By October it seemed more venues were willing to take them(4), but a proposed gig at Liverpool Stadium was called off after trouble with insurance and Ipswich council forbade a gig at the town's Corn Exchange venue after "unsatisfactory behaviour" at a Stranglers gig there a few days before the Clash gig was due to take place(5). Trouble at a gig in Bournemouth was widely reported by the press and threatened to lead to the cancellation of a series of gigs at the Rainbow(6) - but these gigs went ahead without trouble, after the venue added extra security.

Even after the initial furore around punk had subsided the Clash found that punk's early reputation continued to haunt them. In June 1978 Liverpool Empire banned their appearance there and the gig had to be switched to Blackburn(7). In November Birmingham Town Hall and Odeon turned down bookings by the band(8). In April 1979 the failure of a Clash gig to take place in Chelsea led to disturbances and some 70 arrests(9).

The Stranglers: This band is probably second only to The Pistols in the amount of venues from which it was banned. I have already noted their banning by Surrey University(1), but such problems developed early in the band's career. They first came to national censorial prominence in January 1977. Just after the Pistols' abortive "Anarchy" tour, The Stranglers played a gig at The Rainbow, supporting the Climax Blues Band. Here the band's Hugh Cornwell wore a t-shirt with the word "Fuck" on it - in a spoof of the Ford logo. This got their set curtailed early. The band blamed the GLC for this, who in turn accused the venue's management(2).

In May a date at Leeds Town Hall was cancelled because: 'On reflection the venue's management decided that they were undesirable'(3) and June gigs in Torquay (where the council decided that: 'The entertainment associated with this type of group is not in keeping with the council's policy at any of the venues under its control'), Nottingham (where they were deemed "unsuitable"), Blackburn King George's Hall (which did not want to be involved 'with the sort of uproar surrounding groups of this kind') and St.Albans (the police here objected after 'swearing and spitting at bar staff during a recent Clash concert')(4). Again contemporary events are relevant. The Clash's "riot" show at The Rainbow had taken place just before this and many councils (over)reacted to this by banning punk - of which The Stranglers were then held to be a leading light. It is also worth noting many of the bans again focussed on the potential of fans to misbehave.

In the early months of 1978 it was strongly rumoured that the

GLC was preventing Stranglers gigs throughout London(5) - a situation remedied when the band finally played an open air gig in Battersea Park in September. Despite this new found respectability, when bassist Jean Jacques Brunel tried to book Drury Lane Theatre for a solo gig he was turned down because he was a Strangler(6) and in September 1979 it was reported that Newcastle City Hall would still not allow Stranglers' gigs(7).

In 1979 crowd disturbances followed after the band walked off during a gig at the University of Nice in France because their speakers kept blowing. They were arrested - although the case was eventually dropped. But news of the incident was enough to scare off Aberdeen Capitol who wrote to the band's agent 'stating that they no longer wished to go ahead with the booking "due to the situation which has developed in Nice".'(8)

This is the last reference I found of a ban for The Stranglers. It appears that longevity has mellowed both the band and venue reaction to them. But their case illustrates a number of things. First, the importance of contemporary events. Initial bans were instigated around the time of a general backlash against punk, which was continued by the involvement of the band in stage walk-offs and so on. Secondly, the censorship was never centred on the music as such - it was directed at the behaviour of fans and band alike. Punk as a movement, not as music, was the impetus behind many bans.

Other Bands - In the initial backlash against punk all the movement's leading lights suffered. Even The Jam, who proclaimed

their royalist sympathies and did free gigs for the Jubilee, found themselves banned from Leeds Town Hall as "unsuitable"(1) and were then prevented from playing a gig at Chelsea Football Club's Stamford Bridge ground by the GLC. As this was a last minute decision police had to be called to disperse disgruntled fans(2).

In May and June 1977 The Damned had gigs at Stafford Top of The World, Newcastle under Lyme Tiffanys, Cromer West Runton Pavilion and Cheltenham Town Hall cancelled(3). Another early victim were The Vibrators who had several gigs cancelled immediately after Grundy(4). They were banned from London's New Victoria Theatre and a gig they planned there with the Ian Hunter Band was switched to the Hammersmith Odeon(5). In March 1977 Lou Reed was prevented from performing at the London Palladium because of his "punk image"(6). The Buzzcocks were refused a Wigan gig in October and in December Newcastle City Hall turned down a gig by the Boomtown Rats because the council, who owned the hall, decided to ban new wave acts after "trouble" at punk gigs in the city(7).

1978 saw a let up in the anti-punk hysteria, but bans were still noticeable. The Radiators From Space were banned in February from gigs at London's Nashville and St.Albans City Hall(8) and in May Newcastle Guildhall decided to ban "certain types of acts" - a euphemism for punk(9). Generation X had trouble getting venues in December(10). By 1979 bans were lessening, but Iggy Pop was denied the use of Dunstable Civic Hall in April - allegedly because he had ex-Sex Pistol Glen Matlock in his band and was banned from Warwick University in the same month because the SU 'encountered resistance

to booking a new wave act there.'(11) In December Surrey University banned all future punk gigs after trouble at a UK Subs gig(12).

The last new wave act to suffer from venue censorship was the Dead Kennedys whose British debut tour in September 1980 was banned from Dundee. NME reported that: 'Following complaints about the group's name the local council met and decided on the ban. Commented Tory leader Jock Watson "It's in extremely bad taste, and their appearance wouldn't do the city any good at all.'"(13) What ~~harm~~ the appearance was deemed to present went unrecorded. The band were also banned from Mecca venues, the Lyceum and the Hammersmith Palais(14). The Dead Kennedys' bans were the last one associated with the punk period, but punk's legacy was long lasting in some places. In April 1991 Siouxsie and The Banshees were banned from using Belfast's Mayfield Hall - despite an assurance from the RAH that their fans were **not** prone to rioting(15). It appears that their punk heritage was enough for the venue to veto the show.

The punk era illustrates that when necessary various bodies are perfectly prepared to stamp on pop. Trouble at gigs was usually cited as the main reason for banning shows, but content was also vetoed. The Dundee case again showed that one of the main vetoing powers were the local authorities.

"Get Outta Town" - The Role Of Local Authorities In Controlling
And Censoring Live Popular Music

During punk councils were often at the forefront of gig banning(1), and Parsons accused some of 'trying to censor punk rock out of existence'(2). Local authorities have a long history of controlling and/or censoring live popular music within their boundaries(3) and in many ways they are obliged to perform these tasks as it is often they and local magistrates who issue venues with licences for music, dancing and selling alcohol(4). They will also be the focus of resident anger should venues upset them. Many venues are council-owned, which further increases local authorities' censorial potential. Venues mentioned above, such as Newcastle and St Albans City Halls, are examples of this and bans within them therefore have the imprint of municipal censorship. Councils are also, obviously, another example of locality effecting the censorial climate(5).

Municipal censorship occurs throughout (and prior to) this thesis. In October 1967 Windsor Council debated plans to hold a follow-up National Jazz and Blues Festival to the one at the town's racecourse in the previous summer. A Councillor Wells described this festival as 'a big excuse for young people to attend one big love in'(6) and opposed another festival on these moral grounds. But in January 1968 the council agreed to another festival.

The Deep Purple ban from Manchester Free Trade Hall in 1970 referred to above was also at the instigation of the council(7).

Impromptu free concerts were also banned. The Edgar Broughton Band announced free gigs for Redcar and Blackpool in July and August 1971 - which the relevant councils summarily banned(8). When they attempted to play Redcar and Brighton Broughton was arrested on both occasions and charged with obstruction(9).

But punk really brought to the fore as censorial force. Far more than chains like Mecca and Rank, councils were responsible for the clampdown. Guildford council banned the Sex Pistols on the grounds that its young people: 'should not be subject to this type of behaviour'(10) - whether or not they desired such subjugation. As an 18-year-old living ten miles from Guildford I was at that time very keen to be subjected to the band. Preston banned them as 'parents would be up in arms'(11) if they had allowed them. Again showing the passive censorial role of concepts of the family.

Many of the bans on The Stranglers referred to above were instituted by councils - including those in Blackburn, Torquay, and the alleged blacking by the GLC(12). The Jam's ban from Leeds and The Damned's from Cheltenham were also due to council vetoes(13). Other council-backed bans included Glasgow's ban on all punk in its venues(14), Ipswich's ban on The Clash(15), Portsmouth's on The Tubes, said to be because the gig was too close to Remembrance Sunday(16) and Newcastle's on The Boomtown Rats(17). Music papers headlined with: "Local censors out in force to ban punk rock"(18) and "Big Brother Declares War On New Wave"(19). Hindsight makes such claims may appear exaggerated, but punks had ample evidence with which to fuel their paranoia. Councils, for whatever reasons,

did ban punk bands from appearing in their towns and thus sealed their place in the annals of pop censorship.

Councils have also sought to control one-off events in their areas. In 1989 Hammersmith and Fulham Council refused to allow the annual reggae Sunsplash festival to take place on Wormwood Scrubs, because they had not received the required three months notice from the organisers(20). In 1991 Liverpool City Council vetoed a plan by The Farm and Ian McCulloch to play a free gig outside of the city's St.George's Hall after they decided inadequate notice had been given and the Dunkirk Veteran's Association complained that the proposed site was too close to the city's war memorial(21).

In many ways one can sympathise with councils, who are often forced to adopt a censorial role by residents' complaints and other political considerations. Public order can present a problem at gigs and thus a council may veer on the side of caution in order to avoid possible trouble. But councils are also subject to change via the ballot box and such change can radically the council's attitude toward pop. Nowhere is this more evident than in the history of the GLC(22).

The GLC - Rocking The City?

During punk the GLC was amongst the most censorious of local authorities(1). But it is also a prime example of how a council can vary between pop censor and saviour. In March 1976 MM headlined its front page with: "Now Pop's X Rated" - a reaction to the then

Labour-run GLC's Code of Practice For Pop Concerts - which it produced in the light of the death, by crushing, of teenager Bernadette Whelan at a White City David Cassidy concert in 1974(2). Its suggestions included splitting large teenage crowds into pens and a steward for every 30 indoor fans, or 100 outdoor ones. It was attacked by promoters as unreasonable and seems not to have been fully taken up when the Conservatives captured the GLC in the May 1977 local elections.

January had seen allegations of a GLC blacklist of bands in the wake of The Stranglers "Fuck" t-shirt dispute. One promoter claimed that the GLC blacklist included Kiss and Hawkwind(3). The Rainbow management had called The Stranglers off as a GLC stipulation in the contract between the two said that no such apparel should be worn. A Mr Saxby of the GLC later commented that: 'We supported EMI on their stand against the Sex Pistols and now we're taking a stand against The Stranglers.'(4)

Further allegations of a blacklist surfaced after the calling off of the proposed Jam gig at Chelsea FC referred to above(5). By June punk bands alleged that the Tory administration was now using the Code it had inherited from Labour as a means by which to black any band they didn't like - although such claims were dismissed as "unfounded"(6). Certainly the Code gave them enough scope - one section forbade performers from encouraging 'any action which may over-excite the audience including any enticement by performers by word or deed to encourage people to leave their seats.'(7) Had this been enforced virtually all pop concerts would have been halted.

Instead what occurred was a series of random bans. These included a Clash's 1978 Harlesden Roxy gig(8) and the Plasmatics' Hammersmith Odeon gig(9) - both on the grounds of safety. The council also vetoed a proposed gig by The Specials and The Selecter on Clapham Common in June 1980(10). By then it had produced a Disco Rules OK? code, which was published in December 1978(12). Its recommendations were aimed primarily at clubs and apparently had little censorial effect, but by November 1980 a number of London venues like The Nashville, The Red Cow and The Electric Ballroom had closed and the GLC was once again obliged to deny that it had an anti-rock policy(13).

The following May saw Labour regain control of the GLC and adopt a totally different approach to culture in general and popular music in particular, viewing both as vital sources of popular entertainment and political mobilisation. Their first pop promotion came in July 1981 when it a Rock 'N' Royal concert at Crystal Palace to "celebrate" Prince Charles' wedding. This event's encouraged the GLC to further pursue its role as pop promoter(14).

But this did not mean that all censorial roles were abandoned. In 1984, as part of its Anti-Racism Year, the GLC announced that it would ban from its halls any artist who had broken the ANC-backed cultural boycott of South Africa and encouraged Labour controlled councils in London to do the same(15) - although no major event seems to have been affected by this(16). Contrarily, even during the run-up to its abolition, the council still sought to expand its promotional role(17).

But by 1986 it was all over, as the campaign against abolition proved unsuccessful. A series of farewell gigs were announced(18) - including one on the last day of the council's existence - 31 March 1986(19). Its abolition involved de facto censorship as lack of this important sponsor meant that fewer gigs occurred. Its legacy was an attitude that popular music could be genuinely popular, in the sense of providing entertainment for the populace at large. Other examples of municipal backing for pop has come from councils' involvements in venues such as the Leadmill in Sheffield, The Picket in Liverpool and The Waterfront in Norwich. These all provide examples of the fact that councils' involvement in popular music is far from being all censorial. However their role often involves control which can, as the next case shows, lead into the censorial arena.

Noise Annoys

Volume control at indoor gigs has periodically caused problems, particularly in the early to mid-1970s when loud heavy rock was at its peak of popularity. In November 1973 Leeds City Council, then Labour-controlled, debated putting a 93 decibel limit on gigs in the city. Bands at that time played at an average of 105 to 110 decibels(1). The move came after Ronald Fearn, a lecturer at the city's Polytechnic, produced a report claiming that noise levels in the city's clubs were too high. Luton council also considered following Leeds' example, although other councils

apparently felt the limit was too low(2).

Leeds eventually set out to impose a limit of 96 decibels. Elton John soon said that he would not play Leeds until the limit went up to 110 decibels(3). The anti-noise lobby was joined by Labour Lord Kennet who put an unsuccessful amendment in the Lords to an Environment Bill which would have given local authorities the power to enforce noise limits at gigs(4). Meanwhile the MU began studying a 1971 report from the British Medical Association which recommended a 100 decibel limit(5).

The Leeds level was soon criticised, as those manning meters at gigs reported that 100 decibels was "not loud"(6). Refugee were forced to call off a planned gig at Leeds Poly because of the limit(7). In February the managing director of Mecca wrote to MM deploring the limit and saying the council was misinformed. Resistance to the limit also built up within the city. Young Conservative Roger Ivey led a protest march to the council. Slade cancelled a proposed gig because of the limit - which bands playing at the city's University had apparently been ignoring. MM explained that the legal situation was that whilst the law wouldn't allow the council to stop a concert, it could fine venues and take their licences away(8).

But such action proved unnecessary as the limit seems to have been lifted as "unreasonable" soon after it was introduced(9). In 1976 MM was reported that rock had been given the all-clear by Dr.T.A.Henry of Manchester University who claimed that, whilst fans were being exposed to high levels of noise, there was no evidence

that their hearing was being impaired. He suggested that noise levels in industry might cause greater problems(10). Although the debate over noise levels at gigs didn't disappear(11), no other council took the Leeds route(12). It should also be noted here that whilst safety was the prime concern the net result was censorious(13). But councillors sometimes have an ally in the censoring of live pop.

The Police and Live Pop - The Thin Blue Pencil Line?

Britain's police generally become involved in censorial actions on pop at the behest of others - as the sections on legal cases, festivals and raves illustrate. But they also have a history of their initiating their own censorial actions especially in the live arena and it appears that, on occasions, some officers, such as Manchester's James Anderton, have revelled in their role as defenders of the nation's morals.

Wyman reports Blackpool police telling its Winter Gardens venue not to book the Rolling Stones again in 1964(1). In 1967 Police threatened to 'put an end to the Roundhouse all and everything it stands for'(2) and some complained that police raided hippie clubs whilst leaving porn shops alone(3). The prioritisation of police work remained a contentious issue down the years(4) and again punk marked something of a watershed. Police action over the Sex Pistols river boat gig on Jubilee Day, where fans were arrested and manhandled, attracted a lot of criticism. One comment

attributed to a police officer was: 'There's that cunt Johnny Rotten... Let's get him..'(5).

The same month MM reported that 'many punk bands have found the police taking an unusually close and active interest in their activities.'(6) In July NME headlined: "Police ban hits Clash Punkfest" as a planned gig at Birmingham Rag Market was called off because, said promoter Dave Cork, 'the police didn't want the show to take place' and magistrates subsequently denied it a licence(7). It was also reported that Glasgow police were ready to raid any attempted new wave gig in council venues in the city(8). Wigan Casino had to cancel its Thursday night punk series 'because the police will not allow them to hold punk shows of any description.'(9) A Sex Pistols concert planned for Birkenhead Hamilton Club the following month was also cancelled because of 'police pressure on the promoter'(10).

Such pressure on gigs did not end with punk. In October 1979 a Splodgenessabounds gig at Chislehurst Caves was called off because 'the local police have requested that the owner cancel out the band's performance'(11). In 1980 it was reported that The Angelic Upstarts were banned by police from playing their native North East(12) and in 1987 the organisers of a Hunt Saboteurs benefit gig at Bradford University, featuring several anarchist bands, cited police intervention as the reason for its cancellation(13). In July 1989 York police stopped a gig by The Farm because The Phoenix venue found its licence didn't cover a large enough audience and they had to move to an alternative venue.

The police then followed the group's entourage to ensure that no gig took place(14). In April 1991 police objections were cited as the reason why a proposed two-day show by The Charlatans at Stafford's Bingley Hall would not take place(15).

The police can also pressurise clubs on a more continuous basis. Raids on London's Middle Earth Club referred to above in 1968 show this(16). During the latter days of punk its leading venue, The Roxy in Covent Garden, was closed after objections from the police amongst others(17). The police were also a motivational force in the aforementioned closing of Liverpool's Erics venue in 1980(18). Three years later Liverpool lost its popular Masonic pub venue, when police objected to licence renewal - because of alleged drug use at the venue(19).

Liverpool was once again a centre for police action against clubs in the rave era. In March 1990 it was reported that police were pressurising the city's leading acid venue, the Underground, after having already closed down the Emotions and State clubs(20). In April NME headlined with: "Clubs under pressure" and reported a nationwide police crack down on clubs - especially those playing acid-house music(21). This police were able to do under new provisions in the 1988 Licensing Act(22). In May London's Land of Oz Club closed because 'police insisted it introduced an ID membership scheme'(23). I have already noted problems at Manchester's Hacienda Club, where again one of the main objectors to the club staying open was the police(24). All these actions can be considered as "regulation", but their net effect was censorial.

Police chiefs have occasionally attacked pop with apparent relish. Thames Valley Police Chief David Holdsworth was in charge of operations at the time of the battle at the Windsor Free Festival in 1974(25). The experience seems to have put him off all forms of pop. In 1977 he said that public apathy had helped bring a breakdown in societal values and that: 'The other, and perhaps more insidious and more dangerous creatures in our society are the pornographers, the drug addicts and **the pop groups...** Society has got to pull itself together and say: "What are we putting up with this bloody rubbish for?".'(26)

Holdsworth's remarks anticipate the descriptions of some rock as "aural pornography" that the PMRC used in America some ten years later. It also interesting that Holdsworth uses aesthetic reasons for justifying society's right to censor pop which was, after all, "bloody rubbish".

The proneness of the Liverpool club scene to police action over the years again reflects how locality effects censorship. Manchester also illustrates this general point, particularly after James Anderton took over as Chief Constable in 1977(27). Anderton's deep religious conviction meant retail outlets which specialised in alternative merchandise had to be ever wary of police raids. Knockabout Comics, who stocked drug-related literature, were raided in 1982(28) and had to wait until June 1984 before being cleared of an obscenity charge(29). I noted earlier the police harassment of the Eastern Bloc shop(30), but it is worth re-iterating that the January 1990 legal move against the shop for selling rave tickets

was Anderton's personally(31). Police intervention was also given as a reason for the cancellation of a rave at Blackpool Winter Gardens in 1988(32), which brings us back to the start of this section. It was also reported that Manchester police questioned Morrissey over his track "Margaret On A Guillotine", which advocated the murder of Margaret Thatcher(33).

Conclusion

The last example has a element of farce about it, but the censoring of live pop over the years raises serious issues. Local authorities have banned acts, police closed venues and objected to gigs and venues have introduced their own censorial policies. Pop's status as live entertainment has been subject to the vacillations of councils, police and venues. Here the familiar censorial forces - moralists and politicians are joined by venues and worried residents. Behaviour and safety add new dimensions to the censoring. Audiences rather than acts can be the censors' main target and a continuous thread links concern over the behaviour of Music Hall audiences(1) to worries over stage-diving in 1992(2).

Decisions to call off or, ban outright, gigs cannot be contested and have civil rights implications. Once a gig is vetoed fans have little power. Once again they are recipients of decisions they have no say in. This unhappy situation is likely to continue. Under a government determined to exert control over local authority finances and unwilling to intervene in the market decisions of the

entertainments industry (or any other) there seems little hope for more consumer input. Reasons for bans may vary, but there is a continuous thread of cancelled gigs throughout this thesis. The beat may go on, but its live manifestation is often interrupted and such interruptions show no sign of diminishing(3). Once the beat goes outside its censorial problems escalate...

Notes: Introduction

(1) Frith, 1983, p254 argues that: 'Regulation has always been more important than repression.'

(2) See ibid p16.

(3) It should be noted here, however, that the ever-increasing use of taped material at gigs makes the whole notion of a "live" concert increasingly problematic.

Venues

(1) See pp244-351 above for examples of such cases.

(2) For restrictions in Music Halls see Frith, 1983, p256 and Russell, 1987, pp93, 94 and 108. See also, Pearsall, 1973, p20 and Cheshire, 1974, p90. For restrictions in the 1920s see Gillett, 1983 p45. For early examples of regulation see Mass Observation, 1943, pp255-262.

(3) The Independent on Sunday of 18/4/93 cited lack of suitable venues as a reason for violence at ragga gigs.

(4) For more on the Mean Fiddler group see interviews with its owner, Vince Power, Independent 12/3/93 and Guardian 7/5/93.

(5) See NME 6/10/90, 27/10/90, 23/3/91 and 14/9/91 for details.

- (6) NME 6/5/78.
- (7) NME 21/4/90.
- (8) See NME 27/4/85 for the Lyceum going "upmarket" and NME 10/8/85 for the Marquee doing the same.
- (9) MM 24/7/71.
- (10) See NME 10/12/88 and 18/3/89.
- (11) See NME 18/12/82 and MM 1/1/83.
- (12) NME 18/12/82.
- (13) Crass, 1991.
- (14) NME 7/3/87.
- (15) See NME 7/5/88.
- (16) MM 7/8/71.
- (17) MM 23/6/73.

Night Clubbing?

- (1) See Redhead, 1991, p93.
- (2) MM 11/2/67.
- (3) MM 28/10/67. For more on the importance of UFO see Nuttall, 1970, p119.
- (4) MM 9/3/68.
- (5) Morley, 1977.
- (6) NME 12/11/77.
- (7) NME 29/4/78.
- (8) See NME 22/3/80 and 29/3/80.
- (9) See NME 4/8/90 for more on the Hacienda.
- (10) MM 4/2/67.
- (11) MM 9/3/68. See also p309 above.

(12) NME 16/7/77. At the time of the Grundy incident Rank said they would not let the Pistols play their venues as they 'did not want to be associated with the punk rock group type of stage presentation.' Guardian 3/12/76.

(13) NME 15/10/77.

(14) MM 21/6/69.

(15) MM 17/6/72.

(16) NME 16/7/77.

(17) NME 18/3/78.

(18) NME 25/3/78.

(19) NME 10/6/78.

(20) NME 17/9/88.

(21) NME 24/9/77.

(22) MM 26/6/77.

(23) NME 8/7/78.

Colleges

(1) For example see MM 11/1/69.

(2) MM 20/2/71.

(3) NME 25/11/78.

(4) See Sounds 25/11/78.

(5) NME 17/1/81.

(6) NME 20/10/79.

(7) See pp548-579 below.

(8) See pp591-598 below for more on the left's censoring of pop.

(9) NME 3/4/76.

(10) NME 21/10/78.

- (11) See NME 4/11/78.
- (12) NME 9/12/78.
- (13) See NME 8/10/88.
- (14) See Yorkshire Evening Post 14/10/88.
- (15) See NME 15 and 22/10/88 and Yorkshire Evening Post 15/10/88 for more details of the gig.
- (16) NME 11/8/90.
- (17) NME 17/11/90.
- (18) NME 15/6/91.
- (19) NME 6/7/91.
- (20) MM 2/3/68.
- (21) NME 25/11/81.

Royal Albert Hall

- (1) Vox May 1992.
- (2) MM 19/7/69. Martin and Segrave, 1988, p135 also report a RAH ban on the Rolling Stones in 1969.
- (3) MM 6/7/68.
- (4) MM 27/3/71.
- (5) MM 21/2/70.
- (6) MM 14/11/70.
- (7) MM 22/3/71.
- (8) MM 25/12/71.
- (9) NME 8/10/77.
- (10) MM 22/4/72.
- (11) See pp399/400 below for more on the Night Assemblies Bill.
- (12) MM 22/4/72.

- (13) ibid
- (14) ibid
- (15) ibid. Emphasis mine.
- (16) MM 20/3/71.
- (17) "Commonsense" is a Whitehousean term. See pp448/9 and 467 below.
- (18) MM 27/3/71.
- (19) MM 4/11/72.
- (20) NME 23/2/74.
- (21) MM 16/3/74.
- (22) MM 13/2/71.
- (23) Zappa, 1989, p120.
- (24) MM 13/2/71.
- (25) Zappa, 1989, p119. See ibid p119-137 for a somewhat partisan account of the case. See also Sunday Times Books section 25/7/93.
- (26) See ibid p 137 and NME 6/2/76.
- (27) MM 27/3/71.
- (28) NME 23/10/76.
- (29) NME 5/2/77.

No Sleep at Hammersmith ?

- (1) NME 3/7/76.
- (2) MM 28/8/76.
- (3) MM 30/10/76. See this for more bans on reggae at this time.
- (4) NME 26/2/83.
- (5) NME 26/3/88. See also NME 14/11/87.
- (6) NME 8/1/83.

- (7) NME 16/11/87.
- (8) See NME 26/8/78.
- (9) NME 2/9/78.
- (10) NME 26/3/83.
- (11) NME 21/1/84.
- (12) NME 11/2/84.

Content

- (1) For control of Music Hall songs see Bailey, 1978, p165.
- (2) MM 4/7/70.
- (3) MM 27/3/71.
- (4) NME 21/7/79. See also pp323/324 above and 560/561 below.
- (5) NME 8/9/79.
- (6) MM 20/5/72.
- (7) See NME 30/9/89 and 25/11/89.
- (8) NME 13/8/83.

Caught in The Act

- (1) See MM 18/2/67, Wale, 1972, p308 and Vox February 1991.
- (2) MM 8/4/67.
- (3) MM 9/12/67.
- (4) MM 26/9/70.
- (5) MM 7/7/73. For more on the censoring of clothes at gigs see Wyman, 1991, p285 and MM 25/6/77 which reports a ban on punk clothes in Stafford. See also the Blur case, p314 above.
- (6) NME 12/8/89.
- (7) NME 19/11/77.
- (8) NME 6/10/79 and 9/2/80.

(9) NME 5/5/84. See also MM 2/6/84.

(11) NME 26/5/90. Emphasis mine.

(12) ibid

(13) NME 16/8/80.

(14) NME 10/3/84.

(15) NME 13/10/84.

(16) NME 14/3/87.

Behaviour

(1) MM 10/2/68.

(2) See Martin and Segrave, 1988, pp32-35. See also Vox February 1991 and Chambers, 1985, p42.

(3) NME 27/7/84.

(4) MM 21/8/71.

(5) MM 24/5/75.

(6) NME 10/6/78.

(7) NME 12/1/80.

(8) NME 4/7/87.

(9) NME 16/5/87.

(10) NME 10/12/88.

(11) NME 18/3/89.

(12) MM 12/12/70.

(13) MM 7/8/71.

(14) MM 24/6/72.

(15) MM 11/5/74.

(16) NME 11/5/74.

(17) NME 12/4/75.

- (18) Laing, 1985, p6.
- (19) For examples see letters in MM 13/1/68 and 14/6/69.
- (20) NME 29/10/77.
- (21) NME 8/4/78.
- (22) See NME 3/6/78, 16/9/78 and 21/10/78.
- (23) See Burchill, 1977.
- (24) NME 9/6/79.
- (25) Sounds 27/10/79.
- (26) NME 3/2/79.
- (27) NME 14/7/79.
- (28) NME 4/8/79. See also NME 3/6/78 and 31/8/91, Laing, 1985, p112, Perks and Wall, 1979, and G.Marshall, 1991 pp68-76 for more on Sham's problems
- (29) See pp102/103 above 561/562 below for more on Oi. See also G.Marshall, 1991, pp105-114.
- (30) NME 18/7/81 and see also ibid 11/7/81.
- (31) Birkett, 1991.
- (32) For audiences exercising their own form of "censorship" by "bottling off" bands see NME 8/3/80 (The Selecter), 8/5/82 (Bow Wow Wow), 15/10/88 (Pop Will Eat Itself) and 17/11/90 (Alan Vega).

Punk

- (1) Laing, 1985, p viii. Coon, 1982, p126 also reports "unprecedented bans".
- (2) For detailed accounts of punk see ibid and Savage, 1991a.
- (3) Laing, 1985, p37.
- (4) See Wood, 1988 for a quote from the club's manager.

- (5) See Savage, 1991a, pp 168 and 172.
- (6) NME 13/11/76.
- (7) NME 20/11/76.
- (8) See pp335/336 above for details of the "Anarchy" tour.
- (9) See pp284/285 above.
- (10) Marsh, 1977, pp112/113.
- (11) Laing, 1985, p35.
- (12) Robson, 1977, p145.
- (13) ibid
- (14) See Laing, 1985, pp89-91, for punk behaviour.
- (15) NME 29/10/77. See also Savage, 1991a, pp335/336 for assaults on punks
- (16) NME 9/7/77. See also Savage, 1991a, p336 for the GLC's role in the censoring of punk.
- (17) See Savage, 1991a, pp374/375 and Sunday Mirror 12/6/77.
- (18) See NME 24/9/77.
- (19) Savage, 1991a, p479.
- (20) NME 17/12/77.
- (21) Laing, 1985, p xiii.

Sex Pistols

- (1) See Savage, 1991a, p172 and Laing, 1985, p132..
- (2) ibid p233.
- (3) NME 4/12/76.
- (4) NME 11/12/76. The Guardian of 4/12/76 reported safety as being the motivating force behind the ban. It also reported the objections of one UEA lecturer to the ban.

- (5) Savage, 1991a, p267.
- (6) Daily Express and Guardian of 4/12/76 both saw fit to comment that two of the councillors before whom the Pistols were being asked to perform were women.
- (7) Savage, 1991a, p268.
- (8) The idea of generational strife as the cause of censorship is put forward in Martin and Segrave, 1988.
- (9) Savage, 1991a, p273.
- (10) Robson. 1977, p145.
- (11) See Wood, 1988.
- (12) Savage, 1991a, p273.
- (13) ibid p292.
- (14) NME 19/3/77.
- (15) See Savage, 1991a, p393.
- (16) See pp351/352 above.
- (17) NME 17/9/77.
- (18) Savage, 1991, p429.
- (19) NME 17/12/77. See this for more details.

The Clash

- (1) See NME 6/11/76.
- (2) See NME 21/5/77.
- (3) MM 4/6/77.
- (4) NME 1/10/77.
- (5) NME 22/10/77.
- (6) NME 19/11/77.
- (7) NME 8/7/78.

- (8) NME 18/11/78.
- (9) Laing, 1985, p140.

The Stranglers

- (1) See NME 21/10/78, 4/11/78 and 9/12/78.
- (2) NME 5/2/77.
- (3) NME 21/5/77.
- (4) NME 4/6/77.
- (5) NME 20/5/78.
- (6) NME 14/4/79.
- (7) NME 22/9/79.
- (8) NME 12/7/80.

Others

- (1) MM 4/6/77.
- (2) NME 18/6/77.
- (3) See MM 4/6/77.
- (4) NME 18/12/76.
- (5) NME 28/5/77.
- (6) NME 19/10/77 and Laing, 1985, p136.
- (7) NME 3/12/77.
- (8) NME 4/2/78.
- (9) NME 20/5/78.
- (10) NME 2/12/78.
- (11) NME 7/4/79.
- (12) Laing, 1985, p141.
- (13) NME 20/9/80.
- (14) NME 4/10/80.

(15) NME 20/4/91.

Councils

(1) For example see MM and NME 4/6/77.

(2) Parsons, 1977.

(3) In 1878 safety regulations closed many halls - see Chambers, 1986, p136. In the early 1920s Leyton council banned jazz, see Hustwitt, 1983.

(4) See Street, 1993, for more on this. Clarke and Critcher, 1980, pp124 and 125 note regulation as a means of censorship. See ibid p95 for the conditional nature of working class entertainments.

(5) See Wale, 1972, p252 for local laws effecting pop. For a more recent example see IOC 1990 No 9 p37 which details the banning of the circus troupe Archaos by Bristol council.

(6) MM 10/6/67.

(7) MM 12/12/70.

(8) MM 10/7/71.

(9) NME 24/7/77.

(10) Daily Express 3/12/76. See also Daily Mail 3/12/76.

(11) Daily Mirror 3/12/76.

(12) See NME 28/5/77, 4/6/77, 20/5/78 and 9/9/78.

(13) NME and MM 4/6/77.

(14) NME 25/6/77.

(15) NME 2/10/77.

(16) NME 19/11/77 and 21/2/78.

(17) NME 17/12/77.

(18) MM 4/6/77.

(19) NME 4/6/77.

(20) NME 29/6/91

(21) See NME 23/5/92.

(22) The GLC brought forth perhaps **the** most prominent anti-punk campaigner in the form of Bernard Brook-Partridge, then Tory deputy of its Recreation and Community Policy Committee. See NME 7/9/77, Vermorel, 1978, pp184, 185 and 188 and Savage, 1991a, p365 for details of him. More recently his mantle has been taken on by Alan Blumenthal, a Conservative councillor in Birmingham, who has objected to NWA and Public Enemy gigs in the city. See NME 9/6/90.

Interestingly both have used causal arguments. Brook-Partridge said punk was 'calculated to make people misbehave' Hebdige, 1987, p158 and Blumenthal spoke of NWA provoking race riots in Birmingham, see NME 9/6/90.

The GLC

(1) See NME 15/9/79 for a Members song, "GLC", attacking it and see Savage, 1991a, p336 for the GLC's role in punk censorship.

(2) MM 13/3/76.

(3) NME 5/2/77.

(4) ibid

(5) NME 18/6/77. Also see this for details of The Jam's cancelled Chelsea gig.

(6) NME 9/7/77.

(7) ibid

(8) Sounds 21/10/78.

(9) NME 16/8/80.

- (11) See NME 21/6/80.
- (11) See NME 1/2/79 and MM 26/12/78.
- (12) NME 15/11/80.
- (13) NME 25/7/81.
- (14) See NME 22/8/81 for details.
- (15) NME 7/1/84.
- (16) See Levin, 1985 a and b, for bitter attacks on this policy.
- (17) See NME 25/2/84, 10/3/84, 15/12/84, 15/2/86, 15/6/85, 13/7/85 and 22/3/86 for more GLC musical activity.
- (28) NME 12/4/86.
- (29) MM 18/5/74.

Noise

- (1) MM 24/11/73.
- (2) MM 1/12/73.
- (3) MM 8/12/73.
- (4) ibid See p582 below for the dropping of this Bill.
- (5) MM 15/12/73.
- (6) MM 12/1/74.
- (7) MM 19/1/74.
- (8) See MM 23/2/74.
- (9) NME 8/7/78.
- (10) MM 18/9/76.
- (11) For example see NME 13/1/90.
- (12) See NME 10/6/78, 8/7/78 and 15/11/80 for attacks on the GLC's noise limits.
- (13) See Guardian 4/12/76 and Chambers, 1986, p136 for other

occasions when safety led to censorship.

Police

- (1) Wyman, 1991, p290.
- (2) Record Hunter, Vox August 1992.
- (3) Hewison, 1986, p172ff.
- (4) See, for example, J.Marshall, 1992 and Savage, 1992.
- (5) See NME 18/6/77, 26/11/77 and 9/5/92 and Savage, 1991a, pp 363 and 394 for more details of this event.
- (6) MM 25/6/77.
- (7) NME 16/7/77.
- (8) NME 13/8/77.
- (9) NME 29/10/77.
- (10) Wood, 1988.
- (11) NME 8/10/79.
- (12) NME 28/6/80. See also G.Marshall, 1991, p77.
- (13) NME 31/10/87.
- (14) NME 5/8/89.
- (15) NME 13/4/91
- (16) MM 9/3/68.
- (17) NME 29/4/78.
- (18) See NME 28/10/78, 22/3/80 and 29/3/80 for Erics' closure.
- (19) NME 30/4/83.
- (20) NME 24/3/90.
- (21) NME 7/4/90.
- (22) See Redhead, 1991, for police powers.
- (23) NME 26/5/90.

- (24) NME 5/5/90.
- (25) See pp393-396 below.
- (26) MM 26/6/77. Emphasis mine.
- (27) See Sutherland, 1982, p163.
- (28) NME 4/9/82 and 31/7/82. For venue hassles with the police in Birmingham see Guardian 2/5/91.
- (29) Sounds 23/6/84.
- (30) See pp156-158 above.
- (31) NME 13/1/90.
- (32) NME 26/11/88. This came just days after The Sun had criticised police for not breaking up raves, see Sun 7/11/88. See pp416-439 for the police and raves.
- (33) See Holden, 1993, p12.

Conclusion

- (1) See reference 2 p356 above and T.Davis, 1991.
- (2) See Syal and Davidson, 1992 and NME letters page April to June 1992.
- (3) For possibilities for the future of rock venues via centralisation see interviews with the Mean Fiddler's Vince Power in Independent 12/3/93 and Guardian 7/5/93. Sony have also begun to buy British venues, see NME 16/2/93. For the cancellation of a Suede gig because of overcrowding see NME 8/5/93.

CHAPTER TEN

FESTIVALS - COMMUNITY CENSORSHIP?

1967 saw the first major international pop festival - in Monterrey from 16 to 18 June. Subsequent years saw the emergence of festivals as a vital part of the pop calendar, both in Britain and abroad. But the history of festivals is one of struggle and of resistance, by various interests, to having these events in their neighbourhood. Even more so than with indoor gigs, many censorial actions here concerned worries over the audience, rather than over the music itself. The debate over festivals is primarily one of social control and the historically complex argument about who gets what access to open space. Nevertheless, attempts to prevent, or disrupt, pop festivals **do** have censorial overtones. At at a minimum the cancellation of a festival involves a lessening of the amount of live popular music that is available. It also involves a lost opportunity for parts of the rock community to gather and to experience itself **as** community(1).

This chapter looks at the history of pop festivals in Britain and at the struggles surrounding them. I class opponents of festivals as censors because it is in that capacity that fans experienced them. For my purposes "festivals" will cover **all** large outdoor concerts, as they throw up similar problems and objections, although, of course, the longer the event the more the opposition that is likely to be provoked.

The first British festivals began in 1955 with an outdoor

jazz festival at Lord Montagu's stately home at Beaulieu, Hampshire. These festivals became an annual event up to 1961, when they were ended after violence between rival camps of trad and modern jazz followers who heckled each others' heroes(2). The next major festival series was organised by Harold Pendleton, owner of London's Marquee Club, who started the National Jazz Festival at Richmond, Surrey, in 1961. This was eventually to mutate into the annual Reading Festival(3).

By the late 1960s a divide had emerged between free and commercial festivals. The commercials were, primarily, simply that - an attempt to make money. The free festivals were somewhat different and less musically-orientated. Often the aim was as much to experience the temporary joys of living in an alternative society as it was to listen to music. Their overtly political nature often brought them into conflict with the authorities, especially on the occasions when festivals were held without permission of site owners(4). Meanwhile the commercials, whilst by no means free from opposition, courted, and often got, respectability, as a means of making money(5).

By the early 1970s it was obvious that festivals were here to stay. Henceforth the battle was to be over what conditions and where to have festivals, rather than whether to allow them at all. A Public Entertainments Act in 1982 meant that all public entertainments required a licence(6), but various events brought various responses, as I shall now show.

One Day Events

By the 1980s these events were often merely part of a major artist's tour, but problems surrounding them remained. Local residents were, naturally, concerned about noise and inconvenience throughout the period I am concerned with. For example, by 1971 one day events had taken place at London's Crystal Palace Bowl(1), but not without opposition. In May 1973 MM reported that a proposed concert there had been cancelled because 'a handful of people have objected to the granting of a licence' and the hearing would be heard too late to organise a concert(2). This shows the censorial potential of residents, who here cited the noise and litter as reasons for opposition(3). MM urged readers to write to the GLC in order to preserve 'the best outdoor rock venue in London'(4) and gigs returned to the Bowl later.

From 1968 onwards a series of free concerts were held in London's Hyde Park, with official sanction and varying degrees of success. By far the most famous was The Rolling Stones concert on 5 July 1969. The previous July had seen a smaller event featuring Jethro Tull, Roy Harper and Tyrannosaurus Rex. All these bands were acceptable, but it appears that straightforward rock and roll was not. In September 1969 MM carried a letter from Bill Haley's manager apologising for being unable to arrange a concert for Haley in Hyde Park as: 'I was refused permission, the excuse being that followers of rock and roll would create havoc during the concert.'(5)

In 1970 Blackhill Enterprises, pioneers of the Hyde Park gigs(6), were given permission for two concerts in the summer. Disturbances marred the first, featuring Pink Floyd, in July, whilst the September one featured Eric Burdon and Canned Heat. 1971 saw only one gig allowed in Hyde Park - much to the annoyance of Blackhill(7). It featured Grand Funk. A Hyde Park concert planned for 10 June 1972 by Blackhill met a somewhat ignominious fate when it was cancelled because it fell on the Duke of Edinburgh's birthday and the army wanted to carry out routines in the park!(8)

This began a temporary lull in Hyde Park gigs whilst the authorities reconsidered their attitudes towards them. Although I found no reports of major disturbances, they seemed reluctant to use the Park for live pop. The government had initiated the Stevenson Report(9) into pop festivals and Paul Channon, Minister of Housing and Construction, refused Hyde Park gigs, despite a call from the Young Conservative newspaper, Tomorrow, and Eastern Area Young Tories for him to do so(10).

By summer 1974 Labour were in power and allowed Hyde Park gigs. Capital Radio sponsored one featuring Don McLean in 1975 and Queen played there in 1976. In 1979 The Buzzcocks planned a gig there, but lack of record company support caused them to drop it. This appears to have been the end of Hyde Park gigs on any major scale, but other one-off concerts also faced opposition.

Whilst their Hyde Park gig passed off peacefully, The Rolling Stones' reputation continued to plague them in the early 1970s. In 1973 they were keen to play a concert in a Welsh castle but a

planned gig at Caernavon Castle never materialised(11). A gig at Cardiff Castle in September was announced, but MM reported that: 'The Cardiff Castle show was cancelled... after certain influences in the town brought pressure to bear.' A protest march by the Local Rights Information Bureau and the White Panther Party failed to change the decision(12).

The show was switched to Pembroke Castle, only to be vetoed again. Permission for it was initially given by the Clerk of the Borough Council, but then withdrawn after protests from local people. Paul Martin of GWF, who planned to promote the gig, said that 'the fanatics won' and that: 'There was nothing rational about the decision... They had no other reason than it was the Rolling Stones.'(13)

Cardiff Castle showed that it wasn't hostile to all rock by allowing a concert featuring 10CC and Steeleye Span in July 1975. That year Pink Floyd played the Knebworth stately home in Hertfordshire and the next year Knebworth featured the oft-banned Stones and soon became established as an annual event.

By now punk had arisen and bans here included that on the previously noted Clash outdoor gig at Birmingham's Digbeth Market in July 1977. Permission was initially granted, but when the nature of the concert was made clear to councillors a spokesman told NME that they were 'up in arms about having a punk show on their doorstep.'(14) Local magistrates refused the show a licence and it never took place. A planned punk festival in Windsor was also vetoed after the landowner who originally gave permission for the

festival withdrew it when the nature of the event became clear. The mayor of Windsor had also threatened the gig with a High Court injunction(15). A punk festival which **did** take place, at Chelmsford FC's stadium in September, lost money when only 2,500 of an expected 15,000 turned up.

In 1978 the old guard showed how it could be done when Bob Dylan attracted over 100,000 to a concert at Blackbushe airport in Hampshire. The Stranglers overcame an alleged GLC ban on them with a show in Battersea Park(16). But in December 1978 the Lawn Tennis Association vetoed a plan by Queen to play a Wimbledon Centre Court concert. Led Zeppelin played Knebworth in 1979 and The Who played Wembley Stadium - a practice initiated by the rock and roll festival featuring Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and Bill Haley in 1972. A 1974 show there by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and Joni Mitchell had brought pop back into a more favourable light after the unsavoury events at Windsor the same year(17).

So large outdoor pop concerts slowly but surely became a regular and acceptable part of British cultural life. Obviously some venues were more suitable than others, but pop still provoked prejudice and censorship via the denial of sites. The volatile political climate of the early 1980s saw major pop events suffer. The annual Capital Jazz Festival had to move itself from its home on Clapham Common to Knebworth amid fears of violence after the Brixton and other inner city riots in 1981. The same year also saw perhaps the most pernicious censorial act thus far on the festival front.

Britain's biggest reggae festival was due to be held at Battersea Park in August 1981. However the promoter, Oscar Carroll, received a number of threatening phone calls from men claiming National Front members. Around six calls a day were received in the run up to the festival. Carroll was told that the concert would be bombed if it went ahead and, after the security firm contracted for the concert withdrew, it was cancelled. This is the only time racist threats have led to the cancelling of a concert(18), but it illustrated again the links of censorial action and current affairs coming, as it did, in the wake of the inner city riots.

Another overtly political action stopped a major outdoor concert in 1985 when Oxford City Council planned to hold an Oxford Festival For Peace, featuring Bo Diddley and Aztec Camera, as part of its Peace Year. However it was cancelled after being refused a licence by the County Council. The organiser of the concert said: 'the only reason they've turned us down is that the Tories simply didn't approve of a peace festival.'(19)

Commercial one day events continued and by the 1990s were a commonplace. But safety returned as an issue with the rise of raves and the deaths of two fans at the Donnington festival in 1988(20). Various restrictions on concerts at Wembley Stadium by Brent Council following complaints from local residents also kept the issue of the suitability of large outdoor concerts alive. Madonna was denied a fourth gig there in 1987 because of this(21). In 1992 The Cure were refused a licence for an Oxfam charity gig at Eastnor Castle. Again contemporary events are important as Malvern Hills

council refused a licence following an illegal week-long rave at Castlemorton(22). U2 were also denied a licence for a gig in Heaton Park in Manchester(23). In a more direct act of censorship The Violent Femmes were taken of the bill for a James concert at Alton Towers because the venue considered itself 'a family attraction' and the band 'not conducive to the environment'(24). Wembley now regularly featured as a venue for major gigs, but the history of concerts at football grounds is not a totally happy one and also has its own censorial history.

Pop On The Pitch

The idea of staging gigs in football grounds took off in the early 1970s. In April 1970 Reading FC organised a concert, only for it to be wiped out by storms. A concert planned for Glasgow's Hampden Park in May under the title of Scene '70 was cancelled after poor ticket sales. A plan to move it to Partick Thistle's Firhill ground was vetoed by the club's directors after opposition from local residents(1).

The arrival of stadium rock in Britain was symbolised by The Who's gig at The Valley, home of Charlton FC, in May 1974. This concert avoided major problems, but did not impress the directors of Queens Park FC who refused to let The Who play their Hampden Park ground later in the year. Local councillor Gordon Gibb called this decision 'disgraceful' as it 'will deny thousands of young people the only decent entertainment prospect of the year.'(2)

However the GLC gave Charlton permission for another gig and The Who again played there, along with the grounds of Celtic and Swansea on their "Put The Boot In" tour of 1976. But Charlton were later sued as the gig broke **one**, out of over 100, of the GLC's conditions for rock and pop events(3). In 1978 the club were refused permission for another festival. Bernard Brook-Partridge(4) of the GLC's licensing committee explained that: 'The history of concerts at this ground has not been a happy one for residents. And we were not convinced the promoters had the necessary experience. We thought they were out of their depth.'(5)

But the trend towards football clubs staging festivals continued, with one by Motherwell FC announced in February 1975. Queens Park Rangers used their Loftus Road stadium for a Yes gig in May 1975, but later found themselves in trouble when the gig was held to have broken GLC's noise limits(6). It was soon reported that Hammersmith and Fulham Council were considering banning future concerts at the ground(7). In 1982 A CND gig featuring The Jam was announced for the ground, but this was called off after what NME described as an 'outcry from local residents who submitted numerous objections.'(8)

Other clubs either faced no such problems, or overcame them. Southport, Huddersfield, and Chelsea all held events in 1975, as did Southend and Sheffield Wednesday in 1976. However a planned event at Torquay in 1975 was vetoed by Torbay Council. No reason was given, but it appeared that the council were judging the event by the standards of the trouble at Windsor in 1974(9), again

showing links between contemporary events and censorial action(10).

Local residents remained the main impetus behind many festival bans, often on the basis of noise or other unsuitability. At least one promoter thought of a way round this. When a heavy metal gig was announced for Port Vale's ground in 1981 the promoter, Straight Music, saw off the threat of an injunction by local residents by offering the older ones an all expenses paid trip to Blackpool!(11)

Other residents near football grounds were not so easily appeased. In March 1982 Queen proposed a gig at Manchester United's Old Trafford and NME reported that: '350 local residents have signed a petition opposing the concert' because of noise and other disturbance(12). Later Trafford Council refused the licensing application, 'entirely on the strength of objections from local residents'(13). After attending the Council and residents meeting, promoter Paul Loosby said: 'It was disgusting - a charade. They simply dismissed rock 'n' roll fans as animals.'(14) Again the music itself, apart from its noise factor, was not the primary reason for censorial action. Rock's fans, rather than its sound, were the reason for the ban(15). A month later Queen were refused a licence for a proposed gig at Arsenal's Highbury ground(16).

Since the early 1980s events at football grounds have suffered fewer censorial actions. Chelsea held an anti-heroin gig in 1985 and Birmingham held a UB40 gig in 1989, which was marred by safety problems as over 100 people were hurt as fans danced to support band, The Pogues. By the early 1990s it was apparent that

whilst residents often regarded such events as a nuisance, they also realised that they were not the end of civilisation. Regular concerts still take place at such venues as Aston Villa, Manchester City and Wembley Stadium. Football stadium rock has established itself and is now free from many of its previous censorial problems. But the larger, longer running, events still encounter resistance and have their own censorial tale to tell.

Longer Festivals - Rock and A Hard Place

Here I shall look at a selection of established festivals in order to illustrate some general points. The National Jazz Festival, which became the annual Reading Festival, is perhaps the best example of problems surrounding festivals and shows that, like nuclear power stations, people don't mind pop festivals - as long as they are not in their backyard. After five years at Richmond, beginning in 1961. Pendleton's festival moved to Windsor racecourse in 1966, despite, says Clarke, 'efforts by residents and the council to ban it'(1). Here the police complained that Pendleton set up a mixed-sex marquee for fans to sleep in(2). In late 1967 the council voted to ban future festivals after complaints about "immorality" at that summer's event(3). Again pop's attendant features led to attempts to censor it. The council's decision coincided with other moves against pop in 1967 and prompted Welch's "Stop Picking on Pop"(4) article.

As noted previously, in January 1968 the Council changed its

mind and allowed the festival, after appeals from various pop celebrities(5). Instead it moved to Sunbury On Thames, without incident(6). However Pendleton encountered opposition when he tried to return to a racecourse-based festival in 1969. He put his festival on at Plumpton, much to the annoyance of local residents, including MP Martin Madden(7). Although the 1969 event appears to have passed off peacefully, in 1970 Madden and other residents organised against it. Clarke writes that 'a meeting of local villagers at Chailey, deploring the owners' agreement to (the festival)... was told that every legal method to ban the concerts was being explored. The chairman of the Rural District Council wrote to the Minister requesting additional local powers to control festivals.'(8) The festival was held in August after a judge ruled that Madden had brought his injunction too late(9). But Madden and his neighbours eventually succeeded in driving the festival away from Plumpton. In December the owners of the racecourse gave an undertaking that it would not be used again for festivals(10).

So Pendleton again found his festival harried away from its home. But he had better luck when he began an unbroken run of thirteen years at Reading in 1971. After residents' initial reservations had died down there was a gradual acceptance of the festival, which became an important part of the annual rock calendar. Even the appearance of a number of punk bands in 1978 failed to cause any major rows. By 1982 the festival was essentially a heavy metal event. But it was around this time that its troubles returned.

In 1983 there was debate about moving the festival to another site in the town. The Conservatives won control of the local council and gave permission to redevelop the festival site, deciding to move it in time for the 1984 festival(11). But no new site in the town was found and it was dropped after East Northants Council refused a licence for an attempt to stage it at Lilford(12). Ironically a free gig was allowed on the original site. A proposed new site was vetoed in 1985 when Reading Council rejected the promoter's rent offer(13).

In 1986 the festival returned to Reading in a field next to its original site. The Labour Party's local election manifesto that year included a promise to bring the festival back to Reading(14). The festival's booking policy was rethought in 1988 after a number of bands were bottled off. By 1992 the festival was re-established at its new site. A Guardian report noted that local residents had their noise worries cut down by a sophisticated audio system and that a "mum monitor" provided a hot line for worried parents(15) - an important development as many early concerns about festivals centred on their potentially corrupting influence on the young. In 1993 the Mean Fiddler organisation won control of the festival and its future seems assured(16), but history cautions against such optimistic predictions.

Another venue which enjoyed a brief spell as a festival site was the Isle of Wight. Its first festival took place in 1968 and festivals, each at a different site, took place in the following two years before local censors had their way and stopped festivals

on the island for all time in 1971.

The 1968 festival took place near Godshill. It began at 6pm on 31 August and continued into the following day. Promoted by Fiery Creations, it drew 8,000 people. Flushed with their success the promoters announced a much bigger festival, featuring Bob Dylan, the following year. It lasted from 29 to 31 August and was held near Ryde. Although it passed off peacefully MM soon reported that the Ratepayers Association at Wootton Bridge were opposing a proposed 1970 festival(17).

Subsequently this festival encountered more opposition than the previous two. Roy Foulk of Fiery Creations met Newport Public Health Committee in September 1969 and said that only one member opposed the festivals(18). By the beginning of 1970 Foulk was confidently predicting the event would go ahead, which it did, from 28 to 30 August, at East Afton, with Jimi Hendrix headlining.

But ominous signs preceeded this. In March the NFU advised its members not to provide it with a site(19). In July Pete Harrigan of Fiery Creations reported that: 'We've had no co-operation from the authorities... but the festival will definitely be on despite threats of personal violence to myself and Roy Foulk.' He also said that: 'The County Council has been hounding us, and the rear-admirals and brigadiers have been whipping up hysteria against us.'(20) By 23 July the County Council had agreed to the festival, despite some vehement local protests and public meetings, at which demarcation lines between those who did and did not want the festival were apparently drawn according to age(21).

Whilst the festival passed off without incident many residents objected to an influx of "hippies" taking over the island(22). Clarke reports that local MP Mark Woodnutt, who went to the site in disguise(23), 'objected to nude bathing and fornication'(24) by the audience and orchestrated the campaign against any festival in 1971. He also complained that: 'There was an awful lot of pot smoking'(25) - again an instance of pop's attendant features provoking censorial action. Woodnutt effectively used a safety measure as censorship. He tried to limit the amount of people allowed to attend night events on the island to 5,000 - a figure which meant that a commercial festival was subject to a de facto ban.

The method Woodnutt chose was one which is rare in efforts to control the consumption of pop in Britain - a change in the law. This was the 1971 Isle of Wight County Council Act, Part II of which 'imposed licensing for both assemblies in the open air "at which during any period exceeding three hours during the six hours following midnight there are not less than 5,000 people present," and for coffee bars on the island.'(26) The coffee bar clause caused most debate when the Bill came before Parliament. Here debate was characterised by Tory MP for Eastbourne, Sir Charles Taylor's, frequent interruption with cries of "fornication"(27). Aesthetic critiques entered into the debate when Robert Boscawen, MP for Wells, sarcastically referred to pop's performers 'screaming through a microphone' as part of their "high art"(28).

The Act was passed in July 1971, with only six MPs voting

against it, but not due to be effective until December. Meanwhile Foulk had tried to arrange a festival but, the council rejected suggested sites and, reports Clarke: 'After a court hearing in early August, at which the council sought to stop the festival, time began to run out for for the organisers and two weeks later they gave in.'(29) Thus a classic case of "not in our back yard" occurred. The spectre of faceless businessmen exploiting hapless kids also surfaced in the debate and Labour MP Tom Driberg pleaded: 'Let us hear no more humbug about the wickedness of promoters.. seeking to make great profits... they lost money last year.'(30) In 1990 the Isle Of Wight County Council published a booklet eulogising the festivals(31), apparently having forgotten its own role in getting the only specifically anti-pop festival legislation yet seen in Britain passed.

But, whilst Clarke notes that an apparent victory had been won by 'those in favour of licensing and control'(32), the general fate of festivals was mixed. A large festival at Bath in 1970 was a success, as were events at Lincoln and Surrey Cricket Club's Oval ground. But a 1971 festival at Weeley, Essex, organised by the local Rotary Club for charity fund-raising, saw problems with weather and over-crowding(33). It was against this background that GWF decided to hold a festival in 1972. After being refused sites in Kent, Essex and Sussex, all due to local opposition(34), they settled on a site at Bradney Lincolnshire which the previous year had witnessed a folk festival attended by 60,000 people. Lindsey County council voted to ban the festival, which then became subject

to a court hearing. It eventually went ahead in June, with the threat of jail hanging over the organisers if they failed to meet court stipulations over crowd behaviour, traffic congestion and noise. It passed off peacefully, but it is illustrative of the struggles around festivals at this time and the very cautious, and often overtly censorial attitude exhibited by councils.

In the early 1970s this concern resulted in debate over the future, if any, of pop festivals. I deal with government initiatives below(35), but it is worth noting that battle lines were being drawn. In 1971, under a headline of "Festivals - the great debate", MM sought the views of Woodnutt, Driberg, one of only two MPs to vote against Woodnutt's Bill on its second reading, and Mick Farren, leader of the British White Panthers and of The Deviants band. Driberg saw the issue in terms of a clash of ages and classes and said that Woodnutt and his allies 'don't just want to control the Isle of Wight festival, they want to kill it.'(36) Farren mooted the idea of a permanent site - a measure **still** not granted twenty years on. By the time the Night Assemblies Bill had fallen(37) and the Government had announced the setting up of the Stevenson Committee(38), MM was applauding attempts to get a code of practice in place(39) and organised a ballot on the future of festivals(40).

In 1970 another festival which both enjoyed a chequered career and became a major part of the annual festival calendar started - Glastonbury, held on farmer Peter Eavis' land(41). 1971 saw the only free Glastonbury, 'paid for by a rich debutante',

according to Eavis(42) and also saw Boscawen, MP for Wells(43), continue the tradition of MPs opposing festivals in their constituencies by tabling questions in the Commons on the police being too lenient toward drugs at Glastonbury(44).

Despite opposition from Boscawen, Glastonbury continued and by 1979 it was a well-organised, value for money event(45). By the mid-1980s the festival had grown further and became a victim of its own success, as attendance was swollen by its status as a fundraiser for CND. After the 1983 festival Mendip Council tried to prosecute Eavis for breaking some of the licence conditions(46). In 1987 NME reported that the Tory-controlled council was trying to get the event banned(47), but it went ahead. However by October local residents had voted against the festival taking place in 1988, with the local press leading the campaign against it(48).

Glastonbury returned in 1989, but was again in trouble in 1990. Firstly it appeared that Bright's anti-raves law(49) would impose such restrictions upon it as to make it impossible to stage. Eavis was fined £14,000 for breaching his licence in 1989(50) and the 1990 festival saw disturbances when "traveliers" who were reluctant to leave the site after the festival ended fought with security guards(51). In January 1991 it was announced that the festival would not take place that year(52).

In 1992 it returned, but only after a decision not to allow it was overturned in a magistrates court(54). It also took place in 1993. By 1992 the event was in aid of Greenpeace and was generally judged to be a success(55). But at least one local resident has

waged a continuous campaign against it.

Anne Goode moved to the nearby village of Pilton in 1981. She believes that the festival has grown from 'a quasi-hippy freak-out with which one actually had rather a lot of sympathy' to a 'gigantic monster juggernaut where kids are force fed support the miners, get rid of Margaret Thatcher propaganda and drugs.'(56). She added: 'You are very tired... and the whole thing is geared to - anarchy, and if you add to that the **very loud pop music** then you're going to get a pretty heavy scene. I think this has all the potential for corruption of young people...If you add to that the occult scene into which people get drawn without realising it...'(56). The concern for children and religious motivation we have met before and shall meet again.

Eavis claims Goode, who erected a 30 foot giant cross in opposition to the festival, is not representative of Pilton, but she was at least vocal enough to merit the attentions of The Independent and a Channel 4 documentary team(57). This documentary showed local opposition also centred around the Friends of Pilton, a group Eavis accuses of being newcomers to the village. Its overwhelming picture was a clash of town and country, with a need for both sides to consider the other more.

Meanwhile festivals like WOMAD continue - although this festival has also had several homes and ran into money problems late in 1992(58). It also turned censor in November 1992 when it dropped reggae singer Buju Banton from one of its bills because of the homophobic nature of his "Boom By By" single(59). The ban was

welcomed by the homosexual rights group Outrage! and marks a rare example of "political correctness" causing censorship in British pop(61).

Long-running festivals are now a regular part of the British summer, but problems surrounding them have continued. The lack of a permanent site has often been lamented, but little seems to have been done and with a government wedded to letting the market dictate such things, little appears likely to be forthcoming in the future(61). The history of censoring pop festivals is primarily one of attacking pop's attendant features, rather than the music itself. But the net effect has often been to cut down on the chance to experience pop in a special way. Festival-goers often bear witness to their camaraderie, but drugs and outbreaks of violence make better headlines. In 1992 commercial festivals appeared to be in favour with at least some sections of the media - but their free counterparts have had much less favourable responses.

The Free Festivals - No Direction Home?

Free festivals move us still further away from any simple idea of censoring pop as music and further into areas of social control and of Politics, with a capital "P", as many of the festivals had political aims and often used pop as a background to politicking and creating a temporary alternative society. For example, commenting on the Windsor 1974 festival, Hancock noted that: 'Certainly the music wasn't the major attraction'(1). But,

rather than the music being of no import it might be fairer to say that it diminished in importance(2).

Nevertheless the events were portrayed to the public as "pop festivals" and, as many of them **did** centre upon pop, attempts to clamp down on the free festivals had a censorial impact on live pop. Moreover the vivid portrayal of some aspects of the free festivals sullied the image of popular music in the public consciousness and thus made censorial moves against it that much easier, as the Torquay FC case showed(3).

It is important to remember that many organisers of free festivals often had overtly political ends in mind and saw pop gatherings as a revolutionary tool. They were contemptuous of commercial festivals, which they saw as exploiting the audience's wallets rather than their revolutionary potential. A myriad of free festivals took place from 1969 onwards and continue up to this day, now becoming intertwined with raves. For reasons of space I shall mention of a few of the more prominent ones in passing before going to look in more detail and two of the more controversial festivals - those of the People's Free Festival (PFF) and of Stonehenge.

Early free festivals included 1970's Phun City which took place at Worthing and was organised by IT(4). It was designed to 'meet the needs and desires of the freak, not just a situation set up to relieve him of his money.' A high court injunction against the festival by local residents was lifted only three days before the start of the festival, which left little time to erect fences, turnstiles etc. So the organisers made it a free festival, dropping

their initial plan to charge a nominal entrance fee(5).

Clarke describes the free Glastonbury of 1971 as 'a very important early success'(6) and the abortive 1971 Isle of Wight festival was also to have been free. By 1976 Clarke reports eight free festivals. But their existence was always somewhat perilous as the Deeply Vale, Lancashire, festival shows. It began in 1976, attracting around 600 people and ran until 1979 by which time attendance had grown to around 8,000(7). In 1980 police barred the way to the site and the local council got an injunction against the festival covering all the land in its jurisdiction. It then moved to another site and took place, police preferring to let the 4,000 crowd carry on rather than to risk a confrontation(8). A court injunction prevented the festival in 1981(9) and appears to have killed it off.

But confrontation was most chillingly employed at the events I now wish to look at - the Windsor PFFs of the early 1970s. A strong political current was always evident, with the festivals often incorporating protests against rent and/or drug laws. They came to symbolise confrontation between an alternative lifestyle and a society which had had its tolerance level severely tested and also again showed how pop can destroy the thin demarcation line between regulation and censorship.

The first Windsor festival was set up by William Ubique Dwyer as a "Rent Strike People's Festival" for August bank holiday weekend, 1972. Dwyer sought no licence from the Crown Commissioners who run Windsor Great Park, thus making the festival illegal.

Despite this illegality and lack of facilities 700 attended and it passed off peacefully.

The next year Dwyer, who believed the Park to be common ground, again did not bother getting permission. About 8,000 attended the festival before the police pressurised Dwyer and those remaining to leave the site on the tenth day. There had been 272 arrests for drugs. Thames Valley Police Chief Constable David Holdsworth believed that the event 'had very little to do with music' and Dwyer admitted that the aim of the festival was to stimulate a protest against rent paying(10). Nevertheless the festival was contained rather than repressed in 1973. This was to change in 1974.

The 1974 PFF saw the most violent scenes witnessed up until then of any British festival claiming links with popular music. (It was superseded by Stonehenge in 1985). Dwyer organised it again, this time with the help of Sid Rawle of the Tipi people from North Wales. The Crown Commissioners and local council refused to negotiate and Holdsworth changed his tactics from containment to repression. His personal moral outrage at the festival illustrated by his public pronouncement that the organisers had effectively asked people to 'come to Windsor Great Park and copulate under the influence of drugs.'(11)

The police's attempts to make a stand on drugs led to several local residents complaining of over-reaction. After five days and a peak attendance of 8,000 people the festival dwindled down to 2,000. It was then, on 30 August, that the police decided

to clear the site - smashing equipment and numerous heads along the way(12). Many, well-documented, accounts of police violence followed. The Sun headlined: "Were the police too tough?" and The Times commented that: 'A warning that the field would be cleared after five days might have changed everything.'(13) In total 220 arrests were made and: 'At least 116 people were injured, 70 of them policemen, none of them seriously.'(14) Holdsworth's commented that 'the police achieved what they set out to do: restore law and order.'(15)

But many questioned the cost. MM spoke darkly of 'ugly forces at work in Britain today', by which it meant the quasi-anarchist Dwyer, and not the police, but thought that the police had over-reacted against 'an essentially harmless gathering', whilst Steve Warshal of Release, talked of 'this huge military operation... this illegal swoop with people being physically thrown off.'(16) Indeed the police action appears to have been, at best, quasi-legal.

Farren wrote that: 'It's not the responsibility of the authorities to veto these festivals because they neither understand nor like them. The only regulation needed is making sure that basic sanitation and services are provided.'(17) But Farren did not say how the 'basic sanitation and services' should be paid for.

Some Windsor residents were determined that the festival would not return. The Windsor Citizens Action Group mounted a vigorous campaign against it. They united with local MP Alan Glyn, the police's Windsor Festival Intelligence and Discouragement Group and Windsor and Berkshire Councils to stop any attempt to stage a

festival in 1975. An injunction against it was successfully brought and Rawle and Dwyer spent some time in jail after defying this by publicising the festival. The County Council then spent some £10,000 on advertising that the festival would not take place(18). Evidently money was available in Berkshire for ensuring pop festivals did **not** take place, but not for providing basic amenities which might have allowed for a peaceful event satisfactory to most of the parties concerned. Although the PFF had other fish to fry (ironically, like many of pop's censors) the fact that it **was** a pop festival is shown by the fact that in 1974 well nationally-known bands like Ace, Budgie and Johnathan Kelly's Outside were due to play(19).

Within PFF only Dwyer was passionately committed to having the festival at Windsor. With this in mind, wary of a repetition of 1974's carnage, and with the issue of pop festivals becoming something of a political hot potato, Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins instructed the Department of The Environment to look for a suitable site for the 1975 festival.

After much procrastination a site was eventually agreed upon at Watchfield, a disused airfield in Berkshire. This was provided with government assistance, although it was made clear that this was strictly a one-off. Local residents, including, as ever, the local MP, in this case Airey Neave, voiced opposition to the festival, but it ultimately went off at something like half-cock. The police again appear to have been heavy-handed and made a disproportionate amount of arrests - 95 in a crowd of 5,000

compared with 115 for a crowd of 40,000 at that year's Reading Festival(20). The Law Journal later accused Holdsworth of harming relations with young people via his tactics(21). Meanwhile nothing came of attempts to stage the festival at Windsor.

The Economist was scathing of the government supporting the antics of 'marxists, anarchists and just plain opportunists'(22) and described those who attended Watchfield as 'no more than the youthful layabouts of Piccadilly and Earls Court'(23). Any future government assistance was ruled out in April 1976 when Environment Secretary Peter Shore announced that no money would be forthcoming as it couldn't be justified at a time of cuts in public expenditure elsewhere(24). Organisers tried to find another site, but one at Tangmere in Sussex was vetoed after local MP Tony Nelson pressurised the MOD, owners of the proposed site, into taking out a court injunction against the festival(25). After a site near Canterbury was also vetoed, the festival went to different sites in at Tangmere and Broad Oak (and hence to Seasalter) and ended in confusion and police surveillance(26).

Although the PFF moved to Chobham, Surrey, in 1977 and on to Bracknell in 1978, by 1976 it was, writes Clarke, effectively 'harassed into decline'(27). Meanwhile Windsor saw off a proposed punk festival in 1977(28) and a High Court injunction brought by the Citizens Action Group prevented any festival there in 1978(29).

Windsor's place as the number one free festival was succeeded by Stonehenge. This centred on the summer solstice, began in 1974(30) and became associated with pop in 1978(31). It continued

in 1979 with some 3-5,000 attending what appeared to be a model of cooperation(32). Despite trouble with bikers in 1980(33), the festival continued in 1981 and 1982(34). Up to 50,000 attended the 1984 festival and it appears that it was the growth of the festival that prompted moves against it.

By 1985 music was peripheral to the festival(35) but it remained an important part of the annual festival calendar. A court injunction was taken out against 83 named individuals, including Rawle, preventing them from going near to the stones. On this pretext illegal police roadblocks were set up around Stonehenge and, after attempts were made to get to the stones, the convoy of traffic were herded into a field. The ensuing melee became known as the Battle of the Beanfield. Police attacked festival-goers, smashing up buses and arresting occupants. A public outcry at police tactics, which included keeping journalists away from the field, did little to compensate those who tried to attend the festival. Henceforth the festival was banned. It had always been illegal but would have become legal in 1985 by virtue of an old Charter law which made a festival legal in its twelfth year(36).

Since 1985 various attempts have been made to reach the stones, if not actually hold a festival. In 1986 an injunction placed by English Heritage banned the festival(37). 1988 saw clashes with police and calls for the festival to be given a permanent site(37). This has yet to happen and successive years yielded more minor clashes but no major moves to leave access to the site as possibility for all who want to use it.

The history of the free festivals vividly illustrates both pop's potential both to offend and, if only via its attendant features, to cause disruption. It would be simplistic and unfair to cast all opponents of free festivals as short-sighted censors, but it would be generous to say that opponents and governments, with the notable exception of 1975, have come up with much more than repression. No permanent site for what are essentially somewhat quaint, if occasionally squalid, and noisy events has been forthcoming. Whilst moving from being pop events to having a wider agenda their importance as pop events should not be underestimated. With the emergence of raves repression has again become the norm. Where they once consulted governments now move swiftly to legislation. But governments are the last vital player in the debate on festivals.

Festivals and The Government - Stopping The Rock?

The Isle of Wight County Council Act was the only anti-festival law passed, but at least had the merit of being restricted in its scope. In 1972 festivals faced a much more comprehensive threat. This was the Night Assemblies Bill which was introduced into the Commons by Tory MP Jerry Wiggin with the support of eight other Tory MPs, including Woodnutt and with the initial support of the Conservative government. Its introduction followed disturbances at Weeley in 1971(1) and it sought to forbid gatherings of over 1,000 people at night unless the relevant local authority was given

four months notice. A second clause gave authorities the power to stop assemblies on the grounds of the land's unsuitability. As White noted at the time: 'The consistent record of local authorities' opposition to pop festivals suggests that few, if any, proposed sites would be "suitable for the purpose".'(2)

The Bill imposed fines of £400 for those offending against it. Opposition to it began to mount after its second reading in the House of Commons in January 1972 and GWF produced an alternative set of measures called the Charter for Festival Administration. In March 1972 it was announced that gatherings of under 3,000 and eight hours duration would be exempt(3). Meanwhile the NCCL opposed the Bill because it had grave implications for the right to hold political demonstrations. Even The Economist which, as we have seen, was no friend of the free festivals, retrospectively called the Bill 'rather sinister'(4). The Times warned of the danger of an Act 'going far beyond the purpose for which it was conceived'(5).

In April the government withdrew support for the Bill after receiving a report which said that the Bill's vagueness made it potentially a tool of great repression(6). By May 1972 it was dead. Lacking government backing, it was effectively talked out of Parliamentary time by Labour MPs such as Gerald Kaufman and Les Huckfield(7). But it is interesting to note that opponents of the Bill stressed its implications for civil liberties in general, rather than any concern for fans. Festivals were only off the hook because their opponents had strayed too far into other areas.

Meanwhile the government showed its concern about festivals

by launching a series of inquiries and working parties. It is a hallmark of the more liberal 1970s that this was done. In the 1980s raves were legislated against after **no** consultation. It should be noted, however, that government interest in legal events has primarily revolved around control. Generally speaking moves against events have only been made once they have stepped outside the law.

The first report on pop festivals was the Stevenson Report, commissioned by the Conservative government in 1972 and published in 1973. Dennis Stevenson wrote to the music press asking fans to send in their opinions(8). He took a basically pro-festival line, believing that problems had arisen primarily because the festivals had taken off so quickly without time for the authorities to acquaint themselves with the problems involved(9). His Committee's brief was to draw up a Code of Practice and to offer advice to relevant parties(10). It was published on 25 June 1973 and noted the need for it to be circulated widely in order to diffuse 'what is at times the highly-charged atmosphere of pop festivals.'(11)

The report itself was essentially pro-festival. It was not a statutory document, but an advisory one, as Environment Secretary Geoffrey Rippon, commented that: 'It is the British way to rely on collaboration and goodwill.'(12) The report believed that 'pop festivals are a type of recreation which should take place'(13), although it noted that 'many millions... seem to feel that the fact that tens of thousands of young people want to gather together in one place four days at a time away from their parents is, in itself, corrupting and evil'(14) - again linking censorial acts

with thoughts of moral welfare. The report rejected such notions and noted that 'the degree of resistance that has often been encountered is out of all proportion to the threat that is posed.'⁽¹⁵⁾ It had particular scorn for the media who had behaved 'with great irresponsibility'⁽¹⁶⁾ when reporting the festivals.

It saw no need for new legislation and noted that the festival experience went beyond the music to the comradeship which fostered 'a tremendous feeling of friendship and togetherness, something which to most people comes only in time of war'⁽¹⁷⁾. It said that attitudes had hardened after the 1970 Isle of Wight festival, since which: 'The mere announcement of a proposed pop festival is liable to create consternation, if not panic, in the local community'⁽¹⁸⁾ - once again linking censorial attitudes to contemporary events. The report also carried advice to relevant people, from fans to councils, on what to do when. Overall it was a sensible approach to a problem which was causing little national outcry, but certainly much local concern and censorial action.

A muted national outcry **did** greet events at Windsor in 1974 and the next government inquiry into pop festivals, set up under Lord Melchett by the Labour government, met against this back drop. Melchett's Working Group was formed to succeed Stevenson's in the summer of 1975 and included Stevenson. Its primary task was to look at the free festivals and again it asked fans for evidence⁽¹⁹⁾. It first looked in detail at Windsor and Watchfield and noted that whilst most people accepted the commercial festivals, 'opinions about free festivals were very mixed'⁽²⁰⁾. Some, it noted, wanted

them 'banned altogether on the grounds that they are a nuisance and encourage law-breaking and anti-social behaviour.'(21) Noticeably the music itself was again absent from the list of complaints.

The Free Festivals report, published in May 1976, saw nothing inherently wrong with festivals and followed Stevenson in calling for give and take. It even thought that some public funding, under the right conditions, might be no bad thing. It was adamant that the PFF should **not** get any special government assistance, though it supported its call for a permanent site. Overall Stevenson's pragmatic approach was continued. The letters this report contains from Windsor Citizens Action Group Chair, John Phillips, gave some idea of the vitriol the PFF had stirred up, by speaking of the need not to accede to the demands of 'very obnoxious semi-revolutionary, semi-criminal, drug-taking elements' who use 'a form of blackmailing anarchy' to get festivals which are attended by 'weird and wonderful creatures'(22).

A more general report on festivals was chaired by Baroness Stedman. This was Pop Festivals and Their Problems, published in January 1978. It contained little new, noting that the law, much of which had been made well before the arrival of pop festivals, was often too cumbersome when dealing with them but concluding that, whilst some legal changes might be useful, they would have effects which could not be justified 'merely to deal with the relatively minor problem of pop festivals.'(25) The lessons of the Night Assemblies Bill had been learnt.

Stedman also reported that the Advisory Committee on Pop

Festivals was wound up in 1975 and its role transferred to the Festival Welfare Services (FWS). It also noted that: 'many people associate pop festivals with drug-taking, immorality and a general disrespect for the law and for authority', a view often 'strengthened by sensationalism in the media', but which 'cannot be dismissed as irrelevant.'(24) The fears of residents, it said, 'may prove to be exaggerated in the event, but they are none the less real enough.'(25)

The report saw two main problems with free festivals. First, many organisers lacked status as authority figures, which left them unable to control crowds and, secondly, they were also prone to using sites without permission of the owners. It also noted that they were often more about experiments in communal living than about music(26). It rejected making it an offence to visit an unauthorised festival and said the media had 'a duty... to refrain from reporting in such a manner... that it is likely to exacerbate a potentially difficult situation.'(27) It also asked for more cooperation on all sides and government provision of a site 'which might be available for pop festivals... from time to time'(28)

So the well-meaning pragmatic approach continued. Since Stedman the political climate has changed and the emphasis has shifted from consent to coercion. Although no legislation specifically relating to pop festivals has been passed, there has been a move towards tightening up licensing and public gatherings - as evidenced by the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act of 1990, the Public Order Act of 1984 and the 1988 Licensing Act. The

PFF may have been harassed out of existence, but the problems surrounding the outdoor consumption of popular music have remained.

One point Stedman did make was to refer to the FWS field-worker. This service was set up in 1972 to coordinate voluntary services and from May 1976 it received a government grant for a field worker to enable it to facilitate better liaison between organisers and local authorities and to provide advice for all those concerned with pop festivals. It has been staffed by Penny Mellor since its receipt of government funds. Despite some initial opposition to what Boscawen called 'a State hippies friend'(29), it has carried on, in charitable status and uniquely in Europe, and now provides advice on drugs, alcohol etc to fans, as well as practical advice for promoters(30).

Meanwhile government attitudes towards festivals have displayed a marked lack of original thought. There has been no coordinated policy and festivals once again became a major issue when they united with raves in the 1990s(31). Labour MP Greville Janner has, since the death of Bernadette Whelan at the David Cassidy concert in 1974, campaigned for better safety conditions at gigs, but although a report on safety at gigs was promised in the Commons in February 1991, in August it was announced that there had been 'some delays in the preparation of this document'(32) and little has subsequently been heard. The censorial implications of the code cannot yet be judged but it is worth noting again that safety concerns have contributed to censorship before(33).

Conclusion

The banning of pop festivals **is** a form of censorship which falls within my definition. It limits the amount of pop available and, perhaps more importantly, limits the pop audience's chances of experiencing itself **as** audience. Festivals often involve conflicts of interest and the question is which is paramount - the chance for rock's audience to gather and enjoy their music, or the right of local residents to go about their lives without interference. Restricting festivals has implications for freedom of speech and, on occasions when roadblocks have been used, on freedom of movement. In 1982 Clarke described the history of pop festivals as a slow triumph by the liberal lobby within the establishment. That lobby never got a chance to get involved in the next area I shall deal with.

Notes: Introduction

- (1) For festivals as community see Wale, 1972, p235 and Advisory Committee On Pop Festivals, 1973, p8.
- (2) Hinton, 1990, p5.
- (3) See Q September 1992 for a history of Reading. There was also trouble at Beaulieu in 1960 - see Booker, 1970, p39.
- (4) See pp391-399 above for more on this.
- (5) For a highly partisan account of the superior nature of the commercial Reading over the state-funded Watchfield see Economist 1975b.

(6) See Redhead, 1991, p93.

One Day Events

(1) See Clarke, 1982, p vi.

(2) MM 19/5/73. Emphasis mine. Note the numbers here. It is always a contested point as to how "representative" those who complain about events are. Suffice to note here that that campaigners such as Citizens Group and the Friends of Pilton have often been accused of **not** being representative.

(3) MM 26/5/73.

(4) ibid. Note again the role of residents.

(5) MM 6/9/69.

(6) MM 28/6/69 has an interview with Blackhill's Pete Jenner. Here the help of an un-named Hampstead MP is acknowledged.

(7) See MM 8/5/71. Opposition to Hyde Park gigs again came from an MP, in this case Harold Soref, who linked them to pot usage. See Clarke, 1982, p61 and p584 below.

(8) MM 10/6/72.

(9) See pp401/2 above.

(10) MM 21/7/73 and 16/6/73.

(11) See MM 30/6/73.

(12) MM 18/8/73.

(13) All MM 1/9/73.

(14) See NME 2,9,16 and 23/7/77. See also p376 above for more on this cancellation.

(15) See NME 25/6/77 and 2/7/77.

(16) See pp340/341 for more on The Stranglers' problems and

Battersea gig.

(17) See section pp393-396 above for more on Windsor.

(18) Other racist attempts at hitting pop include a series of phone calls to Capital DJ Dave Cash telling him not to play "woggy" music. See NME 18/2/78 and 1/4/78. The British Movement were alleged to have threatened to kill Jimmy Pursey, see Sounds 9/12/78. See NME 12/12/92 for a "fascist" threat to a J gig at ULU and 23/10/93 for threats to Senser and 6/11/93 for threats to The Voodoo Queens.

(19) NME 22/5/85.

(20) Rowan, 1992.

(21) For Madonna's Wembley problems see NME 18 and 25/7/87 and 1/8/87. See also NME 10/12/88. For opposition to a proposed Michael Jackson gig at Wembley see NME 23/1/88. NME, 11/1/92, reported that a restriction of only 12 gigs a year at the stadium meant that many bands were not bothering to play. For more see Independent 26/5/93 and NME 7/9/91.

(22) See NME 20/6/92.

(23) See NME 23/5/92.

(24) See NME 18/4/92 and Vox June 1992.

Football Grounds

(1) See MM 6 and 13/6/70.

(2) MM 22/6/74.

(3) See NME 5/3/77.

(4) See p368 above.

(5) NME 8/7/78.

- (6) See NME 14 and 28/6/75.
- (7) See NME 28/6/75.
- (8) See NME 29/5/82.
- (9) See pp394-385 above.
- (10) NME 24/5/75.
- (11) See NME 27/6/81.
- (12) NME 6/3/82.
- (13) NME 27/3/82.
- (14) ibid
- (15) This came after The Advisory Committee on Pop Festivals, 1973, p9, favourably compared the behaviour of pop fans to that of football fans.
- (16) NME 3/4/82.

Longer Festivals

- (1) Clarke, 1982, p24.
- (2) See pp351-355 above for the censorial role of the police in live music.
- (3) MM 14/10/67.
- (4) See MM 21/10/67.
- (5) MM 20/1/68.
- (6) Clarke, 1982, p24.
- (7) The censorial role of the local MP is worth noting. See also Woodnutt's opposition on the Isle of Wight, Neave's against Watchfield and Boscawen's against Glastonbury.
- (8) Clarke, 1982, p37.
- (9) MM 8/8/70.

- (10) MM 12/12/70.
- (11) See NME 22/1/83, 18/6/83 and 26/11/83.
- (12) NME 18/8/74.
- (13) NME 6/7/85.
- (14) NME 29/8/92.
- (15) The Guardian 30/8/92.
- (16) See NME 24/4/93 and 1,8,15, and 22/5/93.
- (17) MM 27/9/69.
- (18) MM 4/10/69.
- (19) Clarke, 1982, p37.
- (20) MM 25/7/70.
- (21) See Hinton, 1990, pp42-43.
- (22) See ibid pp44-47.
- (23) See Hansard 18/3/71. Columns 1789-1863.
- (24) Clarke, 1982, p39. Note also Sir Charles Taylor's use of the word "fornication" in the Isle of Wight debate, p386 above.
- (25) MM 10/4/71. But Woodnutt insisted that his opposition to the festival was **not** morally motivated. See Clarke, 1982, p52.
- (26) Clarke, 1982, p51.
- (27) See ibid pp51-61.
- (28) See Hansard, 18/3/71, Column 1811.
- (29) Clarke, 1982. p61.
- (30) Hansard, 19/5/71, Column 1010.
- (31) See Hinton, 1990.
- (32) See Clarke, 1982, p61.
- (33) See ibid p64.

- (34) See ibid p65.
- (35) See p399-405 above.
- (36) MM 10/4/71.
- (37) See pp399-400 above.
- (38) See MM 10/4/71.
- (39) MM 20/5/72.
- (40) See MM 19/8/72.
- (41) See New Statesman 25/6/93 for a profile of Eavis.
- (42) NME 27/6/92.
- (43) See note 28, p411 above, for Boscawen and aesthetics.
- (44) See Arnold, 1971.
- (45) See Clarke, 1982, p168.
- (46) NME 4/2/84.
- (47) NME 9/5/87.
- (48) NME 3/10/87. See pp548-579 below for more on the press' censorial role.
- (49) See pp425-427 below for more on this legislation.
- (50) NME 10/3/90.
- (51) NME 7/7/90.
- (52) NME 19/1/91.
- (53) The Independent 26/10/92.
- (54) See Burton, 1992. For Glastonbury 1993 see Elliott and Platt, 1993.
- (55) NME 27/6/92.
- (56) ibid. Emphasis mine.
- (57) See The Independent 26/10/92. The Channel 4 series on

Glastonbury, which featured disputes between Eavis and Goode and gave a rare "behind the scenes" look at the local politics of annual weekend festivals, was shown on four consecutive Tuesdays from 27 October to 17 November 1992.

(58) See Guardian 8 and 12/1/93 for WOMAD's financial problems.

(59) NME 21/11/92.

(60) See pp596-598 below for more on "political correctness".

(61) A step forward in this direction may have been Sony's purchase of the Milton Keynes Bowl as a venue in 1993.

The Free Festivals

(1) Hancock, 1974, p625.

(2) Clarke, 1982, p85.

(3) See Torquay FC case, p380 above.

(4) See pp13 and 26 above for the censorial problems of IT.

(5) Clarke, 1982, p89.

(6) ibid p90.

(7) ibid pp vii-ix.

(8) See ibid pp 168-170.

(9) NME 8/8/81.

(10) Clarke, 1982, p94.

(11) ibid p101.

(12) For a fuller account of the mayhem surrounding the 1974 Windsor Festival see ibid pp 99-114.

(13) ibid 112-114.

(14) ibid p103.

(15) ibid p114.

- (16) All quotes MM 7/9/74. See also NME and Sounds of this day.
- (17) NME 7/9/74.
- (18) Clarke, 1982, p123.
- (19) NME 3/8/74.
- (20) Clarke, 1982, p134.
- (21) NME 18/10/75.
- (22) Economist, 1975a.
- (23) Economist, 1975b.
- (24) NME 10/7/73.
- (25) NME 14/8/76.
- (26) See Clarke, 1982, pp144-150.
- (27) ibid p174.
- (28) See pp376/377 above for details of the abortive Windsor punk festival.
- (29) NME 26/8/78.
- (30) NME 22/6/85.
- (31) NME 1/7/78.
- (32) Clarke, 1982, p167.
- (33) NME 28/6/80.
- (34) See NME 16/5/81 and 3/7/82.
- (35) For an historical overview and preview of Stonehenge 1985 see Dumsday, 1985. See NME 8/5/93 for more on the "Battle of The Beanfield".
- (36) NME 18/5/85. See also Mitchell, 1985. For fears over Stonehenge see NME 22/6/85. See Guardian 22/6/92 for more.
- (37) NME 10/5/86.

(38) NME 2/7/88.

Government Action

(1) See Clarke, 1982, pp62/63.

(2) White, 1972.

(3) MM 25/3/72.

(4) Economist 23/8/75.

(5) Clarke, 1982, p66.

(6) MM 29/4/77.

(7) See Hansard 5/5/72 pp786-861 for details of this debate.

(8) See MM 2/9/72

(9) MM 20/5/72

(10) Advisory Committee on Pop Festivals, 1973, p vii.

(11) ibid

(12) ibid p v.

(13) ibid p5.

(14) ibid

(15) ibid p6.

(16) ibid p8. That the media behaved with "great irresponsibility" could also be said of raves. See pp432-434 and 566/567 below.

(17) ibid p8.

(18) ibid p37.

(19) See NME 28/7/76.

(20) Working Group on Pop Festivals, 1976, p9.

(21) ibid p19.

(22) ibid pp 33/34.

(23) Working Group on Pop Festivals, 1978, p vii.

- (24) ibid p11.
- (25) ibid p12.
- (26) See ibid pp12/13.
- (27) ibid p19.
- (28) ibid p18.
- (29) See Clarke, 1982, p163.
- (30) The FWS can be contacted at 61B Hornsey Road, London N7 6DG.
Telephone: 071 700 5754.
- (31) For example, see pp416 and 422/423 below.
- (32) Hansard 16/7/91. See NME 13/4/91 and 31/8/91 for more on safety.
- (33) See Guardian 4/12/76 and Chambers, 1986, p136 for safety concerns leading to censorship.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RAVING IN THE FREE WORLD?

Undoubtedly **the** major controversy surrounding British pop and its consumption in the latter period covered by this thesis concerned the "rave" or "acid house party" phenomenon. Starting in its own right in 1987, after being preceded by the "warehouse" scene(1), raves first came to public prominence in "the second summer of love" of 1988. Problems arose because of the practice of holding raves on large open sites, with or without the owner's permission (the matter is more complicated if the land used is "common" land), often in rural areas, and so depriving the nearest villagers of sleep. Initial concerns centred on several areas - trespass, drugs (especially ecstasy), safety, lack of sleep for residents and so on. By 1992 "ravers" had latched on to free festivals and forced them on to the political agenda in a way analogous to the events of Windsor in 1974 and Stonehenge in 1985.

In this section I treat attempts to control raves as an example of pop censorship, because, at a minimum, they have entailed the denial of certain ways of consuming pop. Limiting raves stifles pop's message and involves a conflict of rights - that of leisure versus that of peace and quiet. Raves also see safety once again donning a censorial cloak. Here I shall examine the rise of raves, the legal problems they caused, the issue of drugs and the press' role in the moral panic that followed.

Raves date from late 1987, when young British holiday makers

returned from Spain with records they'd heard in discos. Some of this music was a heavier form of house which soon took on the name of "acid house". There are two postulated origins of this name. The first is a 1987 single by Phuture called "Acid Trax", which is widely held to have started the craze(2). The second is that the term "acid burning" is a Chicago phrase meaning to steal or, in this case, sampling to make records(3). But the term gave the music an unfortunate image from the start. Its hypnotic nature easily lent itself to accusations of drug influence and such accusations were enhanced by the apparently widespread use of ecstasy(4) at raves.

Britain's first "acid" hit was Fairley Jackmaster Funk's "Love Can't Turn Around" in summer 1986(5). By September 1988 26% of the music in the singles chart was acid-related(6). At first the scene was confined to clubs and a few parties held in disused warehouses (with or without permission of the owners and certainly in breach of most fire regulations) in inner city areas. This caused problems for local authorities and the police, but the issue really came to prominence with the rise, from 1988 onwards, of outdoor raves. Initially centring upon the area surrounding the London's M25 orbital road, they soon went nationwide. Their highly visible nature, combined with an association in the minds of many media commentators(7) and authorities with drugs, led to both a minor moral panic and the backlash that usually accompanies it.

This backlash can be seen as commencing towards the end of summer of 1988. In November NME reported that: 'The warehouse

bashes are now virtually extinct. Police have advised disco equipment suppliers that if they hire gear to warehouse organisers they will be fined.'(8) It also reported a spate of police raids on clubs and venue managers banning acid nights in the wake of stories in the Sun which linked raves and ecstasy. (Note again the press' role). The link between contemporary events and attacks on raves is provided by the fact that the scare over acid coincided with ministerial outbursts over "larger louts". Affluent youth had returned to the top of the media agenda(9).

Moves against raves were soon compared to those against punk. Censors appeared to be targeting pop in a way which hadn't been seen for some fifteen years. Whilst this thesis demonstrates that the censors had never gone away, analogies with punk certainly existed(10). But punk never dominated the charts the way rave came too and it never initiated a change in the law as raves did. Others traced back the censorial roots still further with Mark Moore of S'Express saying: 'it's the same reaction as the old fogies had when rock 'n' roll first started - what is all this mindless moronic noise and why is Elvis shaking his hips like that.'(11) Note again here the tying in of aesthetics with censorial practice.

The "old fogies" used emotive language to back up their case. Wells paraphrased the Sun's description of raves thus: 'Kids don't dance they "twist and jerk" to the "mind numbing beat" and the "hypnotic" lights. This is the **exact** same language used by extreme fundamentalists to attack rock music in the States, the same terminology used by the Russian government when they described pop

as "decadent" in the 50s and 60s.'⁽¹²⁾ It would be simplistic to employ a plus ça change argument here - but Wells is making the right connections. By describing what were ordinary events to ravers in emotive language the tabloids were again setting the censorial agenda.

By 1989 the horror stories had died down, but pressure in political circles for action against raves grew. The legal situation was unclear⁽¹³⁾, but local authorities used a censorial tactic that had served them well in the battles against the free festivals in the 1970s and sought court injunctions against those organising raves. The responsibility for ensuring these injunctions were obeyed fell to the police, who were steadily pushed into the front line against raves. In August 1989 the Joy rave in Rochdale was served with two injunctions - one against the site-owner and one against DJ Mike Pickering - who stayed away from the event. Uncertainty surrounding the event meant that when it finally went ahead, in defiance of the injunctions, only 2,000 people instead of an anticipated 30,000, attended. Here the police decided not to break up the event - a decision later criticised by both local MP Cyril Smith and Rochdale Council⁽¹⁴⁾.

A planned rave by the Biology organisation, featuring Public Enemy, was even less fortunate. Police illegally blocked the M3 motorway to stop ravers making their way to it. The same weekend, in October 1989, a 3,000 strong Back To The Future rave at the Santa Pod race track was broken up by police and a planned rave at Lichfield was cancelled after a High Court injunction was granted

against it(15). September had seen overcrowding and rip-offs at Glasgow's Splashdown rave and fights between police and security guards at a Sunrise rave near Riegate(16). Again here the idea of unscrupulous businessmen exploiting hapless kids, raised its head, but perhaps with more justification than usual. Cosgrove noted that whereas affecianados of the music had been behind warehouse parties, the new breed of rave promoters, exemplified by young Tory Tony Colston-Hayter, were 'accountants with rotweilers' mixing 'profit and rogue economics' with little concern for safety(17).

Although attempts were being made to tighten up the law in order to counter raves, existing legislation seemed to be capable of dealing heavy blows against the movement. In November 1988 rave organiser Robert Daly received a ten year sentence for 'conspiracy to permit premises to be used for the supply of drugs' after police raided a rave he organised on the Viscountess boat in the Thames on 9 September 1988. Whilst guilt appeared evident, there was concern over the severity of the sentence. A Liberty spokesman commented that: 'This sentence certainly seems excessive and specifically designed to deter Acid House parties. It plays along with the general feeling that Acid House parties are illegal, which of course they are not. This is just the latest in a series of techniques designed to clamp down on these parties. They've tried roadblocks, confiscation of equipment and now this.'(18)

Meanwhile Graham Bright, Tory MP for Luton South, John Major's Parliamentary Private Secretary and the man responsible for the "video nasties" legislation, had begun another moral crusade.

He sponsored the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act, of which more below. But ravers showed resistance to such censorship. In February 1990 a Freedom To Party rally was held in Trafalgar Square with some 2,000 attending. It was organised by the Freedom To Party Campaign who aimed: 'To defend the right to freedom of association, publicise the threat to civil liberties posed by the proposed legislation... and to advocate reasonable reform of the music and dancing system.'(19) It was backed by such promoters as Biology and Colston-Hayter.

Colston-Hayter took on the mantle of unofficial spokesman for the rave scene, defending the right to rave (and make money out of others' raving) in strictly Thatcherite terms. He proclaimed that: 'We are not shadowy gangsters but entrepreneurs meeting a demand for an alternative to glitzy pretentious night clubs' and that 'we believe the Government should be taking a free-market attitude to parties and licensing.'(20) Bright was here less enamoured with the market. He lamented that present fines were inadequate as: 'The profits from a large event may exceed £100,000.' He also believed that those who proclaimed "freedom to party" 'play down the attraction their parties have for criminals involved in drugs distribution, fraud and extortion. These problems cannot be wished away by juvenile slogans: they require legislative action.'(21) Not for the first time the politics of censorship appeared to be an in-house debate for the right(22).

Bright prevailed, but only after another demonstration had been called in Manchester's Albert Square to protest at police

harassment of raves(23). But the authorities approach was not, however, a process only of oppression, but rather a dichotomous one of mixing containment with suppression. Containment involved the granting of more all night licences for clubs at weekends(24), something promoters had long been calling for. The chance to dance all night in the city was re-affirmed at the same time as the countryside's right to a good night's sleep. But others demanded suppression and wanted the music itself outlawed. The Post newspaper ran a story on 24 October 1988 with the headline "Ban This Killer Music"(25).

Although Bright's Act became law in 1990, raves carried on in 1991 with few major incidents. But the moral panic surrounding the events escalated in 1992 by which time ravers had attached themselves to the free festivals. "Travellers" had already earned a place in press folklore following the "Battle of The Beanfield" in 1985(26). Now they had apparently teamed up with ravers to create public nuisance, if not enemy, number one.

The catalyst for a moral panic centring on "travellers", but encompassing raves and thus pop, came in May 1992 via an illegal week long festival at Castlemorton in Worcestershire's Malvern Hills which up to 25,000 attended. The debate here again partly centres on a dispute about public space and what is legitimate activity, on it as at least part of the land used was common land(27). What undermines ravers' arguments is their tendency to assert their "right to party" without regard to the rights of others.

Meanwhile sections of the press mixed aesthetic criticisms in

with moral ones. Ravers were shown to be not merely a nuisance, but as making themselves such in order to pursue a culturally worthless form of music. So The Observer commented upon the 'ear splitting music' at Castlemorton, which it wrongly called 'this summer's new music'(28). An Independent editorial spoke of the fact that since the 1960s 'young people... have shown a desire to gather in huge masses and be **assaulted by loud music**' and then, more sensibly, called for a system of licensing to enable 'a popular form of pleasure'(29) to continue without causing upset. The Times reported that raves contained 'music that had the beat and volume of a pneumatic drill'(30). Aesthetic critique was again used to make the ravers' pursuits seem culturally invalid. Often one was left feeling that raves would be tolerated if only it was Beethoven and not dance music that they played at "ear splitting" volume.

Raves continued after Castlemorton, but publicity around it brought forth a new determination by local authorities and police to counter them. In June 1992 The Municipal Journal reported that Environmental Health Officers were looking at the problems of raves(31) and under a headline of "Landowners call for hippy watch scheme" the Local Government Chronicle reported that Dyfed and Powys police were taking measures to counter expected attempts to hold raves in their counties(32). A July festival ~~was~~ held in Mid Wales and passed off peacefully(33) and a large rave at Romsey in August was contained by police using roadblocks, which resulted in another rave being held just outside Winchester. Local MP, Michael Colvin, visited one site and 'said he believed a festival site

should be made available for travellers, but suggested there could be a case for police having powers to call in troops when needed.'(34) Travellers eventually left after being served with notices issued under Section 39 of the 1986 Public Order Act.

So the process of containment and outright banning continued. In many ways the rave movement takes us away from the censoring of pop per se and into that of public order. But that music is central to raves is undeniable and moves to counter raves are censorious as they stifle pop's message. It goes without saying that raves are noisy, cause inconvenience for local inhabitants and undoubtedly result in some contraventions of the law. The same could be said for party conferences, major football matches and the trooping of the colour(35). As noted earlier, in the early 1970s a Conservative government set up inquiry teams to investigate free festivals, but in the 1990s anti-rave legislation was passed without consulting those involved. Government had moved towards a more repressive policy(36). Meanwhile the legal position surrounding raves has remained unclear.

Raves and The Law

Law is the ultimate censorial sanction, but that around raves was confused from the start. That raves can be legally held is now established(1) but, commenting on Castlemorton, the Sunday Times noted that: 'Whether or not these raves are legal is a murky area. Travellers have every right to gather on common ground but, once in

residence, they are subject to the Public Order Act. If there is any threat of damage or disorder they can be moved on by the police.'(2) The right of free assembly is established, the right to be noisy once assembled is not.

Previously the picture had been murkier still. Technically all public entertainments were subject to the 1982 Public Entertainment Act, but this was often avoided by making raves into clubs and making ravers club members, which left only safety and fire regulations to be obeyed. Making raves private, rather than public events, moved them outside the scope of the 1982 Act. Local authorities then began to use the 1967 Private Places of Entertainments Act, which laid down that any private entertainment provided for financial gain must have a licence. But this had to be adopted by individual councils and, as many had not done so, they were unable to use it(3).

Soon came calls for more action. Following reports in the national press over ecstasy-related deaths at raves and clubs a minor moral panic developed. In November 1988 Scotland Yard held an unprecedented press conference to put the problem of ecstasy into perspective. They also confirmed that they had been infiltrating raves and had plans to break up unlicensed parties. Police opposition led to Blackpool magistrates refusing permission for a 14 hour rave at the town's Winter Gardens(4). In October 1989 NME reported plans for new legislation(5). Bright's method was one which, as I noted above, has often been used in censorial and moral issues in Britain - the Private Members Bill. Some concern was

expressed that this was the second time Bright had introduced such a Bill with overt government support - the other time being the 1984 Video Recordings Act.

Despite media concentration on links between raves and drugs Bright's avowed motivation was safety. Certainly he was aware of moral panics, as he linked raves to Teds in the 1950s and 1960s flower-power(6). The debate on the legislation saw some familiar bogies raised. Bright spoke of 'the acid party **cult**'(7) and I deal with the importance of that word below(8). John Patten claimed that: 'The parties are a way for evil, corrupt men to make money'(9) - again promoting the idea of the young being corrupted by unscrupulous businessmen. Patten spoke of these men 'luring young people into believing the parties are glamorous and exciting occasions.'(10) The fact that many raves were exactly that apparently escaped him.

Bright sought to deter illegal raves by increasing the penalties for organising them, explaining that the new law did not create any new offences or involve restructuring existing entertainment law. His aim was that 'the young have their entertainment in a safe and sane environment.'(11) But the penalties for those providing unsafe, and presumably insane, entertainments were draconian. The Act, which came into effect on 13 July 1990, imposed fines of up to £20,000 for each proven offence (justified by Bright on the grounds of massive profits being made at raves) or imprisonment for up to six months, or both. Labour offered no opposition to this, with the party's Stuart

Randall claiming that 'everyone's won' as the Act was passed(12). But Redhead noted that the law's effect was to 'criminalise a whole section of the youth'(13).

By 1992 some were asking if the Act had had the intended effect. Prosecutions under it were rare and the Sunday Times speculated that, as half the fun of raves was chasing the site all over the countryside and as legal raves missed out on this fun, illegal raves would continue(14). The police also appeared powerless to stop a well-planned rave if the location was kept secret and enough ravers turned up. Most raves were over in a day or two and police often adopted a softly softly approach rather than risking confrontation. But the government also sought to clamp down on travellers and in spring 1993 promised that 1994 would see legislation in place that would give the police to stop any convoy of over six vehicles. In a related move, it also considered lifting the obligation on local authorities to provide gypsy sites(15) and tightening up the legal definition of "traveller" in order to remove some legal protection. John Major's anti-rave remarks at the 1992 Conservative Party conference showed the popularity of moves to restrict the movement and the failure of Bright's Act makes further moves against the "right to party" almost inevitable.

Whilst the media became preoccupied with the links of raves and drugs, the police have more often than not seen the problem in terms of safety(16). The planned Biology rave was prevented by police, who said that 'with 40,000 people turning up at one place we have to consider special safety measures'(17). By April 1992

Detective Chief Inspector Alan Burrell of the West Midlands Regional Pay Party Unit was warning of a Hillsborough-type disaster at a rave. He also said he knew of at least 1,200 raves since 1990 and that he had personally contacted '533 mainstream organisers' to give advice, which hints at the scale of the phenomenon(18). Meanwhile Hants police said: 'we would ask all responsible people to contact the police if they become aware of these parties'(19).

The police remained at the forefront of attempts to stifle raves. Allegations of police over-reaction arose at the Sunrise 111 rave held in Greenwich in November 1988 and police also stopped a rave in Ipswich with 62 arrests(20). A weekly rave in the Blackburn area was also shut down by police in March 1990. Here Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire, Keith Brown, commented that: 'They are far from innocent fun-loving parties. These events present a danger to those who attend, where the organisers give little thought to the safety aspect.'(21) In July 1991 World Party, the legal rave organisers, cancelled a proposed rave at the Kent showground following police harassment of a rave they had held near Louth in June which resulted in 85 arrests(22).

At this and various other raves the police used roadblocks to stop and search ravers on their way to the site, or to turn them back(23). The legality of these road blocks was questionable, the tactic dating from the miners' strike of 1984-85. Liberty expressed the situation thus:

'The police for their part have used a range of powers and non-powers: pressurizing landowners, who have signed contracts for

the use of their land, to withdraw often alleging (wrongly) that the parties are illegal; raiding the homes and offices of party organisers; setting up numerous roadblocks; altering sign-posts; sending large numbers of officers in riot gear to parties and closing them down; turning off the electricity at acid-house parties and confiscating equipment; arresting numerous people, sometimes including legal representatives, and holding them overnight in police stations (often releasing them without charge the next day). Many of these actions have developed unchecked. Acid-house party-goers, and still more acid-house organisers, are an unpopular minority.'(24)

As such, it appeared that the use and abuse of the law was an acceptable way to deal with them. The same report noted that: 'there is no general power invested in the police either at common law or by statute to create roadblocks.'(25), yet the police constantly used this extra-legal tactic. Whilst, understandably, MPs clamoured to defend their constituents' rights sleep, few were seen to be defending their young constituents' right to move freely around the country at whatever time they chose. The reaction to raves sought to present ravers as at best unreasonable and at worst downright dangerous - because they chose to consume popular music in a fashion that did not suit some interests. To call this "censorship" would be to understate the case.

In January 1992 police broke up a rave at London's Canary Wharf(26) and in October 1992 there were arrests at a rave in Huyton(27). By now it was apparent that raves were not going away

and neither were clashes with the police. The right of access to common land was being contested yet again. Anti-rave campaigners highlighted the links of raves and drugs, especially ecstasy, but the police played down the drugs issue. Ron Hadfield, whom the Association of Chief police Officers appointed to look into raves, said in June 1992 that: 'Drug abuse is not "the bottom line"... Safety and nuisance are the key issues'.'(28)

But, as I noted above, the term "acid" made the music particularly susceptible to moral condemnation and this was soon evident. By February 1988 RM's Scott Summers was already pondering 'how long it will be before our "moral guardians" start claiming that promoting the music is helping to promote drug taking among the young?'(29) The answer was to be: "Not very long at all."

Even the MM dished the dirt. In August 1988 it wrote that in order to "get down" readers should accept that: 'Acid House is indeed "Acid House" as in LSD-Inspired Dance.'(30) But RM kept things in perspective by saying that: 'There can be no denying that drug taking does occur, but not to the extent that the tabloids would have us believe.'(31)

In October 1988 Music Week ran an article in which leading rave DJs accused the tabloids of scare-mongering. It continued: 'The scandal-mongers have found plenty to grapple with since the first shrieks of "Acieed" rang out over the capital, in the spring. Grisly tales of widespread drug taking and sensational accounts of the outcome of such activity have made column inches in all the tabloids. The Observer added fuel to the fire in August with an

article which seemed oblivious to the fact that Acid House is intoxicating in its own right without the need for chemical stimulants.'(32)

At the November 1988 press conference referred to above, the police noted that so far that year they had arrested 51 ravers for ecstasy possession - compared to 600 each for heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. They tacitly admitted that their attitude to raves was linked to press reporting when a press officer said: 'We called the press briefing **because of the heightened media interest in the problem.**'(33)

Meanwhile, Andrew Tyler, author of the book Street Drugs, *accused the media of promoting interest in ecstasy*(34). Power was *again exercised without responsibility*(35). Some saw beneficial aspects to the drug(36), as raves seemed free from the aggression that often characterised official clubs and Q speculated that 'almost universal usage of the affection-inducing drug Ecstasy is not unconnected with this.'(37) As noted earlier, by 1992 the nightmare of a return to 60s drug-usage amongst the young was being played out by parts of the press. After 5 LSD dealers were jailed in May The Independent headlined with "Sixties hippie drug makes a comeback" - as LSD apparently re-emerged as a problem(38).

But a sense of proportion was necessary. Liberty commented that: 'The screaming headlines of the tabloids - "Drug taking teenagers danced until dawn at wild disco party" - are rarely matched by the evidence.'(39) Although some have used the imagery of ecstasy in songs, for example E Zee Possee's "Everything Starts

With An E" and The Shamen's 1992 number hit "Ebenezer Goode", overall the press seem to have overplayed the drug's usage. But what has been the general role of the press in the acid-house scare?

Party Poopers? - The Press and Acid

The censorial role of the press has its own chapter, but a few extra words on its particular role with regard to raves are necessary here to show the censorial climate surrounding them. Parts of the press have consistently considered only the more sensationalist aspects of raves. In October 1988 RM lamented that: 'Thanks primarily to their pernicious influence, the term "acid" with all its hallucinogenic connotations, means just one thing in most people's minds - drugs.'(1) The same article also noted 'silly stories in the Observer linking acid house to AIDS'(2).

An interesting example of press attitudes to raves is the Sun. Initially it used them as a selling device. On 14 September 1988 it ran a quarter page advertisement for acid accessories and followed it a fortnight later with a t-shirt offer which was: "Only £5.50 man". It also published a "Hit list for acid boppers". All this changed after a 21 year old girl, Janet Mayes, died at a Surrey disco. Initially it was the death was held to be drug-related, although a man was later charged with unlawful killing. The Sun had already headlined with "The Evil of Ecstasy" on October 19, but the apparent link of acid house and a young woman's death

caused it to step up its anti-rave campaign. On 1 November it headlined a story about the dead girl's mother with: "Shoot these evil acid bastards"(3). It then launched a free unhappy smiley badge with the motto "Say No To Drugs" on it and so began a moral panic over something it had previously keenly endorsed. Q magazine noted the censorial impact of this by saying that: 'Within days police raids of warehouse parties in the Home Counties and beyond had begun.'(4) A climate that **something must be done** had been created and the acid backlash began in earnest, at the apparent behest on an ill-informed newspaper(5).

Further evidence of press misreporting came in April 1992 with the reporting of a Chief Police Officers drugs conference at Preston. Here The Independent reported that cost of an ecstasy tablet as 'about £15' but The Guardian reported it as 'costing between £5 and £10.'(6) Perhaps The Guardian has a better dealer than The Independent. There was also disagreement about the number of raves held in 1990. Was it 1,200 as the Daily Telegraph believed, 1,220 as The Independent and Guardian concurred, or 1,225 as The Times asserted?(7) Such inaccuracies in reporting the somewhat sedate atmosphere of a police conference engenders little confidence in the reporting of the much more chaotic state of affairs at a rave(8).

But the press' coverage of raves was not totally insensitive. Some journalists were genuinely interested in raves and their problems. The Independent's editorial of 26 May 1992 is an example of this more balanced approach. Whilst not free of moral

condemnation, it also noted that: 'To ban them altogether would be to outlaw a popular form of pleasure that need not be threatening. But they must be contained.'(9) It then went on to suggest legal and regulated sites. This would appear to be away forward, but it also recalls the missed opportunity of the PFF's call in the 1970s(10). It is to be hoped, but not expected, that the chance for a similar way forward with regard to a phenomenon that is far more popular than free festivals ever were is not spurned. At least some attempt was made to listen to the demands of the free festivals, ravers have heard little from officialdom except seizures, arrests, roadblocks and general harassment. Censorship is seldom any starker.

Conclusion

There is some debate as to how far ravers constituted a new subculture(1), but it is clear that a nationwide movement which had a form of popular music as its epicentre emerged. It is the fact that music **is** at raving's centre that makes moves to curtail raves simultaneously a move to censor pop music - whether or not such censoring is the protagonists' priority. Some music **only** gets heard publicly at raves, denying this outlet is censorship. Raves are a social problem and it is society which must find solutions to their problems, which should also contain as few censorial implications as possible. The conflict of rights - "to party" and to sleep - must be resolved. Illegal raves, with no concern for local

inhabitants' feelings, are not likely to engender public sympathy - but the urge to clamp down further should be resisted. It is not unreasonable to want to consume pop in a field.

Debate so far has been hampered, rather than improved, by sections of the press. Their preoccupation with the drugs issue has blinded rather than enlightened the general public. Unlike the press, the police did not equate raves and drugs. The "Right to party" slogan was that of a selfish hedonism, but attempts to stop raves had civil liberties implications which far outweigh the nuisance they generally caused. The censorship of a way of consuming pop has seldom been so blatant. It remains to be seen whether further restrictions will be placed on travellers' and ravers' freedom of movement - but the likelihood is that further control of this activity will be implemented(2). The Beastie Boys may be proved prophetic by singing that: "You've got to fight/ for your right/ to party."

Notes: Introduction

(1) Warehouse parties appeared in Britain in the early 1980s, see Redhead, 1991 and raves from late 1987.

(2) See, for example, MM 27/2/88.

(3) See Q October 1988. See also Saunders, 1993, p218 for a claim that this theory is a total fabrication.

(4) See Saunders, 1993 and Guardian 7/9/93 for more on "E".

(5) Q October 1988.

(6) Q November 1989

- (7) Daily Mirror of 1/11/92 claimed that ecstasy had been responsible for 20 deaths thus far.
- (8) Wells, 1988b.
- (9) For example, see "Ten pint lager lout jailed for 5½ years", Sun, 27/9/88 and "York war on lager louts" in Yorkshire Evening Post 10/10/88.
- (10) See Peter "Baby" Ford quote in Q October 1988 and Music Week 10/12/88.
- (11) Q October 1988.
- (12) Wells, 1988b. Emphasis in original.
- (13) See pp424-432 above.
- (14) See NME 12/8/89.
- (15) NME 18/10/89.
- (16) See Cosgrove, 1989.
- (17) ibid
- (18) NME 25/11/88.
- (19) NME 10/2/90.
- (20) Independent 3/9/90. For the opposite approach to Colston-Hayter see Spiral Tribe in NME 9/1/93 and Sunday Times 21/6/92.
- (21) Independent 1/9/90.
- (22) For a more liberal approach see Redhead, 1991.
- (23) ibid
- (24) See NME 8/9/90.
- (25) Melechi and Redhead, 1988. For calls to ban acid in the Sun see editions of 26/10/88, 1/11/88 and 3/11/88
- (26) For more on the "Battle of the Beanfield" and Stonehenge see

p398 above.

- (27) Independent 25/5/92.
- (28) Observer 24/5/92.
- (29) Independent 26/5/92.
- (30) Times 1/6/92.
- (31) Municipal Journal 5-11/6/92.
- (32) Local Government Chronicle 5/6/92.
- (33) Guardian 28/7/92.
- (34) Guardian 10/8/92.
- (35) See NME 18/10/75 where the Law Journal makes a similar point about the free festivals.
- (36) For example, see Guardian 13/11/92 on travellers losing their right to benefit.

Raves and The Law

- (1) See, for example, Guardian 27/7/92 for a report of a legal rave at Donnington attracting 25,000 people.
- (2) Sunday Times 21/6/92.
- (3) See NME 10/2/90, Independent 3/3/90 and Redhead, 1991, for more details.
- (4) NME 26/11/88.
- (5) See NME 14/10/89.
- (6) See Independent 3/3/90.
- (7) Hansard 9/3/90 Col 1121.
- (8) See pp480/481 below for more on the word "cult".
- (9) Hansard 9/3/90 Col 1143.
- (10) ibid Col 1144.

- (11) Independent 3/3/90.
- (12) Hansard 27/4/90 Col664.
- (13) Redhead, 1991. p93.
- (14) Sunday Times 21/6/92.
- (15) See Independent 10/10/92.
- (16) See Stephenson, 1988, where a distinction is drawn between illegal, but safe, raves the police turned a blind eye to and "irresponsible" raves.
- (17) NME 14/10/89.
- (18) Independent 30/4/92.
- (19) Redhead, 1990, pp5/6.
- (20) NME 19/11/88.
- (21) NME 10/3/90.
- (22) NME 6/7/91.
- (23) See, for example, Q November 1989.
- (24) Starmer, 1990.
- (25) ibid
- (26) Independent 22/6/92.
- (27) Independent 22/6/92.
- (28) Sunday Times 21/6/92.
- (29) RM 20/2/88.
- (30) MM 20/8/88.
- (31) RM 8/10/88.
- (32) Music Week 20/10/88.
- (33) NME 26/11/88. See also Select August 1992.
- (34) Q January 1989. See also Guardian 6/10/89.

(35) See Curran and Seaton, 1981.

(36) See Saunders, 1993. See also Guardian 10/1/92. The Sunday Times of 16/2/92 also contains a report on ecstasy. Somewhat incredibly, none of the four former users interviewed said anything favourable about the drug.

(37) Q November 1989.

(38) Independent 29/5/92. See also p16 above.

(39) ibid

Raves and The Press

(1) RM 8/10/88.

(2) ibid

(3) Sun 1/11/88.

(4) Q January 1989. All Sun references are taken from here.

(5) See Cohen, 1973, for moral panic theory.

(6) Independent and Guardian 30/4/92.

(7) Independent, Guardian, Times and Daily Telegraph 30/4/92.

(8) Observer 24/5/92. Cosgrove, 1989, presents the press as being ten years too late on the case.

(9) Independent 26/5/92.

(10) See Farren, MM, 10/4/71 on free festivals and the need for a permanent site.

Conclusion

(1) See Redhead, 1990 and 1991.

(2) See Daily Telegraph 24/2/93, Guardian 1/4/93 and NME 10/4/93 and 8/5/93 for more details on the clampdown on travellers and raves.

PART FIVE: THE CENSORS

CHAPTER TWELVE

KEEPING THE FAITH - MARY WHITEHOUSE AND THE NATIONAL

VIEWERS AND LISTENERS ASSOCIATION

Mary Whitehouse and the organisation she leads as President, the National Viewers and Listeners Association (NVALA), are by far the best-known censorial campaigners in Britain. Some understanding of them is therefore necessary if the censorial climate within which pop operates in Britain is to be understood. If, as Williams has suggested, Britain has competition for the role of censor(1), then NVALA is at the forefront of that competition. Here I want to briefly outline the history of NVALA and examine its beliefs and tactics. I will then look at the cases where it has intervened in pop. I have already noted the importance of "a member of the public" complaining to the police about "obscenity" and it is often speculated that such people are likely to be members of NVALA or a similar group. The The Anti Nowhere League case described earlier is one which lends plausibility to such beliefs(2) and shows the need to understand NVALA.

The NVALA's History

NVALA's history is inseparable from that of Whitehouse. She is its founder, motivational force and far better known than NVALA itself. It is therefore necessary to know a little of the history of Whitehouse herself in order to see what motivates her, and thus

the NVALA.

Undoubtedly **the** most important factor about Whitehouse is her religious commitment. She was heavily influenced by her involvement with the Moral Rearmament Army (MRA), a Christian evangelical movement launched in 1938 by American Frank Buchman and previously known as the Oxford Group, which Whitehouse first came into contact with in 1932 at the age of 22. Later accused of appeasing Hitler(1), MRA believed that: 'the revolution we most need is the change in human character itself.'(2) Whitehouse hopes to effect this "revolution" via the NVALA.

Like many moralists, Whitehouse saw the 1960s as a watershed. In 1963 she was a teacher and was shocked after the BBC broadcast a programme called "A Kind of Loving", which left her pupils with the idea that 'we shouldn't have intercourse until we're **engaged**.'(3) For Whitehouse this epitomised all that was wrong with broadcasting at that time, being yet another example of the BBC(4) giving full licence to the forces of the "New Morality" whilst totally ignoring those of traditional Christianity. For her the programme's acceptance of the "sub-Christian" idea of premarital sex was 'a landmark in the creation of the "permissive society"'(5). So television got particular attention as the harbinger of the permissive age.

Whitehouse also considered that the Church had neglected its role of spiritual guide. At best, she believed, it was silent on moral issues of the day, at worst it gave succour to humanist morality(6). As evidence she pointed to examples such as the then

Bishop of Woolwich, Dr John Robinson's Honest To God, published in 1963 and including attempts to update Christian morality and liberalise attitudes in areas such as divorce and homosexuality. Crucially for Whitehouse, there **is** no coming to terms with a changing morality. Her morality is fixed forever. This consistency means that the objections she raised in 1963 are the objections that NVALA continues to raise today.

Whitehouse says: 'For a thousand years in this country, there was no serious challenge to the validity of the Christian ethic... few doubted that... swearing, blasphemy, and obscenity were intrinsically wrong... that fornication and adultery were immoral, abortion evil, sodomy sinful and murder a capital offence.'⁽⁷⁾ She frequently refers to the "Christian core" at the heart of Britain⁽⁸⁾. That these attitudes were being subverted, particularly on the BBC - a body funded by the very public it was corrupting - was anathema to her.

She believed this entailed **deliberate** attempts by some at the BBC to propagate non-Christian morality and to undermine the very idea of childhood. I shall look at her concern with children again later, but it is enough to note here that it has been a constant theme of her work⁽⁹⁾. Her other initial concerns were in areas which sought to challenge conventional morality or criticise the social order. So particular venom was for satire programmes like TW3⁽¹⁰⁾ and the "kitchen sink" dramas of The Wednesday Play⁽¹¹⁾. She dates the start of the permissive age to 1956 and John Osborne's Look Back In Anger⁽¹²⁾.

Although television formed the main focus of her actions the last example shows all media were under suspicion and pop too caused concern from an early stage. A 1964 quote of hers bears repetition: 'There are many things in the accepted fabric of children's life which need to be dealt with in a forthright way - "pop" records for one. "My love can't wait" says one pop song. "Tomorrow may be too late," says another. Children accept many of the words on their face value but nevertheless are being brainwashed with the pornographic ideas which lie behind many of them.'(13)

This is worthy of some comment. First, it is factually incorrect as it quotes the lyrics to one song (Elvis Presley's "It's Now or Never"/ "O Sole Mio") and claims them to be from two songs - thus giving the false impression that the "problem" is wider than it actually is. Such songs are then given the ability to "brainwash" children - a causal assertion which might be hard to prove. In 1967 pop got comparatively little broadcasting time, but Whitehouse felt it was too much, complaining that: 'the amount of time they (pop groups) get you would imagine that young people today en masse see only as far as a strumming guitar.'(14)

It is worth noting the information that Whitehouse was receiving on pop at this time was not from the most unbiased or intellectually-credible of sources. The only book on pop she references in any of her works is David A Noebel's The Marxist Minstrels(15), which she uses to back up her claim that: 'Drugs, revolution, immorality, black magic, devil worship... characterise

the songs of the "heavy beat" groups.'(16) Noebel once claimed that: 'The Beatles' ability to make teenagers take off their clothes and riot is laboratory tested and approved'(17) and saw rock as 'a multibillion dollar assault on the moral foundation of civilised society' by Communists(18). We shall meet Noebel again when I discuss religious anti-rock sects(19), but I want to stress here that Whitehouse regards him as an expert, one whose opinion is valuable. Her critique of pop thus is both under-researched and empirically implausible. Noebel's early works were only available to members of far-right organisations in America, an illustration of Whitehouse's connections(20).

The renewal of the BBC's charter, under the same conditions, in January 1964 provided the impetus for Whitehouse to move. She sought to mobilise public opinion and, importantly, to get public figures behind her. Whilst the influence of the NVALA is hard to assess, it has always had friends in high places. Whitehouse soon got the support of local MP Jasper More, Enoch Powell, then Minister of Health, and Dr Mark Hudson, then Bishop of Hereford. By 1966 MP James Dance was Chairman of NVALA.

Whitehouse launched the Clean Up TV Campaign (CUTV) on 27 January 1964, with the aid of Norah Buckland, the wife of a Staffordshire vicar. Its first major meeting was on 5 May 1964 in Birmingham Town Hall - an event which Whitehouse now describes in euphoric tones. Two thousand people, from various parts of the country, attended. Out of this came a "Clean Up TV" Manifesto, which was included in a Petition that was presented to parliament

by Sir Barrett Cocks in 1965. This affirmed Christian belief and demanded it for the country's children. It also called for the BBC to put God 'back into the heart of our family and national life.'(21) It carried 40,000 signatures, but did little to influence BBC editorial policy. Part of the problem was that CUTV had no organisation as such. To rectify this Whitehouse launched NVALA on 29 November 1965.

This was done, in a typical blaze of publicity, at a press conference in Fleet Street. It coincided with a call for a Viewers and Listeners Council to provide, amongst other things, viewer representation on the boards of the BBC and IBA. As noted earlier, a valid part of Whitehouse's critique of the BBC has always been that it was undemocratic - paid for by the people, but seemingly with little responsibility towards them. There is a strong strain of "no taxation without representation" thinking within NVALA(22).

In 1965 NVALA broadened its outlook beyond television and began to campaign in all media, reflecting Whitehouse's belief that 'the media are indivisible'(23). So, subsequently, NVALA has, amongst other things, campaigned against pornography, taken an interest in the Oz and Little Red Schoolbook prosecutions (both 1971), prosecuted Gay News for blasphemy over its publication of James Kirkup's The Love That Dared To Speak Its Name poem (1976-8), claimed credit for keeping Linda Lovelace's Deep Throat film out of Britain (1976) and The Last Temptation of Christ off television screens (1990). It was also involved in getting Romans In Britain taken off and was a moving force behind the "video nasties" scare

which resulted in Graham Bright's Video Recordings Act of 1984.

Such have been the "successes" of NVALA, but its initial reception from the BBC was, to say the least, somewhat frosty. Whitehouse was consistently denied airtime on which to debate the issues she raised and justifiably claims 'I was censored - officially censored - off the BBC for eleven years'(24) (from 1966 to 1977) and also that in 1965 a BBC directive banned members of staff from talking to her(25). But had they been able to talk to her what would they have found? What beliefs lie behind NVALA actions?

A Question Of Faith - NVALA Philosophy

The central plank of NVALA is its fundamentalist Christian orientation. So it proclaims that: 'Christian values are basic to the health and wellbeing of our nation'(1) and Whitehouse has laid claim to the puritan heritage(2). She says that one of the attractions of the Oxford Group to her was that 'they talked of absolute moral standards'(3). Sympathiser Caulfield notes that, for Whitehouse, 'concepts of good and evil... are no more open to argument than night and day'(4). Wallis talks of NVALA's 'cultural fundamentalism'(5) and Tracey and Morrison comment that: 'one cannot understand **anything** about Whitehouse or NVALA without understanding the fervour of their religious commitment - everything else is subsumed within it'(6).

NVALA's outlook is problematic inasmuch as it is out of step

with much that has occurred in Britain since the late 1950's. Increasingly there has been a recognition that the individual's morality is primarily their own concern and not the legitimate sphere of government intervention. For Whitehouse this is anathema as God has decreed that premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion and so on are wrong forever. There is no scope within NVALA philosophy for changing social mores - God's law is eternal.

For example, Whitehouse could not understand why the church failed to prosecute Gay News for blasphemy over Kirkup's poem and why it was unwilling to take a stand on homosexuality. In common with all the pressure groups I look at, NVALA is fiercely homophobic. Whitehouse has stood firm in proclaiming that, whilst she has sympathy for homosexuals as individuals, homosexual acts are sinful(7). For her, one does not accept homosexuality, one attempts to cure it and television's role should not be to show gays, but those who have cured themselves of it(8).

As already noted, Whitehouse believes the rot really set in in the 1960s, which she calls 'a thoroughly reactionary period'(9). In 1971 she wrote: 'what is happening now is but the inevitable sequel to the denigration, the ridicule and the destruction of moral values which, in the sixties, so effectively prepared the ground for anarchy'(10). That pop was the sound of the sixties, automatically brings it under suspicion. She attacked 1960s music as: 'some of the songs were highly political, some had pornographic undertones.'(11)

For Whitehouse the remedy to Britain's moral malaise centres

upon what she terms "responsibility". This would involve the media considering much more carefully the likely effect of their output upon audiences and thus upon society in general. She states that: 'Responsible social control on every level is the only answer'(12). When the beliefs of NVALA are considered, the implications of this "responsibility" become obvious. Certain subjects would become taboo within popular music, including gays, rebellion, premarital sex, drugs etc.

Whitehouse also shows the censor's typical reluctance to accept that term, saying that the "smear" of censorship was one that was first thrown at her in 1965(13), by 'those in the arts who refuse to listen to the... voices of **responsible** opinion'(14). Should they fail to listen the right to draw a line was reserved. So whilst she wrote that 'there is nothing to be achieved by coercion or censorship'(15), she then went on to attack the BBC for allowing Kenneth Tynan on a few weeks after he uttered British television's first "fuck"(16).

On empirical evidence NVALA rides two horses at once. On one hand it quotes and tallies various reports on the causal links between media portrayals and violence, crime, sex etc, but on the other Whitehouse says that: 'we have got to get away from this silly notion of having to prove everything'(17) and aims to 'break the domination of those sociologists who demand "proof" of the effect of broadcasting before conclusions can be drawn and acted upon'(18).

Instead of "proof" Whitehouse calls for "commonsense"(19).

She says that: 'Commonsense is the most rare commodity... If we could somehow get back to this business of commonsense instead of trying to computerise and interpret, we would make a good deal of progress'(20). For Whitehouse, commonsense is 'the sumtotal of human experience'(21), but that experience **still** needs interpretation and its diversity militates against the acceptance of any commonly held idea of "commonsense". It is apparent that the media has an impact, but exactly what is unlikely to emerge via notions of "commonsense", especially if it is used to mask the epithet "what I believe".

Whilst Fairley's comment that NVALA: 'relies considerably more on intuition than on objective evidence'(22) was true only of its early days, a strong strain of anti-intellectualism has always been apparent(23). Whitehouse has asked: 'Is it not time that commonsense was allowed to blow away the hot air generated by the power-house of the "intellectuals"?'(24). NVALA attacked the BBC's justification of a showing of the film "Scum" as being 'the usual intellectual claptrap'(25).

Another constant strain is patriotism(26). Whitehouse talks of having 'a deep faith... in Britain and what Britain could mean to the world.'(27) But Britain has erred in listening to humanists and liberals. She is also fierce in her anti-Communism and denunciation of the left in general. Unfortunately, like the fundamentalists I examine later(28), she does not always get her facts right. Writing of the introduction of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act she spoke of: 'The thinking of the Labour

government of the day'(29), when Britain actually had a Conservative government at that time.

She presents the left as pro-pornography, a simplistic assertion to say the least. She says: 'Communists understand the destructive nature of pornography and that is why they are so strongly opposed to its dissemination in Russia... for the same reason, Communist sympathizers in the West do everything they can to ensure its availability in their own countries'(30). A battle of minds is going on and 'pornography and obscenity are.. not simply a matter of personal taste but... accepted ideological weapons'(31).

What particularly shocked Whitehouse about the 1960s Underground was that much of its propaganda was deliberately aimed at children. The introduction noted the tendency of censors to extol childhood innocence as a motivation and Whitehouse says that her work 'springs directly from my experience as a teacher, working with the children whose own lives had been adversely affected by what they had seen on television'(32). She quotes the Biblical adage that those who offend against children had better cast themselves into the sea with a millstone around their necks(33). All the pressure groups I examine use children and the family as morality touchstones, but the problem is that they tend to posit transhistorical views of both, whereas the reality is of changing conceptions between time, place and class(34).

NVALA exhibits the censorial trait of xenophobia with Whitehouse's concern that children are 'pressurised into **alien** patterns of behaviour'(35). NVALA is committed to a view of

childhood as innocence and of the need to carefully control their environment. Whitehouse talks dismissively of those who propose that children have rights and has particular venom for educational experiments such as Summerhill(36). NVALA has a particularly static and ahistorical view of childhood, but it is one with immense appeal. It is also a good tactical ploy. Who could resist a campaign which centred upon bringing benefit to children? But what benefits does the NVALA seek to bring and how does it seek to bring them about?

Aims, Tactics and Influence

I noted before that many censors have bigger fish to fry(1) than their immediate stated objectives and this is true of NVALA. It ultimately seeks to put God at the centre of cultural life in Britain and Tracey and Morrison talk of Whitehouse wanting a theocratic state(2). The unlikelihood of this in the immediate future leads NVALA into a more piecemeal approach involving *cleaning up various media* as part of a greater moral objective(3).

One tactic has been, as Wallis notes, getting Whitehouse a high media-profile(4). NVALA also urges members to write and phone offending broadcasting networks and has made much use of petitions. It lobbies companies that have adverts shown during and near contentious programmes and asks them to express concern to the broadcasters, a tactic similar to that of consumer boycotts and pickets of American anti-rock organisations(5).

Wallis also notes that the NVALA has moved from 'the **enforcement** of existing legislation, which they now recognise to be inadequate, to the **creation** of a new more effective legislation'(6). This reflects Gusfield's view(7) that if a moralist pressure group is the dominant cultural force it will seek to co-opt, if it is not it will seek to coerce. Often in a non-hegemonic position, NVALA seeks to rectify this by calls for new laws. Whitehouse has repeatedly stressed the inadequacies of the Obscene Publications Act(8) and called for the law in this area to be tightened up. The Act she says is 'hopelessly ineffective' as: 'How can one **prove** that something is likely to deprave and corrupt?'(9). In 1991 NVALA supported Tory MP Gerald Howarth's failed move to extend the legal definition of obscenity(10). When Parliament reconvened in November 1991 Whitehouse again sought an MP willing to put their name to a private members bill tightening up the obscenity law(11).

But her greatest legacy may be the setting up of the BSC, a long held NVALA aim(12). Some commentators saw this as making Whitehouse redundant, as a statutory body would take her place as media watchdog. The BSC's first chairman, Lord Rees Mogg, praised Whitehouse for thinking of the idea(13), but NVALA was soon complaining at the "soft" line adopted by the BSC(14).

Whilst NVALA can vary its tactics, it can never shift from its beliefs. Furthermore, it sees such beliefs as being those of the entire nation, whether or not the nation itself perceives this. A strain of Jacobinism pervades NVALA. Whitehouse says she began

her campaign: 'Believing that we were expressing the thoughts and feelings of mainstream public opinion.'(15) Tracey and Morrison note that: 'Whitehouse always claims that the Association has the support of the population as a whole, or at least a large percentage of the population'(16). But NVALA simultaneously portrays itself as the majority and a 'beleaguered minority'(17).

NVALA also likes to parade its support from those in high places. In 1967 Whitehouse claimed the 'unqualified support' of over 100 MPs(18). In 1989 NVALA celebrated its silver jubilee and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher sent a message of support(19). Thatcher had already awarded Whitehouse a CBE in 1980. Much of this could simply be pragmatic politics, with the government wanting to show its caring credentials, but it also shows that NVALA is an important political constituency which the Tories would be foolish to ignore.

Consequently the Conservative government has at least paid lip-service to NVALA and occasionally given it active support. Tory Ministers are frequent speakers at NVALA AGMs and Conventions. In 1988 Timothy Renton spoke of plans, subsequently enacted, to remove the exemption of radio and television from the 1959 Obscene Publications Act(20). At the 1990 AGM Home Office Minister David Mellor that 'the test of obscenity in the Obscene Publications Act is outdated'(21). Home Secretary Kenneth Baker addressed the 1991 Convention. In 1991 NVALA got assurances of government support for a private members bill tightening up the law on pornography from Prime Minister John Major(22) and in 1993 Major and Douglas Hurd

both sought to associate themselves with Whitehouse(23).

Meanwhile the NVALA has gained access to the corridors of broadcasting power. By 1976 Wallis was able to write of Whitehouse being 'attended by the media'(24). Petley has written of Whitehouse now being an "accredited expert"(25) and "experts" is often what NVALA is presented as. Certainly it is hard to see who else, outside of academia, with the possible exception of the secular Voice of the Listener and Viewer, one could consult, in the UK, on the effects of the media. Within broadcasting Munro has described NVALA as: 'At the very least... one of the hurdles in the obstacle race of programme making'(26), Thames Television admitted NVALA is a source of pressure(27) and Haste reports that broadcasters **do** listen when Whitehouse speaks(28). These allegations would matter little if NVALA was not able to claim the successes I noted above.

What the future holds is harder to predict. Smith notes that: 'NVALA is a one woman organisation'(29). Whitehouse is its epicentre and lynchpin. She is, in 1993, in her eighties and the real problems for NVALA may come when she dies. Certainly it is hard to imagine an immediate replacement being so charismatic.

The future aside, thus far I have given insights into the history, philosophy, tactics and influence of NVALA. I have gone into some depth as NVALA is the archetype of British moralist pressure groups. It is now time to link this to the main theme of the thesis and to examine the occasions when Britain's most important censorial pressure group has intervened in pop.

Pop Goes NVALA

When I wrote to the NVALA to ask its views on popular music I was informed that: 'We have **not** done any substantive research on pop music'(1). Despite this admitted ignorance(2), NVALA has **commented** freely on pop and its effects and interfered with its dissemination. Presumably, lacking any empirical research, it feels able to rely on the "commonsense" I alluded to above. Street is wrong to say that they have 'paid little attention to pop'(3), because, as Whitehouse sees the media as indivisible, they have had to confront pop and have tried both to censor and to smear it.

Again the spectre of the 1960s haunts NVALA analysis. Whitehouse has written that: 'The whole "pop" scene, with its emphasis on the "counter-culture", has done **more than anything** to destroy the manners upon which Western society has been based.'(4) Causal claims are seldom more blatant, nor more unsubstantiated. Another letter from NVALA revealed that its main concerns with regard to pop focussed in two areas. First, 'pop has an influence on young people especially when considering the lyrics'(5). Thus there is a concentration on areas which, as we have seen, the audience often perceives as unimportant and may not even hear(6). But the significance of lyrics becomes apparent in the secondary area of concern. NVALA General Secretary, John Beyer, wrote that:

'In the 1960s the pop culture played a key role in overturning traditional values and this **certainly** helped to bring about an environment of "DIY" morality. Pop artists, by their

lifestyles and their advocacy, have also reinforced this way of life and, sadly, so many young lives have become tragedies as a consequence'(7).

Pop is thus seen as giving succour to the permissive 60s. Furthermore, it encouraged the decade's excesses and pop stars' advocacy of "alternative" lifestyles and morality had tragic consequences for the young. This is a causal argument(8), based on assertion rather than research. As pop is **causing** these tragic events, the obvious response would be to restrain pop, or to make its producers more "responsible". In other words to partly emasculate it, to deny it its excitement and to make certain subject areas taboo.

It is unsurprising that NVALA's first overtly censorial action on pop came when it combined with that other demon - television. This was with the showing of the Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour film in December 1967. The action proved successful, not in getting the film stopped, but in contributing to major upheavals at the BBC.

Whitehouse says that she read about the film and 'the words of a song which... contained the line "you been a naughty girl, you let your knickers down".'(9) She contacted the BBC Chairman Lord Hill and said she 'hoped he would agree that it was most unsuitable for children's viewing'(10). Hill talked to BBC Director General, Sir Hugh Greene, who stood by his decision to broadcast the film at the originally scheduled time, which is what happened.

Whitehouse's objections to a relatively harmless, if slightly

"naughty", line in Lennon's "I Am The Walrus", seem inane twenty five years later, but the fixed moral stance of NVALA means that it holds the same objections today. At the time it led to a row between Hill, who felt that his authority had been undermined, and Greene, who was to depart the BBC the following July, feeling his independence undermined. Whitehouse cites this case as the the final straw for Hill(11). Thus Whitehouse's first censorial action against pop proved successful not in silencing the pop, but in removing from office a BBC Director-General in whom NVALA had no trust. Their second move against pop was less successful.

Tony Palmer's documentary on the Underground scene, All My Loving, was first broadcast on BBC 1 in 1968. Whitehouse objected because in it: 'Jimi Hendrix made obscene gestures and simulated the sexual act by using his guitar as a woman'(12). She also noted that BBC audience research showed that some viewers 'were repelled by the antics of some of the artists (notably The Who and Jimmy [sic - note the inaccuracy] Hendrix)'(13).

After it was shown NVALA considered bringing a prosecution against the BBC and Palmer for "conspiracy to corrupt morals and outrage public decency"(14). A warning letter was subsequently sent to the BBC, but it still decided to repeat the programme on BBC2 on 18 May 1969. As she couldn't get a copy of the film Whitehouse arranged for 'four to six responsible citizens to view it'(15) on its broadcast to decide whether it was obscene. On May 21 Whitehouse, John Barrett, Chief Constable of Lincolnshire and NVALA President, and A.W. Godwin Hudson, Bishop of Hereford, went to see

the DPP to investigate the possibility of an obscenity prosecution. The journey proved fruitless as they were advised that the Obscene Publications Acts did not then apply to television(16).

Whitehouse's view of pop at this time was outlined in a MM interview where she raised the bogey of older people exploiting the young. She saw pop being used by the young to question moral standards, which was healthy enough, but: 'alongside this you have got many people - not teenagers - who are much older, who are using the questioning attitude of youth to destroy completely the standards on which society has been built.'(17)

One such destroyer was Alice Cooper. In September 1972 his "School's Out" single reached Number One in the BBC charts. Whitehouse's concern was that it was aimed at children and encouraged rebellion against authority at school(18). She wrote to TOTP producer Johnnie Stewart asking that the film of the song be removed. Whitehouse objected to: 'the whole mood of the film. It was quite anarchic'(19) and told Stewart: 'You will see that the lyrics contain the following chorus - "Got no principles, got no innocence; School's out for summer, school's out forever; school's been blown to pieces, Oh! No more books, no more teachers". In our view the record is subversive. I hope you will agree and take appropriate action. It could also be incitement to violence'(20). Note again the concentration on lyrics and the misquoting of them. She also complained to the Controller of Radios 1 and 2 and the DPP about the BBC playing the record, which she wanted prosecuted for inciting subversion(21). In a causal argument, she also linked the

record to an assault on a headmaster by schoolchildren(22). The net result of all this was again a partial victory. The BBC stopped showing the original film on Top of The Pops. Whitehouse claimed this was because of her intervention, the BBC denied it(23).

1972 also saw Whitehouse's most infamous intervention in pop - her attacks on Chuck Berry's "My Ding A Ling", a song full of sexual innuendo centring on masturbation. Whitehouse claimed that it was not the content of Berry's song that upset her, so much as his treatment of it in a concert film that was shown on TOTP. She said: 'It's the **accentuation** of the double meaning by the BBC that I object to'(24), which recalls the comments on explicitness in the radio chapter.

She protested about: 'the way in which Chuck Berry told the cameramen to pick out some obviously embarrassed young girls who were not joining in all the so-called fun and games. But at no time did we object to the song **itself**'(25). If this is so, it is tempting to ask why she makes a moral condemnation of "so called fun and games". The case also showed Whitehouse's fixed morality. Thirteen years later she said that: 'I'm quite sure a complaint had to be made about the way Chuck Berry behaved'(26). Again a partial victory was achieved as when TOTP showed the film some of the offending scenes were cut(27).

NVALA have also focussed attention on rock's most accomplished enfant terribles, the Rolling Stones - but again mixed factual inaccuracy with a lack of comprehension of the genre. When the band released Exile on Main Street in 1972 Whitehouse wrote to

Lord Hill, saying that: 'I understand that the new Rolling Stones record, Exit on Main Street (sic), is being played on Radio One. This record uses four-letter words. Although they are somewhat blurred, there's no question about what they are meant to be... The very fact that this programme is transmitted primarily for young people would, one would have thought, demanded more and not less care about what is transmitted. I would be grateful if you would look, into this matter'(28).

Whitehouse had little need to add "and ban it" - the implication is clear enough. The factual inaccuracies also need comment. The album title is mis-quoted, which hardly indicates thorough research. The album also lacks the swear words Whitehouse claims. There are a few "shits" in "Sweet Virginia" which are clear enough, but the alleged "somewhat blurred" words are less easy to spot. The BBC couldn't find them at all. Hill replied that he had listened, at various speeds, to the tracks that One had played and could find none of the alleged words. One continued to play tracks from the album(29).

Whitehouse was on firmer ground when she complained that the lyrics to the Stones' 1973 track "Starfucker", which **does** contain a lot of swearing, were being distributed to children(30). She was also concerned at the lifestyle of the band and saw fit to comment on Mick Jagger's refusal to marry his pregnant girlfriend, Marianne Faithfull(31).

In 1976 Whitehouse claimed that NVALA only looked into pop after complaints sent to it(32), but she objected to the lyrics of

Rod Stewart's "Tonight's The Night" saying that as it was played by the IBA and BBC 'one can only assume that the lyrics of songs like that are considered quite acceptable by someone.'(33).

Whitehouse remained comparatively quiet during punk, commenting merely that 'I am not shocked by punk, I am ashamed by it.'(34). She quotes the Grundy interview as an instance of declining standards on television(35) and complained about the BBC playing "Anarchy in The UK"(36) and about it buying a copy of Alberto Y Los Trios Paranoias' punk spoof "Fuck You" single(37). As usual NVALA couldn't see the joke.

Whitehouse wrote of a 1982 record on which: 'The words are foul, the action they so crudely and violently describe involves bestiality, sex with schoolgirls and obscene practices involving human excrement'(38) and detailed how she asked for the DPP to prosecute the record. She fails to mention its title of the record, but, as noted above, I got NVALA confirmation that it was the Anti Nowhere League's "So What"(39), which I discussed earlier(40). Whitehouse wrongly referred to the group as "anarchist"(41). Here suspicion meets confirmation. Whenever a record is under scrutiny in Britain NVALA is often suspected of providing a censorial impetus and here such suspicion is confirmed. NVALA instigated the first successful prosecution of a pop record in Britain. The Anti Nowhere League suffered for making a record for a specialist audience which the vast majority of people never heard. The mere existence of the record was enough for NVALA to act.

NVALA also tried to intervene in the Beastie Boys' 1987 tour,

supporting Run DMC, when it called for armed police to be present at the gigs in order to quell any potential riots(42). Here it was unsuccessful, but NVALA interest in pop continues, although it denied involvement in the NWA prosecution of 1991(43), despite NCROPA claims that it was(44).

Overall NVALA's view of pop recalls much of the American Christian fundamentalist literature on the subject(45). Pop is treated with constant suspicion, calls and hints for censorship and occasional censorial actions, ultimately of a legal sort. Whitehouse has written that: 'We need... to realize the significance of the "heavy metal" image with its studded belts, wrist-bands, rings, knuckle dusters, barb-wire necklaces, and the T-shirts with violent images and messages'(46). For her dismissing this as "fun" is to be dangerously naive. It may be similarly naive to dismiss NVALA's influence. It has achieved censorial victories in the past and it will doubtlessly continue to do so in all fields - including pop.

It has also continued to use American sources for such research as it is interested in. Its Viewer and Listener newsletter of Spring 1988 contains warnings of the 'pornographic' nature of much of rock (Prince, Madonna, Judas Priest and Motley Crue are specifically mentioned) from a report by Dr James Dobson, a member of the US Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. Dobson equates rock with pornography and believes that pornography causes rape. Such being the case, the implication of what to do about rock is obvious.

NVALA shares the American Christian fundamentalists' inability to separate text from context. Their critique of pop remains humourless and the parody that pop indulges in passes them by, as in the "Fuck You" case. It also remains factually ill-informed, so Whitehouse talks of a band whose slogan was 'music, dope and obscenity in the streets'(47). In fact the last word should be "fucking" - a word Whitehouse quotes elsewhere and the slogan was that of the MC5. She also adopts another habit of the fundamentalists by quoting stars, but failing to acknowledge sources, thus rendering it impossible to get a sense of text and context, or even if the alleged quote actually exists(48). Such sloppy research, where research actually exists, typifies NVALA sallies in to the pop world. NVALA **believes** that pop is pernicious, but rather than put forward an intellectually-credible argument it relies upon a cocktail of assertion, "commonsense" and ill-informed secondary sources.

Conclusion

I have gone into some detail about NVALA here in order to explain its origins, objectives, tactics and influence. This has been necessary both to give some idea of the censorial elements operating within Britain in the period in question and to put the attempts to censor pop into context. NVALA's main focus is television, but this is only one of what it sees as a range of pernicious influences upon the nation. Whilst it has done some

research on television, it has done very little on pop, yet that has not deterred it from becoming involved in pronouncements and campaigns against it.

Such information as NVALA **has** got has come from intellectually-discredited sources, but it has often attracted influential support. Its similarity in outlook to American fundamentalists and the PMRC(1) means that their fortunes **may** become linked. Whilst the American right has suffered as the Democrats have seized the presidency, a backlash cannot be discounted and should the PMRC wish to extend its activities beyond America, in these times of media globalisation, it might find a willing ally in NVALA. Tentative links have already been made(2). Whitehouse found herself back in vogue in 1993(3) and Savage has warned of its influence being disproportionate to its size(4). It is to NVALA's credit that it has reminded broadcasters that broadcasting does not belong to them, but too often it has backed it has backed its calls for "responsibility" with overt censorial campaigns. Should links with the PMRC be strengthened pop in Britain may find that its greatest censorial battles are yet to come, especially if the groups I consider next get their way.

Notes: Introduction

(1) See N.Williams, 1984, p34.

(2) See p150 above for more on Whitehouse and the ANL case.

NVALA History

(1) For MRA as an appeaser of Hitler see Campbell, 1987, p98. For

- MRA in 1993 see Guardian 19/3/93.
- (2) Belden, 1979, p3.
 - (3) Whitehouse, 1982, p7.
 - (4) Whitehouse, 1967, p79 talks of ITV having a better attitude than the BBC. Whitehouse centres on the BBC as it is publicly funded, see A.Smith, 1972.
 - (5) Whitehouse: 1971 p 47. See also ibid p46.
 - (6) See ibid p42.
 - (7) Whitehouse, 1985, p21. See Whitehouse, 1977, p21 for her nostalgic outlook.
 - (8) For example, see Whitehouse, 1967, p10 and Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p151.
 - (9) For Whitehouse's concern with children see, for example, Newburn, 1992, pp27, 28, 47 and 127 and Durham, 1991, p95.
 - (10) See Whitehouse, 1967, pp 105 and 109.
 - (11) See Whitehouse, 1967, p29.
 - (12) Whitehouse, 1985, p23.
 - (13) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p42. See also p55 above.
 - (14) Whitehouse, 1967, p180.
 - (15) See Whitehouse, 1977, p216.
 - (16) ibid p 38.
 - (17) Street, 1986, p55.
 - (18) Mackenzie, 1987, p36.
 - (19) For more on Noebel see Denisoff and Peterson, 1972, p122 and 127, M.Sullivan, 1987 and Street, 1986, p55.
 - (20) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p321.

- (21) Whitehouse, 1982, p 15
- (22) A.Smith, 1972, p628. See Whitehouse, 1982, p238 for her objecting to public funding for "The Romans in Britain". See Whitehouse, 1982, pp71-87 for making the BBC more accountable.
- (23) Whitehouse, 1971, p118. Medved, 1992, p17, also sees the media as indivisible and thus incorporates attacks on rock in his attacks on "Hollywood".
- (24) Wells, 1985. Newburn, 1992, p23 confirms that the BBC did "ban" Whitehouse for a number of years.
- (25) Whitehouse, 1971, p58.

A Question of Faith

- (1) Whitehouse, 1985, p158.
- (2) Whitehouse, 1971, p181.
- (3) Dimbleby, 1969.
- (4) Caulfield, 1975, p161.
- (5) Wallis, 1976.
- (6) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p57. Emphasis mine.
- (7) See Whitehouse, 1977, pp66-70 and Durham, 1991, pp110-118.
- (8) Whitehouse, 1967, p167.
- (9) Dimbleby, 1969.
- (10) Whitehouse, 1971, p150. For more on responsibility see Whitehouse, 1977 p103 and 1967 p149. Chapter 15 of her first book is entitled "Responsible Television".
- (11) Whitehouse, 1971, p43.
- (12) Whitehouse, 1971, p138
- (13) Whitehouse, 1971, p64. See also her 1967 pp 68, 86/87, 141 and

148 for her defence against accusations of censorship. See her, 1974, for the use of censorship by her opponents.

(14) Whitehouse, 1971, p67. Emphasis mine.

(15) Whitehouse, 1967, pp86/87.

(16) See ibid p87.

(17) Merck, 1988, p192.

(18) Whitehouse: 1971 p181.

(19) "Commonsense" is a problematic concept. Barker 1984a, p75, notes how campaigners in the comics scare of the 1950s increasingly came to rely on the concept. Wistrich, 1978, p61 noted that 500 years ago "commonsense" led to the burning of witches. Charles Keating of Citizens for Decent Literature invoked the concept in pornography hearings in 1970 - see ibid p46. Overall it is embroiled in struggle with Garofolo, 1987 p89 and Hebdige, 1987, p136 warning of its dangers. See also Glenndinning, 1993.

(20) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p77.

(21) ibid p 84.

(22) Fairley, 1969, p847.

(23) For more on the anti-intellectualism of NVALA see Morrison and Tracey, 1980, p10, Munro, 1979, p133 and Cliff, 1979, p138.

(24) Fairley, 1969, p846.

(25) NVALA: Viewer and Listener Autumn 1991.

(26) For her patriotism see Whitehouse, 1985, p96 and Daily Mail 14/7/81.

(27) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p54.

(28) See pp529-531 below.

- (29) Whitehouse, 1977, p162.
- (30) Whitehouse, 1985, p44. See Durham, 1991, pp171 and 172 for Whitehouse's anti-Communism.
- (31) Whitehouse, 1982, p230.
- (32) Clare, 1989, p11.
- (33) Whitehouse, 1971, p 150.
- (34) For changing conceptions of childhood see Aries, 1973, Humphries, Mack and Perks, 1988 and Pinchbeck and Hewitt, 1969. See Cliff, 1979, p132 and Newburn, 1992, p78 for the importance of the family to all the pressure groups I examine. See also pp54-56 above.
- (35) Whitehouse: 1985 p 48. See Newburn, 1992, p123 for Whitehouse's xenophobia.
- (37) See Whitehouse, 1982, pp46-7.

Aims, Tactics and Influence

- (1) See p59 above, Gusfield, 1986, p124 and Morrison and Tracey, 1978, pp 51 and 53.
- (2) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p184.
- (3) See Morrison and Tracey, 1978, p38.
- (4) Wallis, 1976, p281.
- (5) Medved, 1992, pp328-331 also advocates targeting advertisers.
- (6) Wallis, 1976, p291. Emphasis in original.
- (7) See Gusfield, 1986. See also Wallis, 1976, p271. Morrison and Tracey, 1978, p48 characterise NVALA as ambivalent over whether the need is to reform or repress.
- (8) Whitehouse has said she believes the 1959 Act's notion of

"deprave and corrupt" is unprovable and called for a new act, see for example Viewer and Listener Autumn 1992. In early 1993 she confidently predicted a change in the law by the end of the year. See Guardian 2/1/93. Major's remarks at the 1993 Tory Conference may foretell this. See Guardian 9/10/93.

(9) Whitehouse, 1985, p61. Emphasis in original.

(10) Viewer and Listener Summer 1991.

(11) See Financial Times 8/11/91.

(12) For example see Whitehouse, 1967, p196 and Viewer and Listener Spring 1988.

(13) Viewer and Listener Summer 1992.

(14) For example see Viewer and Listener Autumn 1992 and Spring 1993. Members of NVALA also received a letter dated 1/1/93 complaining that the BSC were not upholding enough complaints.

(15) Whitehouse, 1974.

(16) Tracey and Morrison, 1979, p114. See also Wallis, 1976, p280. As further evidence of their popularity NVALA quoted that 99.2% of people asked has signed their 1992 anti-pornography petition, Viewer and Listener Autumn 1992.

(17) Wallis, 1976, p280.

(18) Whitehouse, 1967, p4.

(19) See Viewer and Listener Summer 1989.

(20) NVALA: Viewer and Listener Summer 1988.

(21) ibid p3

(22) NVALA: Viewer and Listener Autumn 1991 p3.

(23) See Peters, 1993.

- (24) Wallis, 1976, p291.
- (25) Petley, 1991, p31.
- (26) Munro, 1979, p134.
- (27) ibid p115.
- (28) Haste, 1992, p94.
- (29) A.Smith, 1972, p628.

Pop Goes NVALA

- (1) Beyer, 1991.
- (2) Barker, 1984a, p5 notes that 'with popular culture or mass culture... critics can get away with character assassination and hardly anyone will mind.'
- (3) Street, 1986, p17.
- (4) Whitehouse, 1977, p38.
- (5) Beyer, 1992.
- (6) See pp63/64 above.
- (7) Beyer, 1992. Emphasis mine
- (8) For more causal assertions by Whitehouse see Munro, 1979, p133, Viewer and Listener Summer and Autumn 1992 and Whitehouse, 1967, pp217 - 221.
- (9) Whitehouse, 1982, p64.
- (10) Whitehouse, 1971, p101.
- (11) See Whitehouse, 1982, p65.
- (12) Whitehouse, 1971, p119.
- (13) ibid
- (14) ibid p 120.
- (15) MM 24/5/69.

- (16) The 1990 Broadcasting Act brought radio and television under the remit of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act.
- (17) MM 31/8/68.
- (18) For more objections to rebellion see pp512/513 below.
- (19) MM 2/9/72.
- (20) Tracey and Morrison: 1979 p 89.
- (21) ibid and MM 2/9/72.
- (22) MM 2/9/72.
- (23) ibid
- (24) MM 9/12/72.
- (25) Whitehouse, 1982, p88.
- (26) Wells, 1985.
- (27) ibid and Whitehouse, 1982, p89.
- (28) Caulfield, 1975, p107.
- (29) ibid
- (30) Whitehouse, 1977 p24.
- (31) See Whitehouse, 1971, p174.
- (32) See MM 28/2/78.
- (33) Whitehouse, 1977, p39.
- (34) Whitehouse quoted in review of the "Dead or Alive" punk compilation video NME 17/10/92.
- (35) See Whitehouse, 1977, p11.
- (36) See Whitehouse, 1977, p39.
- (37) ibid pp39/40.
- (38) Whitehouse, 1982, p132.
- (39) Beyer, 1992. Beyer also commented that he had never heard of

the band again, but by 1992 they were gigging again.

(40) See pp149-152 above.

(41) Whitehouse, 1982, p132.

(42) NME 25/8/87.

(43) Beyer, 1992.

(44) See O'Hagan, 1991.

(45) See pp491-547 below for American fundamentalist Christian views of rock.

(46) Whitehouse, 1985, p99.

(47) ibid p 38.

(48) For example see Mick Jagger quote, Whitehouse, 1977, p38.

Conclusion

(1) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p322 for links between the religious right and the PMRC.

(2) See pp483/484 below for the speech by Michael Keating at the International Congress For The Family.

(3) See Peters, 1993.

(4) Savage, 1993, p53.

(5) See Whitehouse, 1974.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE

The NVALA is only part of a network of moralist pressure groups which interest themselves in youth, child and family issues. Part of this interest involves keeping a watchful eye on various media, including pop. Here I will look briefly at some of these organisations, whose interest in young people has occasionally led them to call for the censorship of popular music.

A number points need making initially. First there is the perennial question of how much power and influence these groups actually have. Whilst MPs feature prominently on many of their supporter lists, it is hard to ascertain their actual impact(1). Nevertheless there are a large number of pressure groups determined to roll back all the "permissive" reforms of the 1960s(2) in such areas as censorship, homosexuality and divorce. Again here pop is seen as the soundtrack to a decade of permissiveness gone mad(3).

Here too calls for censorship are often part of a much bigger agenda, as behind most of these groups is the desire to "return", as they see it, Britain to a country whose moral foundations are Christian and whose culture - including, and perhaps especially, its mass culture (in which pop is perhaps third only to television and film in its allegedly pernicious influence) - to a Christian foundation.

This again involves objections to the pop lifestyle - supposedly that of sex and drugs - rather than to the music

itself(4). But the relationship between an artist advocating a certain lifestyle and fans taking up is, to say the least, a problematic one. Most of the pressure groups here are vehemently anti-homosexual(5) and certainly worried about the supposed influence of satanism. The fact that many pop stars are openly gay and that heavy metal has often involved satanic posturing has led to much criticism and calls for more "responsibility" - via the exclusion of certain subjects from rock. Again the pernicious influence of pop is to be seen as damaging children(6), who are the focal points for many of these groups(7). But what are their aims?

CARE (Christian Action and Research Education)

CARE is a Christian research and education organisation which has its roots in the Festival of Light (FOL) group, which itself formed in 1971(1). FOL started after rally in Trafalgar Square. Prince Charles endorsed it(2) and Cornwall's Chief Constable led one of its marches(3). After initial publicity had died down FOL disappeared from the limelight in the mid 1970s and became CARE in 1983(4).

CARE believes that: 'the real issue is not whether parliament should act as a moral censor, but to what extent it should do so and by which criteria.' On the lack of causal evidence between pornography (and the mass media) and crime CARE adopt a familiar tactic in comparing it to advertising and ask 'why do commercial companies spend millions upon advertisements... There is a

connection despite the fact that we cannot "prove" it.'(5)

Whilst seldom active in the censoring of pop per se, CARE monitors other mass media which pop uses. This concern began with FOL, which called for the reform of censorship laws to protect children and to establish standards of decency(6). CARE's leaflets offer advice on such diverse topics as: "Monitoring your local video supplier" and "TV Watchdog"(7). It was active in the video nasties panic of the early 1980s with leading member Raymond Johnston calling a report which fixed the evidence against the "nasties" 'exactly what we wanted'(8).

CARE publishes the addresses of broadcasting organisations so that members can complain if they see or hear anything offensive, which justifies the suspicion that when complaints are made to broadcasters or the BSC, complainers may well come from CARE or its fellow-travellers.

The Community Standards Association

The CSA is a nationwide organisation which campaigns for the retention of the Christian ethic at the heart of the nation's morality. It was begun by Anne Whittaker in Cornwall in the 1970s, but it sought to express concerns which had been worrying its members since the "permissive" 1960s and before(1)

The CSA aims to promote: 'those attitudes of mind and standards which are part of our Christian Cultural Heritage (sic) and to fight by all lawful means against **everything** which would

corrupt these attitudes of mind and lower these standards of conduct in our national life and in our local community.'(2) Pop has been seen as such a corrupting force.

Among the myriad of concerns the CSA lists is, under the sub-clause "Addictions": 'Pop Sub-culture' and under the heading of "Media", it includes concern over: 'Standards on Radio and Television... Swearing, Blasphemy, Vulgarity and Obscenity'(3). It offers no definition of these terms, but evidence suggests that, should the CSA ever manage to impose its 'standards of conduct' they would exclude the broadcasting of a large amount of pop.

Merseyside CSA achieved some local notoriety in October 1991 when Liverpool's Radio City commercial radio station reported that it had called for a ban on Oceanic's "Insanity" single because of its references to ecstasy. In a personal interview, Merseyside CSA Secretary, Ruth Slater, denied calling for a ban, although she admitted that she might have agreed to the idea in the heat of the moment. Although she hadn't even heard the record in question her general view was that if records "plug" drugs they should be banned(4). She mixed aesthetic critique with moral outrage, seeing much of pop as being 'unbearable' and said that 'I like music but not **that**'(5). The idea of pop being foisted upon hapless youth was also raised. For Slater DJs were the perpetrators of evil, which recalls the comments of Menhal Merchant(6). She wanted 'responsible' (again!) stations and DJs not to play records which promoted drugs, thus avoiding the censorship which might otherwise be necessary(7).

Slater invoked the "beatist" critique of rock(8) and told me that the drums she heard in pop were 'not all that different' from the pagan drums she heard whilst in Nigeria. These drums, she implied, must have an effect on the listener and almost certainly a detrimental one.

The CSA has close links to other moralist pressure groups. For example, Steve Stevens of CARE and a founder of FOL spoke at Liverpool meeting on pornography in October 1991 which was organised with the help of CSA supporters. Valerie Riches of the nominally secular Family and Youth Concern also attended an early CSA meeting at Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel. Its friends in high places are MPs Malcolm Thornton and Sir Ian Percival, whom it lists amongst its patrons. But the CSA pontificates about a medium it knows little about. Lack of understanding gives rise to suspicion and calls for censorship.

The Conservative Family Group

Formed in October 1985 this group is vehemently anti-homosexual(1), as evidenced by its claim 'almost the only group which campaigned vigorously'(2) for the homophobic Clause 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988. It also attacked Health Minister Virginia Bottomley for her: 'Praise (of) Mr Freddie Mercury as "heroic"'(3). Prior to the 1992 general election it claimed the support of 27 Conservative MPs. It has done little in the arena of

pop, but its anti-gay stance has obvious implication for freedom of expression there.

Family and Youth Concern (FYC)

This group was previously known as The Responsible (note this word yet again) Society, which began in 1971(1), following a 1969 letter to The Times by Dr Stanley Ellison calling for the formation of a group 'to resist the destructive and demoralising trends in our present community'(2). It claims no MPS amongst of list of sponsors, but has support from people like Times columnist Ronald Butt, who was given a CBE by the Thatcher administration. It claims to be interested in 'obscenity' in all areas and seeks to educate, research and publish relevant information(3). Some idea of its concerns and outlook can be gleaned from its publications list which includes: "The Truth About AIDS", Feminism vs Mankind, writings against the Family Planning Association and the works of G.K.Chesterton(6).

FYC claims to be secular, but has often worked with religious activists. The CSA's Anne Whittaker addressed its 1979 AGM(7) and the two have worked closely(8), it has worked with the Salvation Army(9) and with Catholic anti-abortion campaigner Victoria Gillick(10).

It is also against aspects of pop. One of its sponsors, Lord Shawcross, on the EMI board(11) when they sacked the Sex Pistols(12). The Responsible Society called for a government

enquiry into The Sex Pistols' "Carri On" album in 1979 on the grounds that it was "sick"(13). Its Bulletin of Autumn 1980 reported the work of music therapist Frank Knight who made the causal claim that the 'aural drug' of pop could 'encourage and cause individually wrong and socially harmful conduct'(14). Many pop songs, he claimed, were symptomatic of a 'morally sick society' and had 'a shocking materialism regarding love'(15). His aesthetic critique was to label pop "mewsick"(16). Bulletin commented that Knight's argument was 'convincing'(17), but neglected to look at its censorial implications. But FYC was more actively censorial elsewhere, as it was one of the organisations active in the successful 1970s campaign to get the Action comic banned(18).

In 1986 leading member Joanna Bogle, as part of her research into youth magazines, warned that: 'A curious feature of the current pop scene is its obsession with black magic and the occult.'(19) She attacked NME for carrying contact adverts from gays and talked of 'the reality of what is done to a girl's developing personality when a pop star screams obscenities at her from the stage and when occasional lurid details of encounters feature in the interviews with him which she reads in her pop paper. This helps to remove a girl's natural protection'(20). She also attacked NME's coverage of the censorship debate in America and, somewhat bizarrely, commented that in the newspaper's pictures 'scowling seems to be popular'(21).

Bogle's criticisms mirror those of many moralists. She is ill-informed and takes texts at face value, whereas much pop is

tongue-in-cheek. Aside from the obvious homophobia there are other assertions which are, to say the least, a little contentious. She laments that: 'There is much about today's pop scene that is worrying'(22), but obviously has little knowledge of her subject. She implicitly suggests that continual exposure to pop leads to ever more dangers, but it may well be, as Barker argues, that continual exposure leads to a recognition of the formula(23).

Bogle even commented upon NME using the headline "Hellzapoppin", when the title actually comes from a 1940s Hollywood comedy(24). Her concern for the welfare of children is admirable, but ill-informed, under-researched material is less so, especially from a group which claims to publish material: 'Based on the most up-to-date scientific information.'(25) There is little "scientific" about being 'nauseated to find columns of advertisements from homosexual and lesbian partners' in NME(26), rather there is naked homophobia. She adds aesthetic critique, when she talks of videos where 'the music pounds home the message'(27). Presumably music which "pounds" is up to no good. Overall she suggests that 'publishers of teenage magazines... question their own attitudes'(28) and thus censor pop by limiting its coverage.

In 1992 Radio Four reported that FYC had called for a ban on The Shamen's "Ebenezer Goode"(29), but FYC Director Valerie Riches denied this in a letter to me. She went on to say that: 'I did have a few words to say on a Radio 4 programme recently about the pop and rock cult.'(30) The word "cult" is frequently used by moralists in relation to pop and one does not have to be a semiotician to

speculate its significance. It is an attempt to portray pop as in being sinister, suspicious, even demonic. Media coverage of pop how often uses this term to denounce pop. The Sun called punk 'the craziest pop cult of them all'(31), whilst the Sunday Mirror reported on 'the amazing new cult'(32). The Daily Mirror referred to the 'cult' around the Beastie Boys(33), a term also used in Mullen's attack on the NME(34). The Daily Mail described the Red Wedge alliance of some musicians with the Labour Party as: 'The Cult campaign trail'(35). Bright used the term in the parliamentary debate on raves(36), perhaps picking it up from The Sun, which has referred to the 'acid house cult'(37) and headlined calls to 'ban acid cult'(38). So "cult" joins "responsibility" and "commonsense" as a key censorial term.

It is also the sort of term rarely used about pop outside of American fundamentalist literature. As links are made between American rock censors and organisations like The International Congress for the Family (see below), of which Riches is also a leading member, it would not be unreasonable to assume that she is au fait with that literature. Riches told me that she thought 'the pop cult.... is an area which needs to be investigated'(39), but she cannot be unaware that some in America have already done this and reached conclusions not far from FYC's own, under-researched, ones. In 1993 FYC protested about two women kissing on the cover of the first Suede album(40) and about the computer game Night Trap(41). It seems set to maintain interest in all popular media.

Overall FYC shares many characteristics of the other moralist

pressure groups examined here. They see the 1960s as the equivalent to armageddon and talk of the 'dark days of the Abortion Act, 1967'(42), lambast 'workshy parents' and 'the myth of heterosexual AIDS' and have a pamphlet exposing the 'The Facts Behind The Terrance Higgins Trust.'(43) Others might care to examine the "facts" behind a homophobic, narrow-minded, organisation which attacks rock music and calls for the censoring of it via the back door of "responsibility".

The International Congress of The Family

This is the British arm of the World Organisation for The Family and the International alliance For The Family, both of whom specialise in anti-abortion campaigns in Latin America(1). FYC reports its meetings(2) and NVALA advertises them(3), although FYC's latent anti-intellectualism was shown by Riches' complaint that at one Congress conference 'so many speakers pitched their talks at a high philosophical level'(4). The Congress claims to be 'working to counter the current threats to family life and human life by promoting progressive solutions to human problems.'(5) One of those problems is pop.

The Congress is another organisation with friends in high places. In 1992 it listed 15 MPs, from all three major parties, on its Council of Reference and its 1990 Brighton conference was addressed by the Princess of Wales and Mother Teresea. Once again Bogle, organiser of the Campaign For Feminine Women(6), and Riches

feature amongst its most enthusiastic activists. The hall for its 1990 Conference was paid for by the Order of Christian Unity(7) and details of its views were passed on to MP Angela Rumbold and hence to Prof Brian Griffith, who was part of the policy unit within Downing Street(8). So the Congress had direct access to the corridors of power.

The 1990 Conference saw concern expressed over the impact of pop when American Michael Keating, director of the University Christian Outreach movement, gave a speech and ran a workshop on rock. The relevance of this is that Riches told me that: 'My views on the subject were well expressed by Michael Keating.'(9) So what are Keating's views?

Keating said that: 'I think we are witnessing an attempt to steal an entire generation... from their parents and from their God and to rob them from their own happiness.'(10) Keating saw the method of such stealing as youth culture, in particular rock, which is, 'founded upon animal sexuality, rebellion against every form of authority, drug and alcohol addiction, and profound hostility to God.'(11)

He went on to say that it was 'the enemy of the human race' - Satan - who was behind the stealing of this generation which, because of demographic changes, held the future of the entire human race in its hands(12). His speech included a rehash of the familiar bogey of a hapless audience being manipulated by unscrupulous profiteers. He said that: 'It is important to see that youth culture is not devised by the young... The youth are caught in a

snare they did not make.'(13) So the idea of a passive audience is trotted out as fact when the reality is of a complex interaction between fans and producers. The teenage market is as noticeable for what it rejects as for what it accepts, but Keating suggests that it will accept anything, lacking the experience to do otherwise.

So, if youth culture is the problem, what solutions does Keating suggest? Firstly he calls for a strong family to counter its influence, secondly he wants children's access to various media controlled: 'We need to help our children to steer clear of the great harm that can come to them through false education, or bad friends, or **perverse movies and music.**'(14)

The acceptance of such anti-rock sentiments by a group well within the political mainstream in Britain is a cause for concern. Keating does not call for censorship, he is much too wary to make that mistake. But he does call attention to the supposed harmful effects of rock and suggests that parents do their own censoring. He also raises the idea of children being obsessed by pop, saying that: 'It is hard to exaggerate the importance of music in the youth world... music defines the boundaries of youth culture. It creates a world in which young people live and provides them with their most exciting and compelling models for life.'(15)

If this were true then cause for concern about rock might be justified. However, evidence suggests it is false. Most children are influenced by their parents far more than by pop(16). As noted earlier, only a small minority become obsessive about pop music - most can take it or leave it and use it only as a background noise

to other activities(17). Keating is indulging in scare-mongering in order to precipitate censorship. Such scare-mongering should be resisted.

Conclusion

There are numerous other organisations which I could have mentioned who are suspicious of pop. For example, the Childwatch group has called for rock to be treated as seriously as pornography(1). But I hope here to have at least given a taste of the arguments of popular culture's organised opponents. Earlier I noted the problem of determining how much influence these groups actually have. There is a certain amount of intangibility about this, but their censorial influence has been noted elsewhere(2). A formidable lobbying network has pop within its sights. Members of these groups are encouraged to write to broadcasting networks to complain about programmes and there can be little doubt that the "Member of the public" who complains will often have links with them. The existence of a network means that even organisations listed here who don't focus on pop will contact those that do if they spot anything "offensive", especially as there is a great deal of cross-membership.

Certainly those within the broadcasting and record industries know who will be on the case if their output becomes "offensive". What is not so widely recognised is that the NVALA is only part of a much wider network which seeks to control cultural output in

Britain and claims successes like the cancelling of the plan to show "The Last Temptation of Christ" on Channel 4 in 1990(3). The fact that these groups have done little or no research into the effects of pop does not stop them from pontificating about its impact, issuing proclamations against it and launching attempts to stifle it. If pop is to address the issues that concern its audience then all attempts by these groups to increase their influence should be resisted. One way to counter attempts to censor pop is to expose the fallacies of the arguments used by these censors and to expose their motivations. Britain does not have a PMRC, but it does have the NVALA, Family and Youth Concern and the rest. In this case complacency is not permissible(4).

Notes: Introduction

(1) For an appraisal of the influence of moralist pressure groups see Durham, 1991.

(2) For reference to the 1960s as a problematic decade see Durham, 1991, pp6, 131, 132, 133 and 137, B.Campbell, 1983, p185, Weeks, 1985, p18 and Whitehouse, 1971, p150.

(3) For example Newburn, 1992, p150 for Whitehouse on pop.

(4) Some American Christian fundamentalists argue that lifestyle and music are intrinsically intertwined. See pp508-514 below.

(5) See Durham, 1991, pp110-118.

(6) See Durham, 1991, p95.

(7) Newburn, 1992, p185.

CARE

- (1) Munro, 1979, p134.
- (2) See Sutherland, 1982, p100.
- (3) Hall et al, 1978, p286.
- (4) See Newburn, 1992, p42.
- (5) Mellor, 1988, p13. But see Independent on Sunday 27/2/93 on the scepticism of people in the 1990s towards adverts.
- (6) See Davies, 1975, p48.
- (7) CARE leaflet. ND.
- (8) See Brown, 1984.

Community Standards Association

- (1) Slater, 1991, told me that her own concern began with the Teds in the 1950s.
- (2) CSA leaflet, ND.
- (3) ibid
- (4) Slater, 1991.
- (5) ibid Emphasis Slater.
- (6) See p498 above.
- (7) Slater, 1991.
- (8) See pp502-508 for the "beatist" critique of rock.
- (9) ibid

Conservative Family Group

- (1) See, for example, Guardian 28/8/91 and NME 9/1/93.
- (2) CFG: "The Family Needs Friends" leaflet.
- (3) CFG: Family Matters March 1992.

Family and Youth Concern

- (1) See Munro, 1979, p134.
- (2) Family Bulletin No 49, Winter 1987.
- (3) FYC: "About Family and Youth Concern" leaflet. ND.
- (4) Family and Youth Concern: Publications list. ND.
- (5) Family Bulletin No62, Winter 1990/91.
- (6) See Family Bulletin No 67, Spring 1992.
- (7) Family Bulletin No 28, Winter 1979/80.
- (8) For example see Family Bulletin No 34, Winter 1981/2 and No 42, Autumn 1984.
- (9) Family Bulletin No 41, Summer 1984.
- (10) See ibid and B.Campbell, 1987, p195.
- (11) Munro, 1979, p134.
- (12) Daily Express 6/12/76.
- (13) NME 18/8/79.
- (14) Knight, 1977. See also Family Bulletin No 30, Autumn 1980.
- (15) Knight, 1977.
- (16) ibid
- (17) Family Bulletin No 30, Autumn 1980.
- (18) Barker, 1989, p26.
- (19) Bogle, 1986. p5.
- (20) ibid p11.
- (21) ibid p12.
- (22) ibid p11.
- (23) See Barker, 1984a, p134.
- (24) See Bogle, 1986, p12.

- (25) FYC: "About Family and Youth Concern" leaflet. ND.
- (26) Bogle, 1986. p11. See Wells, 1990, for an attack on homophobia in pop.
- (27) Bogle, 1986, p11.
- (28) ibid p13. For a reply to Bogle's attack see Pyle, 1986.
- (29) Radio Four news 2/10/92.
- (30) Riches, 1992.
- (31) Sun 15/10/76.
- (32) Sunday Mirror 12/6/77.
- (33) Daily Mirror 14/5/87.
- (34) Mullen, 1986.
- (35) Kupferman, 1985.
- (36) Hansard 9/3/90 Column 1121.
- (37) Sun 2/11/88.
- (38) Sun 1/1/88. See also Sun 3/7/89.
- (39) Riches 1991.
- (40) Pink Paper 1/4/93.
- (41) Guardian 29/5/93.
- (42) Family Bulletin No62, Winter 1990/91.
- (43) Family Bulletin No69, Autumn 1992.

International Congress For The Family

- (1) Coward, 1990.
- (2) See Family Bulletins Nos 46, Winter 1986, No 48, Autumn 1986 and 59, April 1990.
- (3) See Viewer and Listener Autumn 1990.
- (4) Family Bulletin No 48, Autumn 1986.

- (5) International Congress For The Family: 1990 Conference Brochure.
- (6) Coward, 1990.
- (7) ibid
- (8) ibid
- (9) Riches, 1992.
- (10) Keating, 1991, p139.
- (11) ibid p140.
- (12) ibid
- (13) ibid p141.
- (14) ibid p144. Emphasis mine.
- (15) ibid p142.
- (16) See NME 19/10/91 and Roberts, 1983, p38.
- (17) See Frith, 1983, p216 for music as the context of youth leisure, **not** its focus and p231 for pop as a background to other activity.

Conclusion

- (1) 20/20 February 1991 p49.
- (2) See Graef, 1991. p76.
- (3) See McAnena, 1991.
- (4) For more on moralist pressure groups see Durham, 1991 and Weeks, 1985, p35. See the bibliography here for the New Right.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RELIGIOUS CENSORS - COMBATTING THE DEVIL'S MUSIC?

Pop's most vociferous opponents have often been drawn from Christian religious sects. Since the early days of rock and roll in America in the mid 1950s priests and preachers have warned against the dangers of becoming involved in what was often perceived as literally being "the devil's music". The alleged pagan roots of rock and roll, supposedly from African and Haitian voodoo rituals, were repeatedly emphasised. The overtly racist nature of many of these critiques limited any intellectual credence they may have aspired to and today such analyses are relegated to the fringes of the fundamentalist(1) churches of America. This is **not**, however, to say that they do not surface in Britain and this chapter examines the history and beliefs of clerical censors in Britain.

Much of the material I draw upon here of American origin and on the margins in Britain - indeed it often has to be sought out, rather than being generally available. But many British would-be censors draw upon American material to back up their claims(2) and some understanding of this material is therefore necessary in order to fully survey the British censorial climate. I shall begin here by looking at early examples of religious objections to rock and roll, move on to various other examples of objections and then consider the sorts of allegations that these censors make about rock.

Genesis - Initial British Clerical Reaction to Rock

Popular music has often been at the centre of the church's concern about the moral welfare of the nation. In Ireland during the mid-1950s the Catholic magazine Redemptionist Record complained that songs such as "A Penny a Kiss, A Penny A Hug" and "My Resistance is Low" showed that the church's enemies 'are using contemporary songs as an instrument for the propagation of immorality.'(1) Whilst initial hostility to rock in America had racist overtones(2), as previously noted, British reaction was imbued with a strong element of anti-Americanism from which religious critiques were not exempt. So, in 1958, when the Methodist preacher Dr Donald Soper condemned much of contemporary pop, he noted that a lot of it was of American origin and that it had been necessary ban American horror comics via the 1955 Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act(3). He warned that: 'It may be just as necessary to curb trashy songs.'(4)

Such concern was nothing new. Leonard has noted church opposition to jazz(5) and the anti-Music Hall campaigner of the 1890s, Ormston Chant, was also fuelled by a religious fervour. Her anti-materialism(6) mirrors Soper's. In September 1956 the Bishop of Woolwich criticised the film "Rock Around The Clock" because 'the hypnotic rhythm in the picture had a maddening effect on a rhythm loving age group.'(7)

As rock's popularity grew, so came more overt calls for censorship from British clergy. Martin and Segrave note that a

Reverend J.H. Chamberlain of Smethwick saw music as either God's or the devil's and, as rock was the product of the latter: 'His solution was to "ban evil music" with the censoring being done by a board of "distinguished musicians".'(8) A Nottingham Pentecostal vicar told his congregation in October 1956 that: 'The effect of rock and roll is to turn young people into devil worshippers; to stimulate self expression through sex, to impair nervous stability and destroy the sanctity of marriage.'(9)

These criticisms have two main elements. First, the accusation that rock is based on devil worship and secondly, presumably as a consequence, that the behaviour of the listener was altered. A causal relationship between rock as **music** (not just lyrics) and anti-social behaviour was postulated from the off. American accounts provided fuel for the first theory, the rock and roll "riots" provided evidence for the second. These criticisms still occur today, albeit in a changed form.

As noted previously, to these criticisms a third was often added - the aesthetic(10). Members of established religions in Britain joined in this. For example, Soper talked of pop as "artistic suicide" and "trash" whose market ranged from 'the bright 10 year old to the retarded adult'. He raised the idea of a hapless audience and accused the industry of 'foisting rubbish on the public'(11). Martin and Segrave note that 'Soper was adamant that some form of **censorship** was needed'(12). Soper's main criticism was on the grounds of materialism, but he used aesthetics to supplement it. Such was the initial reaction from some British clerics to

rock. However, they did not form any censorial body so the history of the (attempted) religious censoring of pop in Britain is one of intermittent outbursts and struggles, rather than any concerted censorial campaign - although the religious motivations of more full time censors like Whitehouse should be remembered. Having seen some of the early clerical reactions to rock, let us examine some subsequent outbursts.

Rock and The Church - A Brief Historical Outline

The church has constantly tried to ensure that popular entertainments were of a suitable sort. In the Middle Ages, reports Lawhead, minstrels came under attack from the church 'which held that their obvious secular joi de vivre posed a threat to the spiritual welfare of its people.'⁽¹⁾ By the Victorian era the church acted as both patron and censor of the arts. A dichotomous approach was often adopted, suppressing the harmful, whilst promoting the wholesome and this approach continues today, as I show below. An example of suppression was that of Chant, who was active in a campaign to close down London's Leicester Square Empire⁽²⁾. An example of the provision of alternatives was the rational recreationalists who tried in the mid-nineteenth century to divert working class men away from the public house and into more "improving" pursuits⁽³⁾.

By the time rock 'n' roll arrived in Britain the idea of providing alternatives still persisted and many in the church

welcomed and promoted the arrival of skiffle as a more wholesome alternative(4). Skiffle, says Bradley, thus became 'the acceptable, even slightly "cissy," face of youth, patronized by teachers, vicars and youth club leaders.'(5)

Street reports that with the rise of Beatlemania: 'Rev Thumond Babbs threatened to excommunicate any of his flock who went to a Beatles concert.'(6) The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the need to live with and understand the Rolling Stones and modern youth(7), whilst the Jehovah Witnesses warned of the dangers of rock(8).

By the time this thesis begins the battlelines between pop and sections of organised religion had been drawn. They were further galvanised by the remarks of John Lennon in 1966 that the Beatles were 'more popular than Jesus'(9). These remarks eventually provoked a fierce reaction in America, particularly in the southern "Bible Belt" where Beatle records were burnt at various gatherings(10). But the Bishop of Montreal pointed out that: 'In the only popularity poll in Jesus' time, he came second best to Barabbas.'(11)

1968 saw controversy when Immediate used a parody of The Lord's Prayer to advertise The Small Faces' "Ogden's Nutgone Flake" album(12) and the reaction to the formation of Eric Clapton's Blind Faith "supergroup" in 1969 did not go down well with a Reverend T.E.Winsor of Tickenot, Rutland, who wrote to MM complaining of the "imbecilic commotion" surrounding the band. He continued that it was 'a distressing feature of today's youth that a large portion of

them can be wrapped in adulation of a group of long haired louts whom they have yet to hear' and lamented that they didn't show a similar faith in Jesus(13).

By 1970 heavy metal was rising, often bringing with it an interest in the occult which provoked much Christian condemnation. The band Blackwidow was said to include witchcraft in its show, although it soon dropped it and it appears to have been no more than a stunt(14). But Black Sabbath were soon denying links with black magic(15), as were Black August(16).

In the 1960s many pop musicians sought religion(17), but upset some Christians by turning toward eastern mysticism rather than Christianity. George Harrison's involvement with the Hare Krishna sect is a paradigmatic case here. Larson described the combination of western rock and eastern mysticism as "deadly" and claimed that Harrison's musical popularity 'faded in direct proportion with his mystical involvements'(18) - although exactly how he measured this is not made clear.

Meanwhile Britain's foremost Christian rocker, Cliff Richard, was sharpening his censorial claws. He attacked Alice Cooper's live show saying that: 'I feel that if there are 13 and 14 year olds hooked on Alice Cooper, and they see dolls mutilated on stage, then it's **bound** to have a bad effect. If there's the slightest possibility of that then I think **it's valid to ban it.**'(19) The idea that kids will get **hooked** on Cooper is analogous to fundamentalist claims that rock itself is a drug(20). The comment that anything with the "slightest possibility" of harming children

should be banned left the censorial floodgates open. But Richard rejected the idea of censoring rock **records** as 'there's not much you can do just by banning it' - a view he developed via his experience on the Longford Committee on pornography(21).

Richard also voiced another Christian concern - that of stars' lifestyles. He called the Sex Pistols 'the worst thing that ever happened'(22), as well as admonishing David Bowie for wearing a dress in his "Ziggy Stardust" phase(23) and Mick Jagger for living in sin with Marianne Faithfull(24). He has also self-censored his own work. He asked fans **not** to buy his 1975 single "Honky Tonk Angel" after he had recorded it without realising that its subject matter was a prostitute(25). He also asked for a section of Comic Relief's "Utterly Utterly Utterly Rude" video featuring him singing "Living Doll" to be cut as he objected to some of the other content of the video, despite the fact that he played the concert where the material was originally aired(26).

Meanwhile clerical attacks on rock continued. In October 1976 Dr Thomas.F.Torrance, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, claimed that rock led to violence, mayhem and homosexuality. NME reported his belief that the 'music plays on subconscious emotions of those who listen and when it's played back years later, those who got off on those things in the Sixties psyche back to their adolescence.'(27)

Whilst these were isolated outbursts, the message from some clerics was clear - rock was dangerous and, at a minimum, should be approached with extreme caution. But if some were content to issue

proclamations, others were taking more direct action. Punk saw renewed clerical interest in rock. NME reported that amongst the main opponents of a proposed punk festival in Birmingham's Digbeth market in July 1977 were local clergy who objected because it was due to take place on a Sunday near a local church(28). As noted above, when the Sex Pistols played a gig in Caerphilly on 14 December 1976 opposition to it was led by Pastor John Cooper of the Elim Pentecostal Church(29), which includes Alex Maloney, whom I discuss below with reference to backmasking. The Nottingham vicar who warned of the dangers of rock in 1956 was also a pentecostalist.

The theme of rock as corrupter was taken up in September 1981 by another cleric, Rev. Professor Moelwyn Merchant, then Emeritus Professor of English at Exeter University. He told a meeting of public school headmasters in Oxford that: 'I think that explicit sex is much less dangerous than... pop records which lower the tone of human relationships'. He went on to say that: 'It is the Disc Jockeys and their plugging of debasing of sensory material... who are the real pornographers and we should identify them as such.'(30) His aesthetic critique was that pop led to 'the dilution of taste'(31).

In 1986 Peter Mullen, a York vicar, used a TES article on NME to attack rock in general. He claimed that those involved in a vicarage rape 'may have been fans of a heavy metal group'(32) and that whilst he couldn't prove a causal link between the 'pop-cult'(33) and violence 'it would be foolish to imagine there is

never a link'(34). He also used the well-worn analogy of the power of adverts(35) and invoked aesthetics, feeling pop to be 'trivia, its melodies are bland, if non-existent, its rhythms tedious'(36). He showed his ignorance by calling The Mekons "The Mekes" and describing NME as a fanzine, which it isn't.

Other Christian opposition to pop came in the live arena. In April 1988 The Shamen were asked not to use filmed images of the pope at a gig in Leicester Square's Notre Dame Hall as the venue's owners were a religious order(37). Meanwhile Manchester's Hacienda club(38) faced religious opposition in July 1988 when 40 members of the Victory Chapel in Salford blocked the club's Saturday night disco and had to be moved on by the police. The influence of American evangelists was evident here as the chapel is an offshoot of LA's New Harvest Christian Fellowship(39). Such links justify the inclusion of American anti-rock material here.

Bands who used sacrilegious images have, unsurprising, encountered clerical opposition. In November 1988 Christian Death were banned from a gig at Deptford's St.Mark's Church 'following objections from a local archdeacon'. A spokesman for the band, some of whose fans draped themselves with pictures of the pope and Christ, denied that they were blasphemous, but admitted they were sometimes heretical(40). A replacement gig at the Boston Arms in Tufnell Park was also called off after the venue saw a poster of Christ masturbating, which was being used to advertise the band's "Sex and Drugs and Jesus Christ" album. The gig eventually took place at the Pied Bull in Islington(41).

Creaming Jesus faced attempts by Brighton clergy to get their gig in the town called off in March 1990. Canon Michael Butler of the Sussex Board of Social Responsibility labelled the band "blasphemous" and "disgusting". The promoter of the gig at the town's Richmond Club told the churches that it had been called off to avoid any demonstrations, but then went ahead with it(42).

Others felt the need to move against the music itself. In September 1987 Alex Maloney held a public meeting in his home town of Burton on Trent in which he warned of the dangers of "Satanic Rock"(43). In Liverpool in December 1990 the Praise Chapel, again part of an American church, the Christian Fellowship, held two public meetings entitled "Hells Bells: The Dangers of Rock and Roll"(44) - the title coming from an American anti-rock video produced by Reel To Reel Ministries of Florida, which was played at the meetings.

The Truth Temple of The Bibleway Church in London's Woodford Green produced a leaflet called "The Truth About Rock" around this time. It attacked Satanism in rock and ended: 'Friend if you are in any way involved in this evil music, I urge you please to turn away from this great **deception.**'(45)

Morrisey's "Ouija Board Ouija Board" single was criticised by the Christian Response To The Occult in November 1989 for 'encouraging youngsters to take an interest in the occult.'(46) Diane Core of the Christian Childwatch group called the single 'totally irresponsible' and added that: 'We're not into censorship, although frankly society wouldn't suffer if much of this stuff were

banned... What we would like to see is a committee of some kind set up. It should involve a balance of parents, government representatives and young people.'(47) At a minimum the implication of the criticisms of Morrissey is that rock should not address certain issues - an avocation of censorship by the back door.

But Christianity is not the only censorious religion in Britain. In the wake of the Rushdie affair the censorial attitude of Islam has been much commented upon(48). This debate entered the pop world in June 1992 when Muslims objected to the use of snippets of the Koran in live performances by The Orb. After complaints by two Muslim bouncers at a Brighton gig the band dropped the section from their act. One member of the unofficial Muslim parliament spoke of taking "appropriate action" if the recordings were not taken from the show, which they subsequently were. The band's Alex Patterson apologised to the bouncers for any offence caused(49).

However Christianity still exerts the greatest religious censorial influence in Britain. Such influence is felt within the pop industry without the churches even having to move, as shown by WEA refusing to release the Jesus and Mary Chain's "Jesus Suck". Band member Jim Reid asked if: 'people seriously think that this little pop group making a fairly obscure record called "Jesus Suck" is going to do anybody any harm?'(50)

In August 1989 the Aberdeen Evening News and Nottingham Evening Press refused to take adverts for Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus" single, saying that they didn't want to cause offence(51) - a testament to the power of passive Christian censorship. In August

1991 the Church of England's In Tune With Heaven report recommended allowing the use of cathedrals for pop concerts(52) and it started to use a video called "Rave in the name of". But the Christian religion encompasses not one, but many, views on pop(53) and these various objections and debates within Christian opponents will now be examined.

"Beatists" and "Golden Agers"

Christian opponents of rock can be crudely divided into two groups. The first, the "beatists", oppose rock's beat and tend towards causalist arguments(1). The second, the "golden-agers", argue that rock **became** corrupted and will make favourable comparisons of 1950s music to that of the 1980s and 90s(2). Thus the "beatists" will not be so affected by contemporary events as the "golden-agers".

Perhaps the most extreme "beatist" tracts are those of the Chick organisation, whose British outlet is the Penfold Book and Bible House, based in Bicester, Oxon. From here they send out their Battle Cry newspaper which regularly carries stories from teenagers who tell of their addiction to rock before being saved with the aid of a Chick tract(3). Anti-rock Chick books include Godwin's Dancing With Demons and The Devil's Disciples and Jones' Stairway To Hell.

Chick's publications repeat, in slightly updated form, 1950s arguments about the pagan origins of rock. For Godwin: 'The rhythms of Rock music are directly opposed to the natural rhythms of the

human body, especially the human heart beat'(4). Blanchard, a British evangelist, supports this view and warns that 'excessive beat has real dangers' as 'the element of relentless beat in rock music increases the danger of a shallow, emotional, unthinking response, made at the wrong level and for the wrong reason.'(5) Maloney denies that he has a criticism of rock that is beat-based, but a leaflet from his Face The Music Ministries warns ominously that rock's beat came from the Druids who 'used it to call up evil spirits'(6).

The beatists argue that the main effect of this pagan-derived beat is hypnotic. Hart quotes a psychologist as saying that rock's beat is 'the same beat that people in primitive cultures use in their demonic rites and dances. If the beat is monotonous enough it can induce a state of hypnosis.'(7) Godwin agrees that 'The typical rock song can be summed up in one word: hypnotic.'(8) MacKenzie's book, which repeatedly praises Noebel(9) and was recommended to me by the Kings Church, argues that a combination of drum-beat and volume at live gigs often leads to 'a hypnotic trance-like state in the listener.'(10) Lawhead, another Christian writer, denies that rock is hypnotic and says: 'A beat or a rhythm is not evil.'(11) But Pyle believes that the drumming pattern in rock 'comes from demons. It is Satanic.'(12)

I deal with Satanism in rock below, but the racist ideas surrounding notions of "pagan" and "primitive" drumming and rhythms merit comment here. Much of the material originates from, and is aimed at, America's "Bible belt", where racism might easily find an

audience. Godwin says blues is 'a style begun by post Civil War American Negroes'(13) which 'is filled with smutty references and a "things will never get better" mentality.'(14) When debating whether rock can be used for Christian purposes Hart sneers that: 'The music that came over from the slave-trade boats doesn't fit our theme.'(15)

Pyle writes of being told by missionaries in Haiti and Africa that 'the beat and movement of their pagan and sensual dances... are exactly the same as the beat and movements of the rock 'n' roll dances.'(16) He talks of the "jungle beat" of rock, which is a 'savage and dirty music'(17). He refers to Michael Jackson as 'this girlish little black boy'(18), although what skin pigmentation has to do with this is unclear.

But a problem with the argument that rock consists of pagan jungle rhythms transferred from Africa into the heart of Christian America is that it is historically incorrect. Palmer notes that it presumes that most of the slaves who were transported to America came from the coastal regions of Africa where the drum was the dominant instrument, whereas the majority actually came from the centre of the continent where stringed-instruments dominated(19). Lawhead notes that it would be just as valid to see country and western as the root of rock(20). He continues: 'As for the charge that rock's rhythm is demon inspired, most people overlook the obvious fact that in other places where New World slaves landed (Jamaica, Haiti, the islands of the West Indies) nothing close to rock ever evolved.'(21)

Britain has not been immune from racist theories about rock. In 1970 Charles Cleall wrote for the Methodist Recorder that rock may engender bad habits in church as its rhythm might hamper the ability to think. Martin and Segrave write that:

'In a subtly racist statement, Cleall concluded that rock and roll was a form of music not indigenous to Europe nor was it an accident that: "(1) the communities in which it is have never built a city nor a form of handwriting, and (2) that those young people who permit pops (sic) to reign over them are remarkable chiefly for their tendency to worsen themselves.'(22)

But accusations of racism have not deterred the beatists. Writing of violence at rap gigs Godwin says: 'We must wake up and realise that there is something **in the music** that is provoking these deadly rampages'. That something, he claims, is 'in the **beat**'(23). Hart also concurs that the rock music **causes** "frenzy" and "hysteria" at gigs(24), is a major factor in murders(25) and **causes** bad driving and deafness(26). Hart says that: 'Good music, with its balance of melody harmony and rhythm has its appeal to mind and intellect. Rock, with its emphasis on the beat bypasses the mind and works directly on the body.'(27) The racist tone of this equates "white" with "cerebal" and "good" and "black" with "physical" and "evil".

But Larson(28) tells parents that, whilst they **should** worry about the beat, 'your main concern should be directed toward what the lyrics say and what the singers do.'(29) McIver notes that: 'Fundamentalists never really devised a plausible theory to explain

how the beat affected listeners, beyond linking it vaguely to hypnotism and pointing to its "savage," jungle origins. Recently the emphasis has shifted back to the words.'⁽³⁰⁾ This lets in the "golden-agers"⁽³¹⁾, so that at the PMRC backed Senate "Porn Wars" hearing of 19 September 1985 lyrics were focussed on. Although the PMRC has sought to distance itself from the fundamentalists, it uses them as a research resource and they, in turn, urge participation in the PMRC⁽³²⁾.

Another part of the beatist critique centres on repetition, which Blanchard sees as dangerous⁽³³⁾. Mackenzie is concerned about the daily repetition of the same song day in, day out. As an example he cites Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper", which is about a suicide pact, and says: 'The effect of such a song can be devastating when heard at high volume repeatedly.'⁽³⁴⁾ Here he takes up a common fundamentalist theme by arguing that children are obsessed with pop⁽³⁵⁾ and that more exposure means more danger.

Hart claims that what separates rock out from many other forms of music is its use of dissonance, which, he says, is sparingly used in classical music, but over-used in rock. If not resolved into consonance it causes tension and this, he says, is what happens in rock⁽³⁶⁾. Rock, says Hart, 'appeals to the body's glands and sensuous nature'⁽³⁷⁾, so that a rise in promiscuity has accompanied its rise. It is one step from this to the next fundamentalist claim - that rock is physically harmful. Pyle is amongst those who relate the story of different plants being played classical and rock music, with the former thriving and the latter

dying(38). Godwin claims that rock: 'has been found to cause chemical imbalances in the human body. The bass tones and driving drumbeats... have been proven to demonstrate a reaction with the cerebral-spinal fluid and pituitary gland of the brain.'(39)

These accusations cover the whole of rock, but others see evil in only some parts of it. Maloney is keen to draw distinctions between pop and the extremes he sees in heavy metal(40). Essentially a "golden-ager", he posits a cleaner era of pop which has been eroded by the emergence of heavy metal. Golden-agers also tend to focus on lyrics, which, as we have seen, are often unimportant to fans(41).

But even amongst "beatists" there is also a feeling that, whilst rock may have been far from perfect before, it has now reached new lows. MacKenzie comments that: 'Today... the messages portrayed by many artists are much more disgusting than they were twenty years ago'(42) and Pyle countenances the view that country and western music was good and wholesome until it discovered sex in recent years(43).

Nostalgia is a crucial motivation of censorial action, as Pearson's Hooligan(44) shows and Whitehouse, has often depicted a Golden Age of her childhood years(45). The beatist Godwin favourably compares Elvis to 'the rampaging, satanic, sex-stuffed Rock rapists around today!'(46) and Maloney believes that: 'Never before has rock music plummeted to these depths.'(47) The feeling of reaching a new low develops into a view that **something must be done** and here that something means campaigning against rock.

But this is not a united campaign. There is intense debate between the "beatists" and the "golden-agers" about whether rock can be used to spread their own message, about whether there can be such a thing as "Christian Rock". For the "beatists" rock is a tool of the devil and thus must be kept out of the churches, for the "golden-agers" God can spread his message via any medium and pop is, under the right circumstances, as good as any other medium(48). But both feel that musicians lifestyles should be above reproach.

What sort of example?- Christian objections to the rock and roll lifestyle

I have noted the tendency for pop's attendant features, rather than the music itself, to attract censorship and a notable feature of many fundamentalist critiques is that almost as much space is given to criticisms of lifestyle and interview quotes as it is to musical criticisms. The sex and drugs attract as much vitriol as the rock and roll. Often no distinction is drawn between them. Godwin argues that: 'The lifestyle of the performers cannot be separated from the music they make.'(1) So, if musicians take drugs and have premarital sex, then the music they make **has** to countenance and promote such activity.

Blanchard lists 'rock musicians whose lifestyles or music show occultic influence of one kind or another'(2) and even the more liberal Church of England was concerned in 1992 that children's heroes might be 'the latest rock star whose lyrics may

be full of aggression, whose life style may hint at drugs and who makes no secret of life with his latest live-in girl friend.'(3) Presumably secret sinning is preferable.

Sex is a major area of concern. For Godwin it is all part of Satan's grand plan to use rock for diabolical purposes. He writes that: 'All the smutty and degenerate emphasis on sexual lust in rock music is designed to fire up teenage imagination and hormones, leading to active fornication. Why is Satan so interested in getting the kids sexually active? Because immoral sex serves a specific purpose - to spread demons.'(4) He continues that: 'Wild and unchained sex is a hallmark of both the rock lifestyle and true satanism.'(5)

MacKenzie lists a whole page of quotes about sex from NME - 'a magazine with a high teenager readership' - to show the immoral nature of rock which he then links to teenage pregnancy and abortion(6). Aranza cites the lyrics to Olivia Newton John's "Physical" as one reason for teenagers experimenting with sex(7), again positing a causal relationship. Godwin notes that most porn films use rock(8) and says that the net effect of Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach" **will** be hundreds and thousands of more unwanted pregnancies as it's 'simply reinforcing the "rightness" of premarital sex.'(9) Mackenzie says abortion is 'one of the fruits of.. promiscuity, which is aided and abetted by Rock 'n' Roll'(10).

Fundamentalists also have vehement homophobia in common. MacKenzie devotes a chapter of his book to the topic and notes that the "sin" was punished by death in the Bible(11), but reassures his

readers that, fortunately: 'Not all rock stars are gay.'(12) The spread of homosexuality is often blamed on David Bowie(13). Jones says that 'homosexuality... is a cruel and heartless weapon used by Satan to gain control of the minds, bodies and souls of its victims... The only way anyone could find joy and pleasure from that kind of unnatural sex is to be driven 100 per cent by demons.'(14)

But what has this got to do with the censorship of rock? Simply put, the fundamentalists attribute the supposed "growth" of homosexuality almost entirely to the example of degenerate rock stars. Larson boldly claims that 'the real influence on style and morality are entertainment stars, who have a profound impact upon youthful sexual identity.'(15) Godwin's twenty four pages of blatant homophobia(16), includes the stunning claim that 'the frequent screams punctuating most Rock tunes **all** come from the homosexual penetration of the male.'(17) Bevan, of the British Kings Church, also warns against homosexuality and laments that it is now hard to find a band that doesn't include a gay person(18).

Maloney told me that homosexual acts were abominations in the eyes of God and claimed that he had personally "cured" some gays(19). But such "curing" might be aided by the suppression of rock. If homosexuality is caused, then one way to cure it is by suppressing the causes. If rock is one of those causes then, logically, it should be suppressed. This is seldom so boldly stated by fundamentalists, but the logic of their argument leads inexorably to this conclusion.

Rock is also accused of causing drug abuse(20). Pyle lists rock stars who have died in connection with drug abuse and asks mockingly: 'Is there a relationship between rock and drugs... You know the answer!'(21) He quotes Adam Knieste saying that: 'Rock (itself) is... a dangerous drug on which our children are hooked... Rock is more deadly than heroin because it is generally thought to be harmless and therefore does the damage unchallenged.'(22)

In Britain former Church of England General Synod member and Cabinet minister John Selwyn Gummer has written that cannabis taking has been: 'Encouraged by the (pop) groups'.(23) Godwin is much more vitriolic and says that 'everyone knows drugs are a standard part of the Rock and Roll lifestyle'(24) and they are also tools of Satan as, for example: 'LSD is the single most important reason why we are witnessing the runaway satanism in **all** rock songs today'.(25) Godwin even asserts that increases in record prices can be directly linked to rises in the price of cocaine, as the stars need more money to feed their habit(26). Blanchard cites a 1970 Canadian report which claimed that pop encouraged drug use, especially marijuana(27).

Whilst there is some genuine concern for the welfare of the rock audience in all this, the drugs issue is primarily used to justify more rock-bashing. If drugs are part of the lifestyle and the lifestyle is inseparable from the music, then only by hitting the music can one deter drug use. The censorial implications of all this are obvious - any song mentioning drugs would be vetoed(28). The fact that numerous rock songs warn against drugs is either

ignored or seen as equally dangerous because even mentioning drugs is equated with advocacy.

Another fundamentalist allegation against rock that was once popular is that of it being a Communist conspiracy(29), but this appears likely to decline in the post cold war era. The claim that rock encourages rebellion amongst the young and inter-generational strife is frequently made. Pyle lists a set of Biblical quotes against rebellion(30) and Godwin uses the fundamentalists' favourite quote, from Samuel, that 'rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft'(31). The fact that Christianity itself was born out of rebellion is conveniently ignored.

MacKenzie notes that the Bible tells children to honour their parents, but rock urges rebellion against parents(32). Jones is amongst the many fundamentalists who use the Twisted Sister video of "We're Not Going To Take It" (featuring a rebellious son blasting his father out of his bedroom window in a suitably over the top way) as the definitive example of rock as rebellion(33). This po-faced attitude characterises many of the criticisms(34). The one thing lacking in all of the more extreme critiques is any sense of humour. Everything is taken at face value, nothing is taken as being an act. The subtleties of text and context elude these critics.

Godwin writes that: 'At the very core of Rock and Roll music is the steely rule of rebellion'(35). As usual, he is in no doubt as to the origins of this rebellion, writing that: 'Rebellion is the devil's trademark... When destroying a family, Satan and his

demons continually throw more rebellion, rebellion, rebellion onto the raging family fires. And rock music is the gasoline they use to feed the flames.'(36) Larson disputes the concerns about rebellion and argues that children are only obliged to obey Christian parents(37), but Blanchard counters with a quote from Romans that: 'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.'(38)

In this case the encouragement of rebellion is contrary to the will of God and a wide range of examples are used to back up claims of rock as the epicentre of rebellion. Aranza claims that Elton John's innocuous "Bennie and The Jets" 'encourages teenage rebellion'(39) and quotes Alice Cooper as saying that: 'Rebellion is the basis of our group.'(40)

But a sense of perspective needs introducing here. It is obviously not the case that all Christians blame rock for causing, or even contributing to, society's problems. Lawhead sees rock as a symptom and not a cause. He says society's problems are socially, not musically, based(41) and that whilst some rock stars **are** immoral blanket condemnation is **not** the answer. Rather, the correct musical choice is to be nurtured. Moreover, Lyons points out that: 'Most criminal psychologists deny that the music itself - no matter how blasphemous - could create a Night Stalker or a Charles Manson.'(43) Lawhead inserts a note of realism by saying that: 'Rock musicians are actors. Not everything they say or do should be taken at face value'(44) and that overall, 'they are very much like the rest of us.'(45)

This sort of analysis is lost on many of the fundamentalists, who pore over stars' lifestyle for evidence of Satan's work. When, as in some heavy metal, the artists work seems to, embrace satanic and occultic beliefs the calls for censorship become all the louder.

Truly The Devil's Music? - Christian Objections To Satanic and Occultic References in Rock

Wesley asked: "Why should the devil have all the best tunes"(1) and there are various accounts of Satan having been a musician(2). Today many bands, particularly those working within the heavy metal, use satanic and occultic references in both their songs and images. Some artists also claim to be satanists(3) and some fundamentalists use this evidence to suggest that the music itself is the work of the devil and that the musicians are his dupes - willing or not. Again this view is mainly found in the publications from America's "Bible belt", but it is not without its British adherents, who constantly seek to extend their influence.

For example, Maloney's Face The Music Ministries claims that: 'Satan's desire is to rule the world' and that heavy metal 'is one of his methods of attack'(4). Skynner, another British evangelist, agrees that rock is 'a carefully masterminded plan instigated by Satan himself.'(5) Again Godwin goes furthest and suggests that rock is: 'Piped in from Hell'(6) and 'is inspired by satan'(7). As evidence of he cites Motley Crue, who were not commercially

successful until they embraced satanism with the "Shout At The Devil" album(8), but he neglects to mention unsuccessful satanic bands. For Godwin rock has always been satanic - but has got worse, in terms of blatancy, over the years, although he also claims that blues is 'rooted in witchcraft'(9).

Links between rock and Satan are continually stressed. For Jones: 'The purpose of rock is to get demons inside you to destroy you and drive you to hell'(10) and he uses references to hell and the occult in various heavy metal lyrics to back up this claim. But Lawhead says that those who see rock as a tool of Satan make two mistakes: 'overestimating the devil's power and underestimating his subtlety.'(11) Subtle is a word seldom used about heavy metal. Lawhead argues that individual pieces of music, not genres, are good or bad and that the job of Christians is to tell them apart(12). Even Blanchard concedes that the theory of rock stemming from the devil, via the jungle, to Europe and America is 'neither factual nor fair'(13), although he does add that we should 'never give the benefit of the doubt to the devil'(14), which leaves the censorial gates wide open.

Fundamentalists reserve particular ire for Ozzy Osbourne who, for many, personifies all that is wrong with rock. Jones claims: 'A few thousand demons already live in his body'(15) and calls his live show 'a satanic service'(16). Osbourne's song "Suicide Solution" should have been indicted in an American court in 1990 for playing a part in the suicide of a young fan(17). Although found innocent, Osbourne has since sought to distance himself from the

satanist image(18). But his critics seem unwilling to accept is that much of the alleged black magic is simply an image, that Osbourne is no more a tool of satan than Christopher Reeve is Superman. Indeed Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath has said that the whole satanic image was the invention of their label's marketing department and nothing to do with the band(19).

But the accusations continue, with Godwin declaring that: 'Demons, directed by Satan, have been moving through **all** rock music and the people who make it **from the beginning**'(20) and MacKenzie devoting a forty four page chapter to Satanic rock from the Beatles to Osbourne via Michael Jackson and Chris De Burgh(21). A man who is often cited as proof of rock's satanic links is Anton Le Vey, head of the American Church of Satan and allegedly the man pictured in the middle cover of The Eagles' "Hotel California" album(22). But Le Vey sees rock as **Christian** and has said that: 'Heavy metal has succeeded because its symbology is more appealing than that of Christianity, which is why **Christianity created it**'(23). He has called heavy metal 'the last big burp of Christianity'(24). Ironically satanist bands such as Norway's Burzum now take their imagery not from occultism, but from fundamentalist literature(25).

Le Vey's remarks are, of course, by no means conclusive evidence and so some cling to their view of rock as satanic tool. Jones claims Mercyful Fate's "The Oath" is 'the actual oath of allegiance to Satan recited when a person becomes a satanist'(26) and MacKenzie asks if the "I" in Barry Manilow's "I Write The Songs" might be Satan(29). Jones even has a get out clause for

those who doubt his word. He tells his teenage readers that: 'If thoughts like "he's crazy" or "he doesn't know what he's talking about" are flooding into your mind right now be careful. Those thoughts are coming straight from your enemy the devil.'(28) QED - not only does the devil use rock he also clouds the minds of those who don't see this truth.

A contrary point of view to the fundamentalists is provided by occult historian Russell who writes that: 'The Devil no doubt has some interest in cultural despair, Satan chic and demonic rock groups, but he must be more enthusiastic about nuclear armament, gulags and exploitive imperialism.'(29) McIver puts things into perspective by saying that the behaviour of many rock stars is abhorrent, but that 'it is the result of the words and behaviour of real people, not supernatural demons.'(30) The labelling of rock, or parts of it, as "satanic" is an attempt to point the finger and blame rock for society's ills, the censorial implications of, which are obvious. But the fundamentalists have moved the debate on in recent years. MacKenzie claims that Led Zeppelin broke up because of Jimmy Page's obsession with the occult in general and the work of satanist Aleister Crowley in particular(31). We shall meet Crowley in the next section where I consider backward masking.

Backmasking: The Devil's Latest Weapon?

The issue of backmasking - the insertion of backward messages into a track which allegedly enter the listener's mind without them

being aware of it - received much publicity in 1991 when Judas Priest were taken to court in America charged with putting subliminal messages on to their "Stained Class" album, which then contributed to the suicide death of a teenager(1). Although this case failed, with the judges ruling that it could not be proved either that the messages got through or that, even if they did, they were the decisive matters in the death, it showed the influence of fundamentalist critiques of rock. In many ways the backmasking debate sees these censors coming to terms with new technology. The racist motivations of earlier critiques had become apparent and the beat analysis seemed out of date when an analysis supposedly based on modern technology came to the fore. If the devil was not using the beat of rock, he might at least be using its technology - and possibly without the knowledge of listener, or even the artist.

The first book to come to prominence here was Aranza's Backward Masking Unmasked. Published in 1983, its title is something of a misnomer as much of it is spent repeating the customary critiques of the rock lifestyle, rebellion etc. Aranza argues that if a backwards message is placed on to a record it is stored in the unconscious part of the brain, as it is on the surface nonsense, but if repeated several times it may later be decoded and accepted as fact. For example, "dog si natas" would be stored and, if repeated often enough, be confirmed as "satan is god"(3). Blanchard brings the theory to Britain and says that the worrying factor is that messages 'can be received, stored,

unscrambled and impressed on the mind **without the knowledge of the listener**'(3).

Alex Maloney is Britain's leading exponent of the backmasking thesis. His work has censorial overtones, although he too baulks at the use of the word "censor". He gathers information from many of the authors I have quoted here, including MacKenzie and Godwin, although he feels that some of it is 'too extreme'(4). He sees rock as a religion and thinks bands such as Venom and King Diamond 'are building their own church'(7). His critique of rock has two parts. First he objects to, and has campaigned against, backmasking and secondly he objects to much of the satanic imagery. His "golden-ager" credentials are shown by his nostalgic lament that 'the values that were upheld 15 years ago are no longer precious'(6).

As the listener is unaware of what is going on, Maloney sees backmasking as being an invasion of privacy and wants records containing backmasking to be labelled, seeing this as 'informed choice', rather than a move towards censorship(7). He has claimed success over the clauses in the 1990 Broadcasting Act which outlaw the use of subliminal techniques on commercial television and radio(8), saying that it was included after his campaign with Tory MP Andrew Bowden(9). He believes that a test case may result(10). Maloney's influence may be minimal, but he has appeared on television and in various national newspapers to publicise his claims. He has been credited with 'influencing changes in the law'(11) and until backmasking on records becomes illegal Maloney's campaign against at least some forms of rock seems set to continue.

The backmasking theory gains added credence amongst fundamentalists because it is done backwards and this is where Crowley, a British satanist who died in 1947, comes in. The crucial part of his thought here concerns his book Magick where he encourages the principle of reversal as a way of contacting the devil. Crowley tells his followers to walk, talk, think, read and **play records** backwards(12). Eric Clapton's "Layla" apparently has connotations with Crowley(13) and Jimmy Page claims to have written "Stairway To Heaven" in Crowley's old house(14). Godwin calls Crowley the 'patron saint of rock and roll'(15) and warns that 'the single most important part of satanism is the principle of reversal'(16), whilst Aranza stresses Crowley's influence in backmasking history(17).

Crowley has undoubtedly interested rock musicians. Page owned the Equinox occult shop in Kensington and has said that 'it goes without saying that Crowley was grossly misunderstood.'(18) Later the guitarist in the punk band Raped claimed to be Crowley's grandson(19) and in 1991 independent band 5.30 claimed to be using Crowley's old front door on stage for good luck(20). Genesis P.Orridge of Psychic TV has written a preface to a collection of Crowley's writings(21) and Ozzy Osbourne also has a track called "Mr Crowley"(22).

Within the literature on backmasking a number of examples recur including Prince's "Darling Nikki", ELO's "Fire is High"(23) and The Rolling Stones' "Tops". I shall look at two examples here. The first is often used as an early example of the backmasking

technique (as are the end of The Beatles "Sgt Pepper" and their "Revolution No 9") - Led Zeppelin's "Stairway To Heaven". There are various interpretations of what the song allegedly says when played backwards. Godwin lists the first message heard as 'I sing because I live with Satan'(24), Blanchard has it as 'Oh, he is my prince satan'(25), Anderson as 'Satan, Satan, my sweet Satan'(26), MacKenzie as 'Here's to my sweet Satan'(27) which Maloney agrees with(28), perhaps because they both use the analysis provided by the American evangelists Dan and Steve Peters(29).

A similar divergence emerged occurs in the next example. Queen's "Another One Bites The Dust" is often cited as encouraging drug-usage, but how? The jury seems divided. According to Maloney, Blanchard and Godwin the backward message is '**start** to smoke marijuana'(30), but for MacKenzie and Aranza the message is '**decide** to smoke marijuana'(31). Maloney has also claimed it as: '**It's fun** to smoke marijuana'(32). So the evidence is confused, even the number of syllables used is disputed. Does this mean the devil is sending confused messages? Surely Satan would want the message to come across clearly. On my hearing the Zeppelin track is extremely difficult to decipher, the odd "Satan" here and there perhaps, but exactly what else is there is anybody's guess. The Queen example seems to contain the word "marijuana", or something very like it, but again what exactly remains unclear(33).

The critics are also divided on how Satan spreads his more decipherable messages. On the name KISS, Maloney, Godwin, Pyle and Skynner all claim it stands for "**Kings** in Satan's Service", whilst

Aranza and Lyons say its "**Kids** in Satan's Service". The devil's message appears to be becoming ever harder to discern.

But things appear to go from the ridiculous to the sublime with a claim from American evangelist Jim Brown that the theme tune to the television series Mr Ed, the talking horse, played backwards says: 'Someone sung this song for satan'(34). Another bizarre claim, made by Godwin amongst others, is that the track "Kiss Kiss Kiss" on John Lennon's "Double Fantasy" album, which was released before his death, has the message "We shot John Lennon" on it, supposedly evidence of demons boasting in advance of what they would do to Lennon(35).

The last two examples seem to take an already implausible argument to its illogical extreme, but what is the evidence? It is technically possible to put backward messages on to records. For example, Prince's "Darling Nikki" definitely contains an audible "message" at the end of it which only makes sense when played backwards. The debate thus hinges on whether this has any untoward effect on the unsuspecting listener. Certainly the Christian critics would err on the side of caution and, therefore, of censorship.

Lawhead is among the more cynical of Christian observers of the backmasking phenomenon. He writes that there is no **proof** that the brain can unscramble backward messages and so the whole issue rests on whether you believe it can or not(36). He concludes that the backmasking theory only appeals to immature people(37). The Christian Buzz magazine has written of the backmasking issue being

blown out of proportion(38) and Larson dropped the theory after finding that one of his own songs contained the "message" "Satan is here in this building"(39).

But Maloney still maintains that, even on secular grounds of invasion of privacy, backmasking is wrong, as 'with no warning of content with regards to backmasking you are totally unaware of what you are buying.'(40) McIver notes that evidence in the backmasking debate is contradictory as 'the scientific studies confirming subliminal influences so eagerly cited by the backmasking prophets are contradicted by other studies in which no influence is detected.'(41) Certainly the idea is treated with disdain within the industry. Nick Kabler, producer of Venom, a definite user of backmasking on their "In League With Satan" track, says that: 'To put backmasking on records is very easy to do' but he thinks that any "messages" are mere coincidences as any word spoken, or sung, backwards tends to sound like another and he doubts any effect may come from this as: 'If some form of subtle suggestion, like backmasking did work, the industry would have... used it to sell more records'(42).

P.Orridge states that 'there's absolutely no proof that subliminals or backmasking work'(43) and Lyons notes that 'the psychological effectiveness of forward - never mind backward - subliminal messages has yet to be established'(44). Indeed the argument seems to edging away from those who see subliminals as harmful. Walker notes that backward speech is hard to work out(45) and a 1992 report by the British Psychological Society dismissed

the postulated effects, saying that: 'There is no evidence that the effects of subliminal stimuli can be substantial enough to induce major changes in lifestyle'(46), either for better or for worse. They continued that 'there is no evidence of harmful effects'(47) and in the case of rock records it concluded that 'even when backwards messages are present in a tape or record, **listeners are not effected by them**, whether or not these messages are subliminal, because the meaning cannot be perceived by the listener.'(48) Satan may have to find another way of entering the mind.

But the legal situation regarding records alleged to contain backmasking is still confused. McIver notes that in 1973: 'Broadcasting of subliminals was banned... by Britain'(49) and, as noted earlier, the 1990 Broadcasting Act forbade the broadcasting of records containing backmasking over the commercial airwaves. Some want to go further. Godwin says of backmasking: 'It's time to put a stop to this... NOW!'(50) and Maloney writes of the need to 'stand by our convictions to **have the whole matter banned**, thereby making the use of back-masking illegal'(51). Should this occur, the implication is that tracks such as "Stairway To Heaven", The Beatles' "Revolution No 9" and Prince's "Darling Nikki", to name a few, would be banned. Maloney has already enlisted the help of one Conservative MP in his campaign and appears capable of enlisting more support for, at a minimum, a labelling campaign. But it is important to examine the fundamentalists' general tactics in order to see the full censorial implications of their critique.

The Tactics of The Religious Censors - Walking God's Path?

Once again one tactic used here is that of aesthetic critique. So Maloney's Face The Music Ministries says of heavy metal 'played forwards it's just bad music'(1) and Godwin describes Mick Jagger dancing as a 'department store dummy'(2). Pyle writes of a generation whose 'musical taste buds have been destroyed with rock noise'(3). The message is clear - it has no worth so it is pointless to defend it. For many of these campaigners the aesthetic critique is almost as important as the religious one. Sullivan and Flashman have documented the fact that many fundamentalist anti-rock campaigners are originally driven by aesthetic dislike(4) and this is evident, despite the number of ex-rockers such as Godwin who write the texts.

Censorial tactics also emerge from the church's role as protector of children. MacKenzie justifies this with Jesus' quote from the Bible that it is better to drown yourself than cause a child to fall(5). So seriously does he take the threat of rock that the covers of his book recommends that children should not read it without parents present. Fundamentalists paint a picture of young fans not merely liking pop, but becoming totally obsessed by it. So Larson writes that: 'As a parent you could overlook the depravity of some rock if it were your child's occasional interest. It isn't. He listens to it constantly'(6) and he says that: 'Rock actually means more to them than their parents, because its culture has become a surrogate family'(7). Bevan, who claims to have taught

over 400,000 school-children about the dangers of rock, also paints a picture of obsession with pop(8). But, as noted earlier, the vast majority of children use pop sparingly and do not become obsessed with it(9).

But some see children in danger and argue that if protecting them means a somewhat censorial role, then so be it. Godwin asks 'what's wrong with being a censor where... children are concerned?'(10). MacKenzie says that: 'What we should ask ourselves is why we are allowing young children of today to be subjected to such lyrics as "Relax don't do it, relax when you want to come".'(11) For these writers censorship is hardly an issue. Godwin writes that: 'Rock and roll is the single biggest reason why our young people seem to have completely lost their minds and their self control.'(12) If this is the case then the censorship of rock not only becomes legitimate, but vital.

Tactically there are two main trends in censorial actions by the fundamentalists which are firstly the search to provide alternatives and, secondly, overtly censorial action against the problem. The most extreme case of the latter route comes from America. In Freedom Village, Lakemont, New York, Pastor A.Fletcher Brothers offers a rock "de-programming" service which has been taken up by hundreds of young people. Music is banned and students attend lectures on the evils of rock lyrics(13). Whilst Brothers is on the fringes, the PMRC has used information supplied by him(14) and he busied children in to the Senate "porn rock" hearings in September 1985(15).

A similar service is offered by two Californians, Darlyne Petlinicchis and Gregg Bodenhamer, whose Back In Control Center offers to "de-metal" teenagers and gives information to law enforcement agencies(16). Larson is amongst those who reports the Center favourably(17). Most of the authors and groups I have examined urge readers to drop rock for themselves, but they are by no means adverse to censorship. Like NVALA their aim is co-option if possible, coercion if necessary.

Larson tries co-option and says that: 'If there are enough alternatives in a child's life you don't have to worry about what they see on TV'(18) and that rock's 'beat must be replaced with something better suited to healthy moral and musical development.'(19) Pyle also offers a list of wholesome musical alternatives to rock(20), echoing the rational recreationalists' idea of co-opting via superior culture(21).

Britain has yet to witness the record-burning phenomenon that occurs periodically in America, but it is another possible tactic. Blanchard voices his support for destroying rock's trappings(22) and Jones explains that the significance of the burnings is that: 'The Bible says that the best way to get rid of satanic tool is to burn them.'(23) Godwin agrees, saying that: 'The spiritual thing to do is to BURN these records.'(24) So an overtly censorial route is not only countenanced, but actively promoted.

Godwin tells his readers that: 'There is already a very vocal anti-rock movement growing in the grassroots of America. It needs to be strengthened.'(25) He urges his readers to get involved in

this(26), gives them tips on how to stop gigs in their towns(27) and on how to pressurise shops into dropping certain records(28). He also urges support for the PMRC(29). Meanwhile the PMRC has used fundamentalist literature for evidence(30), as have Whitehouse, Blanchard, Skynner and Maloney in Britain. Here the fundamentalist influence has thus far been confined to this sort of "knock-on" effect, but as the Republican party in America falls under more overt fundamentalist influence and American moralist groups such as the anti-abortion Campaign America come to Europe it must be assumed that the fundamentalists will want to spread their moral agenda to the rest of the world and to Europe in particular. In Britain the fundamentalist critique of rock remains on the fringes, but that could change. The Church of England is in declining and non-mainstream sects are growing both in number and size(31).

Overall the fundamentalist critique makes one valid point - there **is** a lot of immorality in rock and people within it do have bizarre, even dangerous, beliefs. But the same could be said of, for example, banking, insurance and the church. By ignoring the material causes of society's problems and concentrating almost exclusively on the cultural critique they miss out of a very problematic area and leave themselves open to easy attack. This attack is made all the easier if they also get their facts wrong.

On The Wrong Track - Factual Inaccuracies in Fundamentalist
Accounts of Rock

Many of the fundamentalists' conclusions about rock are easy to take issue with. In particular, the attribution of causal qualities to rock with little scientific evidence and the failure to see any humour and parody in rock are glaringly apparent. Their case is also undermined by a plethora of inaccuracies which litter their works. This obvious lack of thorough research implies that, should they get into positions of power, they will be similarly blase about investigating the merits of work which might be banned.

Ironically the fundamentalists believe it is they who are telling the truth about rock for the first time. Indeed, they try to monopolise the word "truth". The Peters brothers newsletter is called "Truth About Rock Report", Godwin subtitles one book "The Truth About Rock", Skynner's church calls itself "The Truth Temple" and one of Maloney's leaflets is called "Rock Music: The Truth Behind It". But "truth" is not given, it is a matter of debate. The fundamentalists disagree amongst themselves, as noted above in the backmasking example, so someone isn't telling the "truth".

Certainly inaccuracies, if not untruths, litter their accounts. Anderson calls Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac as Stevie Nix(1), refers to Jim Steinman as being 'of Meat Loaf'(2), when he is actually his songwriter, is the only person I have ever seen refer to Jimmy Page as "Jim Page"(3) and gets the lyrics to the forwards version of The Eagles' "Hotel California" wrong(4), so we

must be wary of any allegations he makes about the song backwards. Aranza refers to The Rolling Stones as having songs called, "Satanic Majesties Request"(5) and "Black N' Blue"(6) - whereas, in fact, both are misquotes of album titles and no such songs exist. He also refers to a Led Zeppelin album called "Stairway To Heaven"(7) - but the album from which the song comes is untitled and is generally known as Led Zeppelin 4. Aranza also refers to Alan Parsons as Allen Parsons(8).

Blanchard continues the catalogue of errors. He quotes a line of The Rolling Stones' "Sweet Virginia" which doesn't exist(9) and misquotes their track "Sister Morphine" as "Sweet Sister Morphine"(10). He isn't much better on The Beatles, misquoting the lyrics to "Magical Mystery Tour" and referring to the double EP of the same name as an album(11). Most bizarrely of all he refers to American blues/jazz star Dr John as being 'of the group Tangerine Dream'(12). Aranza claims that Dr John is a 'licensed witch'(13), but neglects to give the licensing authority. Flashman rightly accuses Blanchard of a 'blatant lack of understanding' and a 'blinkerred and narrow view'(14) and also notes his misquoting of lyrics(15).

Godwin contributes the astounding "fact" that 'punks sleep all day'(16) and wrongly refers to the Sex Pistols' "Seventeen" by its refrain of "I'm A Lazy Sod"(17). He refers to Britain's "huge" National Front being 'flocked to by thousands of English "skinhead" punks'(18), calls Irishman Bob Geldof "English"(19) and gives Timothy Leary's 1960s slogan "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out" as "Drop

out, Tune in, and Turn on"(20).

Hart mentions that at Elvis Presley concerts 'Theatres were demolished in London'(21) and Mackenzie repeats this(22) - but Elvis never played Britain. Hart also misspells Art Garfunkel's surname as 'Garfinkle'(23). MacKenzie says The Thompson Twins' anti-heroin song, "Don't Mess With Dr Dream", is about cocaine(24), misquotes the lyrics of Lennon's "Imagine"(25) and gives the date of The Rolling Stones' ill-fated Altamont gig as December 6 1986, some seventeen years too late. Larson misquotes the lyrics to The Who's "Uncle Ernie"(26) and Pyle makes the unsubstantiated claim that many pop videos 'are so violent that they have been banned in England and Australia'(27). He also says that Elvis 'managed to live to be forty-two, unusually long for rock musicians.'(28)

This list could be multiplied but I have included it here as evidence of how potential censors can get their facts wrong. It is plausible that if they get their facts wrong here, they are wrong about rock in general. The devil is not abroad in rock and roll, but this does not mean that the such claims will go away.

Conclusion

Much of the literature I have included here is of American origin and very much on the fringes both of mainstream religion and mainstream censorial agencies. Its inclusion is justified because it is a reference source for British censors like Maloney, Whitehouse and the Victory Chapel. Thus any account of British pop

censorship would be incomplete without reference to those who continually campaign to extend it. The fundamentalist critique has gained ground in America via the PMRC and labelling has become a common practice there, as has the harassment of artists such as the Dead Kennedys, 2 Live Crew and Ice T. This has already had knock-on effects in Britain with the attempt to prosecute NWA and the removal Ice T's "Cop Killer" track.

It would be naive to say that what happens in America is bound to happen here, but it would be equally naive to pretend that it will have no effect. Certainly the pressure from certain quarters will be kept up. In 1992 a new book, Painted Black(1) by Carl.A.Raschke, was published in Britain to join the anti-rock literature and Maloney is planning his own book. Meanwhile American evangelist Morris Cerullo held a series of "healings" at Earls Court in July 1992 and is already claiming success in recruiting in Britain(2). The beginning of 1993 saw Article 19 warn of fundamentalism spurring more censorship(3) and the rise of Medved talking, as Lennon put it, 'the language of fundamentalism'(4). With the expansion of cable television in Britain it may not be long before America's television evangelists bring their anti-rock message to Britain. I hope to have exposed some of the fallacies of many of their arguments here. The censorial implications of their influence spreading could be very damaging indeed. Lawhead is right to end his book by saying that 'Rock is here to stay'(5), but the battle is still on to determine what sort of rock it is going to be. One factor in this will be Britain's press...

Notes: Introduction

(1) I use the term "fundamentalist" here to cover a number of Protestant sects whose common link is a belief in the literal truth of the Bible. They campaign in a number of areas. See, for example, attempts to get goblins removed from children's books in IOC Vol 20 No 1 Jan 91 p34 and their involvement in getting the Action comic withdrawn, Barker, 1989, p26.

(2) See, for example, Whitehouse, 1977, p38 for her reliance on the work of David Noebel.

Genesis

(1) MM 6/2/54.

(2) See, for example, Gillett, 1983, p17 for churches in America's southern states viewing rock and roll as a plot by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NACCP).

(3) See Barker, 1984a, for an excellent discussion of the campaign which resulted in this act.

(4) MM 29/3/58. Quoted by Whitcomb, 1982. No page numbers are used in this book.

(5) See Leonard, 1964, pp2 and 88. Godbolt, 1984, p29 quotes the rector of Exeter college, Oxford, telling his students to avoid the "nigger music" of jazz and Vermorel, 1989, p10 writes of a vicar in the 1920s warning that dancing leads to hell.

(6) Cheshire, 1974, pp38 and 40 and Pearsall, 1973,p52.

(7) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p35.

(8) ibid p49.

(9) MM 10/2/68.

(10) See pp56-58 above.

(11) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p50. For more on Soper see Guardian 28/1/93.

(12) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p50. Emphasis mine.

Historical Outline

(1) Lawhead, 1987, p32.

(2) See Cheshire, 1974, pp38-41.

(3) See Bailey, 1987, pp35-55.

(4) Barnard, 1989, p37. See Rogers, 1982, p76 for more on Church approval of skiffle.

(5) Bradley, 1992, p127.

(6) Street, 1987, p46.

(7) Wyman, 1991, p344.

(8) See Meltzer, 1970, pp 100/101. Jehovah Witnesses continue their opposition to rock. See, for example, Awake! 22/3/93 pp 13-15.

(9) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p178. The date of Lennon's initial remark was 4/3/66 - See NME 2/3/91 and M.Sullivan, 1987, p317.

(10) See MM 7/1/67. See also pp126-144 above. The burning of records under the Obscene Publications Act take on greater symbolic significance when the burning of Beatles records is recalled. See p527 above for the religious significance of burning.

(11) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p313.

(12) MM 22/6/68.

(13) MM 7/6/69.

(14) See MM 21/3/70, 22/8/70 and NME 22/3/75.

(15) MM 29/8/70.

- (16) MM 11/7/70.
- (17) See Turner, 1974 and Farren, 1975. See Turner, 1988, for rock as a search for redemption. See also Jasper, 1986.
- (18) Larson, 1988, p46.
- (19) NME 23/2/74. Emphasis mine.
- (20) For example see Pyle, 1985.
- (21) NME 23/2/74. See MM 18/3/67 for a letter praising Richard's wholesome image.
- (22) NME 1/8/87.
- (23) Richard, 1981, p67.
- (24) Jasper, 1986, p15.
- (25) See ibid p31 and Richard, 1981, pp109/110.
- (26) See NME 13/12/86.
- (27) NME 23/10/76.
- (28) See NME 9/7/77.
- (29) See Robson, 1977 and p336 above.
- (30) NME 3/10/81.
- (31) Times 23/9/81. See also Daily Telegraph of this date.
- (32) Mullen, 1986. See Walser, 1993, p143 for more on the use of the word "may".
- (33) See pp480/481 above for the significance of the word "cult".
- (34) Mullen, 1986.
- (35) For analogies with advertising see Mellor, 1988, p13. See also M.Walker, 1982, pp10/11, for an argument that adverts and pop work in different ways. See Guardian 19/12/92 for plans by the Church of England to use adverts. Barnard, 1989, p45 notes that religious

sects were amongst those advertising on 1960s pirate radio.

(36) NME 5/7/86.

(37) NME 16/4/88.

(38) See pp308/309 above for more on the Hacienda.

(39) NME 16/7/88.

(40) NME 12/11/88.

(41) NME 3/12/88.

(42) NME 24/3/90.

(43) See NME 19/9/87 for Wells' somewhat cynical review of this meeting. See also NME of 22/8/87 for Maloney challenging heavy metal label Music For Nations to attend the meeting. A Elim church leaflet called "The Top Ten" makes the common mistake of portraying children as absolutely obsessed with pop.

(44) This video was shown in Watford in 1993. See Vox February 1993. For a review of the video see NME 4/1/92.

(45) Skynner, ND.

(46) NME 25/11/89. See also Vox February 1991 p63.

(47) 20/20 February 1991.

(48) Attali, 1977, p12 notes that Islam forbade true believers from sitting at the same table as musicians. In Britain there was some Muslim opposition to putting music in the National Curriculum. See Guardian 16/10/92.

(49) Independent 28/6/92, NME 4/7/92 and Vox September 1992 p7.

(50) NME 20/27/12/86. See also NME 18/4/92 and p104 above.

(51) NME 26/8/89.

(52) See Guardian 22/8/92.

(53) See NME 12/4/93 for links between rock and religion.

Beatists and Golden Agers

(1) For other beatists see comments by Slater of the CSA on drum beats, p477 above. See also Vermorel, 1978, p211 and pp443/444 above for Marcus Lipton MP comparing punk to jungle drums.

(2) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p321 for the PMRC as "golden agers" and the unfair comparisons they make between the 1980s fringes and the 1950s mainstream.

(3) For example, see Battle Cry July/August 1991.

(4) Godwin, 1985, pp8/9.

(5) Blanchard, 1983, p17.

(6) Face The Music Ministries: Rock Music: The Truth Behind It leaflet.

(7) Hart, 1981, p95.

(8) Godwin, 1985, p9.

(9) For more on Noebel see Denisoff and Peterson, 1972, pp122 and 127, M.Sullivan, 1987, Street, 1986, p55 and pp443/444 above.

(10) MacKenzie, 1987, p47.

(11) Lawhead, 1987, p59

(12) Pyle, 1985, p32.

(13) Godwin: 1985, p310.

(14) ibid p311.

(15) Hart, 1981, p142.

(16) Pyle, 1985, p10.

(17) ibid p24.

(18) ibid p30.

- (19) Palmer, 1976, p23.
- (20) See Lawhead, 1987, pp50 and 51.
- (21) ibid p53.
- (22) Martin and Segrave, 1988, p178.
- (23) Godwin, 1988, p124. Emphasis mine.
- (24) Hart, 1981, p96.
- (25) ibid p99.
- (26) ibid p101.
- (27) ibid p103.
- (28) Larson calling one of his books The Day The Music Died shows his credentials as a "golden-ager".
- (29) Larson, 1988, p86.
- (30) McIver, 1988. For PMRC links with fundamentalists see M.Sullivan, 1987, p322 and Wells, 1990a. Tipper Gore, wife of vice president Albert Gore, left the PMRC in 1993, see C.Sullivan, 1993.
- (31) In this context it is interesting to note that Medved is a "golden-ager". See him, 1990d, p25. His view that things have got worse has found support from Joni Mitchell, see ibid.
- (32) See, for example, Godwin, 1985, p330.
- (33) See Blanchard, 1983, pp14 and 15.
- (34) MacKenzie, 1987, p89.
- (35) For example, Bevan of the Kings Church, in the video "Are You Dancing With The Devil?" claims that pop is the biggest single influence on children.
- (36) See Hart, 1981, p78.
- (37) ibid p45.

- (38) See Pyle, 1985, p44.
- (39) Godwin, 1988, p11.
- (40) Maloney, 1991.
- (41) See pp63/64 above for lyrics being unimportant to fans. For Susan Baker comparing the lyrics of Elvis and WASP see Sullivan, 1987, p321.
- (42) Mackenzie, 1987, p98.
- (43) See Pyle, 1985, pp42/43.
- (44) See Pearson, 1983.
- (45) See, for example, Whitehouse, 1971, p21.
- (46) Godwin, 1985, p294.
- (47) NME 19/9/87.
- (48) For details on this debate see, for the "beatists", Blanchard, 1983, pp129-140, Hart, 1981, pp33-40, Godwin, 1988, pp225-245 and 1985, pp271-284, P.Anderson, 1988, p64 and Pyle, 1985, pp44-58. For support of Christian rock see Flashman, 1992, Lawhead, 1987, p85ff, Jasper, 1986, and Turner, 1988, pp155-175. For earlier debates on suitable music for worship see Russell, 1987, p150. Blom, 1943, p61 notes that Cromwell forbade the use of the organ in church in 1644.

Lifestyle

- (1) Godwin, 1988, p77.
- (2) Blanchard, 1983, p42.
- (3) National Society, 1992, p31.
- (4) Godwin: 1988 p14.
- (5) ibid p15.
- (6) See MacKenzie, 1987, pp122-128.

- (7) Aranza, 1983, p25.
- (8) Godwin, 1988, p241.
- (9) ibid p103.
- (10) MacKenzie, 1987, p124.
- (11) See ibid p130.
- (12) ibid p137.
- (13) For example, see Larson, 1988, p150.
- (14) R.Jones, 1988, p117.
- (15) Larson, 1988, p29.
- (16) See Godwin, 1985, pp185-218.
- (17) ibid p204.
- (18) Bevan in Kings Church "Are you dancing with the devil?" video.
- (19) Maloney, 1991.
- (20) For a novel Christian approach to drugs see Turner, 1988, p21 where he argues that they are a part of a search for redemption.
- (21) Pyle, 1985, p9.
- (22) ibid p13.
- (23) Gummer, 1971, p137.
- (24) Godwin, 1985, p171.
- (25) ibid p177. Emphasis mine.
- (26) See ibid p191.
- (27) Blanchard, 1983, p61.
- (28) See pp 85/86, 266 above and 551 below for The Game's "The Addicted Man" - an anti-drugs record which was withdrawn for mentioning drugs at the time of a moral panic over them in 1967.
- (29) See Street, 1986, p55. See also MacKenzie, 1987, p105.

- (30) See Pyle, 1985, p5.
- (31) Godwin, 1985, p280.
- (32) See MacKenzie, 1987, p82.
- (33) See R.Jones, 1988, p49.
- (34) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p322.
- (35) ibid p324.
- (36) ibid p336.
- (37) Larson, 1988, p127.
- (38) Blanchard, 1983, p64.
- (39) Aranza, 1983, p89.
- (40) ibid p23.
- (41) See Lawhead, 1987, p29.
- (42) See ibid p29.
- (43) Lyons, 1988, p172.
- (44) Lawhead. 1987, p24.
- (45) ibid p27.

Satanic Rock

- (1) See Denisoff and Peterson, 1972, p57.
- (2) For example, see Davis, 1985, p73 and Larson, 1988, p118.
- (3) See, for example, Wells' interviews with Deicide and Malevolent Creation NME 11/7/92.
- (4) Face The Music Ministries, The Truth About Rock ND.
- (5) Skynner, ND.
- (6) Godwin, 1988, p16.
- (7) ibid p26.
- (8) See Godwin, 1985, p127.

- (9) Godwin, 1988, p16.
- (10) R.Jones, 1988, p79.
- (11) Lawhead, 1987, p99.
- (12) ibid pp117 and 122.
- (13) Blanchard, 1983, p8.
- (14) ibid p59.
- (15) Jones, 1988, p77.
- (16) ibid p78.
- (17) See Walser, 1993, pp147-151 for details.
- (18) See NME 2/7/88 and NME 24 and 31/12/83.
- (19) See 20/20 February 1991.
- (20) Godwin, 1988, p155. Emphasis mine. Note how this marks Godwin out as a "beatist".
- (21) See MacKenzie, 1987, pp143-186.
- (22) See ibid p184.
- (23) Lyons, 1988, pp170/171.
- (24) Baddeley, 1992, p17.
- (25) Baddeley, 1993. See also C.Sullivan, 1992, and Observer 3/10/93 p3 for more on Burzum.
- (26) R.Jones, 1988, p80.
- (27) See MacKenzie, 1987, p32.
- (28) R.Jones, 1988, p94.
- (29) Lyons, 1988, p177.
- (30) McIver, 1988, p62
- (31) See Mackenzie, 1987, p168.

Backmasking

- (1) This case was not finally resolved until 1993. See NME 12/6/93.
See also Walser, 1993, pp145-7.
- (2) Aranza, 1983, p2.
- (3) Blanchard, 1983, p53. Emphasis in original.
- (4) Maloney, 1991.
- (5) 20/20 February 1991.
- (6) Face The Music Ministries, 1989, p1.
- (7) ibid.
- (8) See pp181/182 above for the 1990 Act outlawing subliminals.
- (9) Maloney, 1991.
- (10) ibid
- (11) Derby Evening News 17/12/91.
- (12) See Godwin, 1985, p69.
- (13) M.Walker, 1983, p3.
- (14) ibid p4.
- (15) Godwin, 1985, p69 and 1988, p92.
- (16) Godwin, 1985, p255.
- (17) See Aranza, 1983, pp11 and 12.
- (18) NME 7/12/74.
- (19) NME 16/9/78.
- (20) NME 20/7/91.
- (21) For Psychic TV see VOX May 1992 p8, June 1992 p114, 20/20 February 1991, Observer 16/2/93 and Independent on Sunday 23/2/93.
- (22) See Walser, 1993, Chapter 3 and p148.
- (23) ELO's satanic links saw them banned from playing Antrim by

Democratic Unionist Party councillors in 1993. See NME 37/3/93.

- (24) Godwin, 1985, p77.
- (25) Blanchard, 1983, p54.
- (26) P.Anderson, 1988, p64.
- (27) MacKenzie, 1987, p206.
- (28) Face The Music Ministries, 1989, p2.
- (29) See Dan and Steve Peters, 1984.
- (30) See Face The Music Ministries, 1989, p2, Blanchard, 1989, p54 and Godwin, 1985, p151.
- (31) See MacKenzie, 1987, p206 and Aranza, 1983, p7.
- (32) Maloney, 1991.
- (33) My examples came from Maloney. For words backwards having strange meanings in the Judas Priest court case see Walser, 1993, p146.
- (34) Baddeley, 1992 and Lyons, 1988. p169.
- (35) See Godwin, 1985, p174 and Skynner, ND.
- (36) See Lawhead, 1987, pp43 and 44.
- (37) ibid pp45/6.
- (38) Flashman, 1992, p10.
- (39) ibid p11.
- (40) Face The Music Ministries, 1989, p3.
- (41) McIver, 1988, p56.
- (42) 20/20 February 1991.
- (43) ibid
- (44) Lyons, 1988, p169.
- (45) See M.Walker, 1982, p6.

- (46) The British Psychological Society, 1992, p2. See Guardian 27/11/92 for a summary of this report.
- (47) British Psychological Society, 1992, p7.
- (48) *ibid* pp8/9. See M.Walker, 1982, p9ff for more on this.
- (49) McIver, 1988, p55.
- (50) Godwin, 1985, p79.
- (51) Face The Music Ministries, 1989, p3. Emphasis mine.

Tactics

- (1) Face The Music Ministries, Rock Music The Truth Behind It leaflet, ND.
- (2) Godwin, 1985, p238.
- (3) Pyle, 1985, p14.
- (4) M.Sullivan, 1987 and see Flashman, 1992, p14.
- (5) MacKenzie, 1987, p185.
- (6) Larson, 1988, p86.
- (7) Quoted by MacKenzie, 1987, p219.
- (8) Kings Church: "Are you dancing with the devil?" video.
- (9) See Frith, 1983, p231 for pop as a background to other activities.
- (10) Godwin, 1985, p288.
- (11) MacKenzie, 1987, p36.
- (12) Godwin, 1985, p291.
- (13) See Denselow, 1989, p264.
- (14) See Lyons, 1988, p164.
- (15) See ibid p167.
- (16) See ibid p172.

- (17) Larson, 1988, p63.
- (18) ibid p74.
- (19) ibid p86.
- (20) See Pyle, 1985, p56.
- (21) For rational recreationalists see Cunningham, 1980, p84 and Bailey, 1978, p33. For tonic sol fa see Pearsall, 1973 p111 and Russell, 1987, p23.
- (22) See Blanchard, 1983, p58.
- (23) R.Jones, 1988, p158.
- (24) Godwin, 1988, p147. Emphasis in original.
- (25) Godwin, 1985, p270.
- (26) See ibid p322ff.
- (27) See ibid p325.
- (28) See ibid p327.
- (29) See ibid p328.
- (30) See M.Sullivan, 1987, p322.
- (31) See Guardian 28/193.

On The Wrong Track

- (1) P.Anderson, 1988, p61.
- (2) ibid p62.
- (3) ibid p62.
- (4) ibid p64.
- (5) Aranza, 1983, p15.
- (6) ibid p105.
- (7) ibid p60.
- (8) ibid p65. See also MacKenzie, 1987, p168.

- (9) Blanchard, 1983, p30.
- (10) ibid p61.
- (11) ibid
- (12) ibid p45.
- (13) Aranza, 1983, p108.
- (14) Flashman, 1992, p5.
- (15) ibid
- (16) Godwin, 1985, p244.
- (17) ibid p250.
- (18) ibid p265.
- (19) Godwin, 1988, p203.
- (20) ibid p201.
- (21) Hart, 1981, p85.
- (22) MacKenzie, 1987, p5.
- (23) Hart, 1981, p89. See MacKenzie, 1987, p60 for more.
- (24) ibid p61.
- (25) ibid p145.
- (26) Larson, 1988, p191.
- (27) Pyle, 1985, p7.
- (28) ibid p8.

Conclusion

- (1) For more see review, NME 1/2/92 and Walser, 1993, pp141-143.
- (2) See Guardian 22/8/91.
- (3) See Guardian 2/1/93.
- (4) See Lennon, 1993.
- (5) Lawhead, 1987, p149.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
PRESSED INTO CENSORSHIP?

The press' part in defining the important issues of the day was highlighted in 1973 by the publication of Cohen's Folk Devils and Moral Panics, which showed how the media can create a feeling that **something must be done**(1). This chapter includes comments on links between pop and moral panics, but primarily suggests that the press' role in the censorship of pop is essentially twofold. Firstly it often creates scares around the latest pop outrage (often raising the spectre of exploitation of the young) and secondly it provides aesthetic critiques with which to stoke the censorial flames. These roles can overlap. Late 1992 saw much comment on the role of the press in public life(2), but little attention has been paid to the way in which it has sought to censure and censor the most vibrant cultural medium in British society. This chapter attempts to redress that balance.

The term "the press" encompasses a wide range of publications, but here I am mainly concerned with the role of the national daily and Sunday newspapers. Whilst they cater for a diversity of audiences, all have contributed to censoring pop. A broad difference may be that the broadsheets often provide the aesthetic critique, whilst the tabloids are quicker to highlight calls for bans.

Evidence of the impact of the press upon popular music is not hard to find. In 1967 the News of The World's five week series on

pop and drugs, instituted something of a moral panic(3). The paper was also alleged to have "set-up" the drugs prosecution of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards later the same year(4) and, as noted above, a report it carried on an "orgy" at the UFO club in London was cited as a reason for it having to move from its original site and, subsequently, close(5).

The press is in a very powerful position to suggest action against whatever latest outrage is occupying its time(6) and its role as labeller and moral entrepreneur has often been commented upon(7). This role has long been apparent in the realm of popular entertainments. In 1879 the Daily Mirror brought out the Boy's Own Paper to combat the influence of the "penny dreadful" comics(8). In 1898 The Times asked 'how far a Music Hall programme may be held to encourage lawlessness' and commented that the songs could not have been written if various immoral lifestyles were not permitted to be celebrated there(9). In 1927 the Daily Mail, which has often taken on the mantle of moral guardian to the nation(10), blamed dance halls for youth crime and commented that: 'Victims of the dancing craze multiply with the frequency of adapted jazz "melodies".'(11). Note here the oft-used censorial tactic of mixing moral and aesthetic critiques.

By the time rock 'n' roll arrived press critics had this long tradition to draw upon. The Sunday Pictorial depicted Johnny Ray fans as victims and asked if he was a mass hypnotist(12). But the Daily Mail was the most fiercely anti-rock. In September 1956 it reported that: 'Tin Pan Alley has unleashed a new monster, a

sort of nightmare in rhythm... Rock 'n' Roll, often known now as rock, roll and riot is sexy music. It has something of the African tomtom and voodoo dance.' The following day it noted that: 'It is deplorable. It is tribal. And it is from America. It follows rag time, blues, dixie, jazz, hot cha cha and boogie woogie, which surely originated in the jungle. We sometimes wonder whether this is the negroes revenge.'(13) Xenophobia, as I've noted(14), is also another oft-used tool of the censor and here the Mail managed here to combine both anti-American and anti-black sentiment. Elsewhere in the 1950s, it was the Daily Sketch picking up an NME comment that caused Cliff Richard to tone down his act(15). Bradley reports that there were **no** favourable reports of rock and roll in the press prior to 1962/63(16).

By 1967 calls for anti-pop action grew, as was reflected in the NOTW's series on drugs. The reports made it clear that the paper felt that the music itself was helping to spread the drugs menace. It headlined its first week's report with: 'Drugs and pop: Facts that will shock you'(17) and blamed Donovan for many of the links between pop and drugs. Censorship was mooted at the off. Commenting upon the fact that Donovan's "Sunshine Superman" contained references to drugs and had appeared on both television networks, the paper warned ominously that: 'the line must be drawn somewhere'(18). Noting that many in pop praised LSD, it said that: 'The effect which this **may** have on kids who rush to buy each new release and regard the pop stars as gods, is incalculable and **could** be damaging.'(19) So again, the idea of children as hapless victims

of the industry was mooted.

The NOTW's censorial agenda was shown by comments on The Game's "The Addicted Man" single(20). Despite this being an anti-drugs record the paper called it a 'particular horror' and lamented that: 'Despite the BBC ban, the record is on sale to the public.'(21) The implication is that it should not be, as it **might** cause youngsters to take drugs.

The paper continued its onslaught for a further four weeks. Talking of "with it" "beat groups", it alleged that it was impossible to exaggerate the influence that LSD was having on the pop world(22). It carried details of a raid on the south coast home of an un-named star - was actually that on the Redlands home of Keith Richards, which had resulted from a tip-off from the paper. The series concluded with a selection of readers' letters headlined: 'Drugs: The Great Debate.' One letter it printed contained the comment that: 'Pop stars should be subjected to a series of tests - like horses and greyhounds - before they go on stage.'(23) Artists such as Vince Hill, Tom Jones and Alan Price soon called for the press to give less publicity to drugs and more to the good side of pop(24).

Press coverage also contributed to the problems faced by festivals(25). Hall et al say that at the 1968 Isle of Wight 'the media constructed an image of the event which contained just-about every permissive demon that had ever haunted the imagination of the morally indignant'(26). Although Clarke concludes that the press' role here 'was not very important and did not exercise a decisive

influence'(27) others disagree. In 1971 Arnold wrote that: 'For sheer prurience, the reportage of the rock festivals which took place in southern England last month would be hard to equal.'(28) The 1973 Stevenson Committee report also had harsh words to say about the press' treatment of the festivals, arguing that: 'they have behaved with great irresponsibility and **have to a certain extent created the problems surrounding pop festivals'**(29).

That the music itself was not the focal point of the press' attention does not make their actions any less censorious. The spectre of drugs and violence-dominated festivals that the media painted were undoubtedly at the backs of the minds of many festival opponents. The press contributed to a situation where the announcement of a festival was tantamount to the declaration of war in some areas. As noted earlier, amongst those voicing the fiercest opposition to the annual Glastonbury festival was the local newspaper(30).

If festivals provided the press with ammunition for its scare stories, the aesthetic role was not ignored. A reader in the NOTW letters page mentioned earlier believed that the drugs explained why 'the words are often meaningless and stupid'(31). I noted in the introduction Simple's remarks in the Daily Telegraph in 1972(32) and in August 1975 the paper carried this quote from former war correspondent L.Marsland Gander:

'The wealthy pop idols are the most greivous example of the wrong kind of heroes. Their main achievements are to cause premature deafness by by battering young eardrums and to provoke

hysterical riots among weeny boppers. Luckily only limited sections of the community are affected...'(33). The paper also highlighted Merchant's 1982 attack on DJs(34).

But the press was at its most assertive and censorious during punk. Early reports of the movement were hardly complimentary(35), but after Grundy(36) the press went for blood. The following day's reports are amongst the most vitriolic ever seen in the British press. The Daily Mail had: 'Four letter group in TV storm' and reported on 'the Bizarre Face of Punk Rock'(37). The next day it reported that Grundy's programme 'goes out early in the evening, a **time when many children are watching**'(38) - thus portraying the Pistols as corrupters of the young.

It also presented the familiar, but barely credible, scenario of hapless youngsters being duped by unscrupulous businessmen. Its television critic, Shaun Usher, wrote an article titled "The Mercenary Manipulation of Pop - Never Mind The Morals or Standards... The Only Notes That Matter Come In Wads." A few quotes will suffice to give its tone: 'The ultimate peddlers of the pop industry - slick, agile of brain, fast of mouth, trained to sniff out the greasy tang of available banknotes, know that the same three chord product can be sold over and over again as long as the package changes... increasingly they capitalise on a basic human tide of behaviour: young people's instinct to outrage the older generation.' These "peddlers" apparently didn't care that such packages 'were getting nastier, less responsible, more decadent.'

Overall: 'The crying shame is that some youngsters, gripped

by the urge to rebel and overthrow inherited values, will be deluded into following this grotesque, insulting, anti-life festival of moral and spiritual anarchy'. Moreover: 'If pop is the modern opium of the masses, and of course it is - then Punk Rock is now heroin.'(39) It is interesting to note that the same day the Mail was promoting this moral and intellectual high ground it also featured, on its "Femail" page, an article on how to "Tempt him with silk" at Christmas.

The various levels this of this attack are noteworthy. The analogy of pop and drugs I showed in the chapter on religion. The audience as victim argument we have met before and will meet again. The aesthetic critique was also present, as Usher wrote that: 'Even the promoters of punk rock hesitate to claim the music has merit... Unlike The Beatles, good enough to take root in the hearts and minds of every generation, Punk Rock is poor, ungainly, derivative and quite simply no good.'(40) Had Mr Usher done his homework he would not have gone far to find similar critiques of The Beatles themselves. Subsequently punk's "merit" was shown(41).

The Daily Mirror headlined with 'The Punk Horror Show' which occurred 'at peak children's viewing time'. It also carried the story of one viewer, 47 year-old lorry driver James Holmes, who had kicked in his television in disgust. It informed readers that: 'The essence of punk is anarchy and outrage' and evoked images of the destruction of childhood innocence by including the story of 14 year-old Dee Generate and his punk band Eater, whose average age was 15(42).

The next day the Mirror carried varied the aesthetic and tried ridicule. It printed a series of anti-punk jokes and invited readers to send more in. (Very few appear to have bothered, as no more were printed). It also editorialised that interviews such as Grundy's belonged, at best, to late night spots - 'Not tea time, with the children and Nan around'(43). What grandad was meant to have felt was unrecorded. On December 4 a minor incident at a Bill Haley gig at the New Victoria Theatre in London was enough to get Mirror and Telegraph headlines(44) - again showing links between the censorial climate and contemporary events.

The Sun was slower off the punk mark. It ran two page punk special in October 1976, which used the damning term "cult" to describe it(45), but did not headline with the Pistols after Grundy(46). But it soon joined in with a 'Were The Pistols Loaded?' story about how much the band had drunk before the interview and used the aesthetic critique by commenting on 'the so-called "artists" paid to entertain us'(47). It indignantly reported Vivienne Westwood's spirited defence of the band's swearing and wrongly quoted the band's first single as being "Anarchy UK"(48).

The Daily Express linked the Pistols and Quirke cases(49) and dismissed the movement as another music business hype in an article called: "Punk? Call it filthy lucre"(50). Columnist George Gale attacked EMI for releasing "Anarchy In The UK" and the commercial stations for playing it. He saw the BBC as even worse, as they were not even being paid for playing it, but still did so(51). Gale called for new BBC governors and for 'new legislation to protect

our children from the panderers of the record companies, whose desire for easy money without sufficient thought for their responsibilities is the very ground on which punk rock is contrived to flourish.'(52) It should be remembered that at this stage only three punk bands, the Pistols, The Vibrators and The Stranglers had been signed.

The broadsheets were little better. The Daily Telegraph wrote of: '4 Letter Words Rock TV' and sub-headed with a comment on the band's 'Bizarre Style'(53). It pressurised EMI by writing of the various warnings it was said to have given the band(54). A story about a threat by Labour MP Tom Swan to punch Norman Tebbit whilst in the Commons got the headline: 'Punk politics at peak debating time'(55). The Tory bogey of tax-payers money being wasted on punk was raised with a claim that the Sex Pistols fee for a cancelled gig at the University of East Anglia would come 'from public rates funds'(56).

The Times used veteran moral campaigner Ronald Butt to attack punk and I noted his comments on "exploitation" earlier(57). Aesthetic critique surfaced in the term this 'kind of rubbish'(58). Butt proposed censorship, but in a subtle way. All the record company had to do was to drop the band. For him: 'It is not being a censor for a company not to promote, for a publisher not to publish, for a bookshop not to sell.'(59).

The Guardian printed a piece by Christian rock critic Steve Turner blaming porn magazines such as Forum for punk. They, in turn, complained about this allegation(60). The paper also

headlined: 'Punk concert brings trouble', when the concert concerned had taken place two months earlier(61). It should be noted that "obscenity" was much in the news at this time(62), via the POUM exhibition at the ICA and Gay News trial - again highlighting the link of contemporary events and calls to censor.

The impact of press reports upon the band was dramatic. War, starvation and economic exploitation carried on without comment, whilst a group of teenagers were castigated for uttering rude words on television. The planned tour all but collapsed as venue after venue pulled out in the wake of press coverage of the band(63). The band's Steve Jones commented that from Grundy onwards: 'it was different. Before it was just the music: the next day, it was the media.'(64)

At a press conference the day after the interview the press demanded to know how signing such a band could be justified(65). Pressure was continually applied to EMI and evidence suggests that it was such pressure that made EMI sack the band(66). Although the label would not defend the interview, they were apparently prepared to keep the Pistols until the Evening News report, on 4 January 1977, that the band had spat and vomited at Heathrow airport. The next day Robert Adley, MP for Christchurch and Lymington, wrote to EMI asking what they were doing 'financing a bunch of ill-mannered louts'(67). Soon the band were dismissed. Whilst a number of factors underlay the dismissal(68), the press had played a vital role. EMI was pressurised for over a month and Savage portrays the sacking as a victory for the press(69).

When the Pistols were later sacked by A&M the Mirror gave the story front page treatment with a: 'Punk group's £75,000 for doing nothing' headline(70). In May London's Evening News ran an article entitled "Rock's Swastika Revolution"(71), which led to allegations on that the band were connected to the National Front. Malcolm McLaren wrote a furious letter in reply, denying this 'totally obscene connection'(72).

Throughout the summer of 1977 the press vigorously pursued punk. The Sunday People investigated the "Bizarre Cult that's sweeping Britain"(73). The use of the word "cult" is again significant. The conclusion of the People's team was that: 'It is sick. It is dangerous. It is sinister.'(74) It said that punk 'calls for a "Hitler" in Britain' - a claim it backed up by an interview with one punk who backed the idea(75). The aesthetic critique was couched in terms such as: 'It demanded very little musical talent.'(76)

The following week the spectre of audience exploitation was raised by the claim that this 'freaky music craze' was being exploited by 'the raucous bands themselves, their promoters, record companies, magazine publishers and pop boutique owners.'(77) The People also noted that unscrupulous promoters were using the term "new wave" to disguise punk bands and thus con unwitting venues into putting them on. It covered a Heavy Metal Kids concert with phrases such as: 'Worse was to come' and a tone similar to that used by American fundamentalists. The fact that the band concerned was actually a heavy metal band and **not** a punk one escaped the

People's intrepid reporters. It also reported that some teds had declared war on punks and got a quote supporting its exploitation thesis from an official of the National Association of Boys Clubs who said that much of punk was just teenage rebellion but that: 'The trouble is the flames of this are being fanned by commercial interests, particularly the record companies, who are exploiting teenagers weaknesses for their own profit.'(78)

But another role of the press was also shown here - that of comforter after initial concern. Here youth are portrayed as essentially good, but vulnerable to the machinations of unscrupulous businessmen. If the press can persuade the unscrupulous to be "responsible" everything will be all right. The tabloids' task then is not one of censorship, but of ensuring "responsibility" and calling ceaselessly for such "responsibility", a more polite term for censorship, whilst simultaneously highlighting the "bizarre" nature of the "cult" in order to sell more copies. Only by exposing the readers to the alleged dangers can it then take on its other role of informing them that everything will be all right.

But in 1977 everything was not all right, as the Sex Pistols had got another record contract and planned to release a single called, mockingly, "God Save The Queen", to tie in with the Jubilee celebrations. It was released on 27 May 1977, just days before the People began its punk expose. The record's subtleties escaped the press. The Sunday Mirror wrongly claimed that it called the Queen "a moron"(79) and when the Jubilee was underway it headlined with:

'Punish The Punks'(80). Savage writes that: 'the British public took the instruction to heart'(81) and a series of assaults on the Pistols and their friends followed(82). The press was thus implicated not only in censorship (the various bans were largely due to initial press coverage), but also in provoking violence(83).

By the end of this "summer of hate" attempts began to incorporate punk into the mainstream. A good example of this was the interview with Johnny Rotten's mother carried by the Islington Gazette of 27 May. Hebdige has noted how the media attempted to resituate punks within the family and how the NOTW ran positive stories of punks(84). The Nottingham Evening Post ran a story about punks attending church(85). So again the press comforted as well as confronted.

The Pistols returned as press enemy number one again in November with the release of their "Never Mind The Bollocks" album. The Sun made up for missing out on Grundy earlier by taking a much greater interest in this release and the subsequent attempt to prosecute Virgin for displaying its cover(86). It headlined with: 'Sex Pistols in a new "four letter" storm'(87) on its release and called the decision to acquit the album 'astonishing' as it 'gives Johnny Rotten and his foul-mouthed Sex Pistols the chance to put up two fingers to the world.'(88)

Apart from this case press moves against punk waned after the Jubilee and in the month the Sex Pistols broke up, January 1978, the Sun began serialising the Vermorels history of them. Later the Sun was active, along with London's Evening News, in getting Kevin

Coyne's "Babble" show cancelled by drawing attention to parts which dealt with the Moors Murderers(89). Possible press reaction was also cited when the Au Pairs "Come Again" was cut from the BBC2 youth programme "Look Hear". Producer Roger Casstles said: 'The popular media just aren't ready for those kind of lyrics yet.'(90)

The press also played its role in the censoring of Oi. It was heavily promoted by Gary Bushell and the Sounds magazine, reaching the height of its notoriety in the riot-torn summer of 1981. The Daily Mail rediscovered its censorial heritage to attack Oi, after Southall's Hamborough Tavern was burnt down during clashes between local Asian youths and right-wingers at an Oi gig(91).

The Mail headlined with 'Terror in Southall', but the report paid little attention to the music apart from references to the 'skinhead venue'(92). It accused those promoting the music of 'fanning the flames of Southall'(93). To its supposed horror it found that this was being done by Sounds, then owned by the respectable Trafalgar House group. Or, as the Mail put it - 'the skinhead Bible of hate from an establishment stable'(94). What it was less willing to inform its readers was that this 'establishment stable' also owned the Mail's main rival, the Daily Express(95).

The Mail accused Sounds, and Oi in general, of being a vehicle for "anti-black" and fascist propaganda. The Mail's headline of "Black War On Police" for the multi-racial Toxteth riots(96) apparently could not be interpreted in this way. The Mail suggested that: 'Nobody who reads Sounds has any right to be surprised at what happened (at Southall)' and noted ominously that

Sounds was 'directed at the young'(97).

The Mail attacked Bushell's sleeve notes for the "Strength Through Oi" album which Sounds had promoted and reported that the skinhead featured on the cover of this album was a British Movement member then serving a sentence for causing an affray. It happily reported that Decca had now withdrawn the album. Decca, it appeared, had accepted the causal argument which the Mail, amongst others, had been promoting and commented that: 'It is obvious that there is an association between some of the music and the violence and this is extremely undesirable.'(98) So the album was censored and the Mail was able to claim a minor victory. But perhaps this was a sign of the times as even the more liberal Observer editorialised in 1981 that amongst: 'The causus belli of a youth war... (was) the violence of youth culture, of some rock music'(99).

Two years later the Mail returned the censorial breach when an article by Lynda Lee-Porter claimed that: 'The entire pop world is geared to titillating the young, in arousing children to frenzied ecstasy as erotically dressed pop stars scream invitations to sexual behaviour far beyond their audiences years.'(100) Its television critic also claimed that: 'Songs... have become the new pornography.'(101)

Individual journalists also saw fit to do their censorial duty. It was the Mirror's pop columnist, Robin Eggar, who, in 1981, alerted his brother, and Tory MP, Tim to the existence of Crass' "How Does It Feel" single and thus sparked off the unsuccessful

attempt to censor it(102).

Comments like Porter's above were backed up by the Express' George Gale in May 1986 when he warned readers that: 'Minds indeed become mindless when stuffed with the trash poured out by the pop industry everyday, without restraint, without control, without decency, without discipline.'(103) This quote gives insights into the censorial mind. First there is the aesthetic critique - pop is "trash" and therefore indefensible on artistic grounds. Then comes the causal allegation that 'minds indeed become mindless' when 'stuffed' with it. The word "industry" evokes images of the unscrupulous businessmen who duped their hapless audiences. Then comes the note that it is 'without restraint'. Apart from being factually incorrect(104), this also sets up a censorial agenda. If the "trash" is being poured out with no regard for its effects, then someone should take steps to remedy this appalling situation. If no one else steps forward then the tabloid press is often willing to don its censorial cloak.

In 1983 the tabloids had attacked The Smiths' "Handsome Devil" for dealing with child abuse(105) and in 1987 rap became the focus of media attention via the Beastie Boys. This band was subject to a "shock horror" expose in the Daily Mirror after members of it allegedly told British children suffering from leukaemia to: 'Go away you fucking cripples'(106) at a pop festival in Montreaux. The Mirror headlined with: 'Pop Idols Sneer At Dying Kids'(107). The band vehemently denied the story and no other paper carried it to any considerable extent. However, the Mirror stuck to

its story and carried news of MP Peter Brunivels' campaign to keep the band out of the country and of Capital DJ John Sachs smashing their records on air(108). In the run up to a general election the Mirror gave priority to the Beasties and editorialised that:

'The CBS record company ought to have nothing more to do with them, even though they are top sellers.

It should have put decency before profit long ago. The **least** it can do now to save its reputation is to cancel the tour at once and stop putting out the group's records.

To do less would be for CBS to climb down further into the filth with the Beastie Boys.'(109)

Even the punk era had not seen such an overt call for censorship. The press never explicitly told EMI to sack the Pistols, however much they might have hinted. The next day the Mirror lamented that Home Secretary Douglas Hurd had 'refused to bar the loutish American pop group'(110), apparently feeling that immigration rules did not cover barring them on the basis of unsubstantiated newspaper stories.

But the Mirror did harm the band in other ways. NME reported that they received death threats following the story. The tour itself, as support to Run DMC, reached an ugly climax in Liverpool when the band had to leave the stage after 10 minutes when the crowd showered them with missiles. Band member Adam Horowitz was later found guilty of assault for throwing a can at a fan(111). But the immediate impression was that a section of the crowd had decided to "get" the band(112). It is not possible to "prove" that

the image of the band presented by the press caused the disturbances, but it was certainly crucial in building that image and was thus allied to those who chanted: "We're the Scouse army and we've beaten the Beastie Boys."(113)

A few points about the Mirror's coverage of the Beastie Boys need noting. Street says that the tone adopted by the tabloids and the PMRC is often similar(114) and certainly words like "loutish" and "filth" gave potential censors ammunition. The Mirror also exhibited the censorial impulse of xenophobia by referring to the band's 'middle class American homes'(115), and to the 'loutish American' band(116) who were 'foul mouthed Yanks'(117), including Adam Yauch, a 'jumped up jerk from New York'(118). It also raised the spectre of the "cult"(119) and of business manipulation by saying that the band 'stand to make a fortune' from their tour(120). However the role of comforter was not ignored, as around the same time the paper ran a story about a reformed punk who had become a guardsman(121).

1987 was also the year when a broadsheet returned to the aesthetic critique of rock. The Times' Bernard Levin invoked the "beatist" critique and attacked pop for its 'violent rhythm' and likened it to drug-taking as 'both thrills are the thrills of malpractice' and 'immediate gratification'. He also claimed that pop's fans had no appreciation of 'real art or real love or real wisdom'(122). After quoting the 25 year old Beatles he claimed that there was 'nothing to remember' in pop(123). The article drew an angry letter in reply from Billy Bragg(124).

But it was another part of the Murdoch empire that aided the clamp down on raves in the late 1980s. I have commented upon its role in the section on raves(125) and do not wish to repeat myself here, but it's worth noting that the Sun soon used the censorial tactic of the aesthetic critique. Its pop writer, Johnathan King labelled acid 'sheeit' and asked 'how dare they call it music?'. It was 'a repetitive bore' which turns 'the kids already empty minds into jelly' and was, King concluded, 'Music for pinheads by brain death victims'(126).

The context in which these remarks were being made underlines their importance. They formed part of a Sun-led media backlash against acid. By then it had already been noted that Mecca in Birmingham had stopped an acid night after scare stories in the local press(127) and leading rave DJ Paul Oakenfield claimed around this time that: 'That's the reason Acid will die, because of the media.'(128) Radio One DJ Pete Tong said that 'I think that it's really sad that that organisations such as the BBC, who have banned the word ("acid"), take notice of the tabloids and are dictated to by them.'(129)

Soon there were allegations that the amount of raids upon raves, and therefore the effective censorship of them, was determined by the amount of tabloid pressure exerted. Wells speculated over whether the police had come to be at the beck and call of the Murdoch organisation. He continued:

'Not so, says a Met spokesman. It is apparently a mere coincidence that three separate and independent forces decided to

concentrate vast manpower on smashing up Acid parties all on the same weekend. Total coincidence, there was no co-ordination - even if a Scotland Yard "support unit" was used at Sevenoaks, Kent. The Met don't pander to idle whims and fancies of the tabloid press. Of course not.'(130)

Wells' cynicism was shared by others. Q of January 1989 noted that more raids on raves followed the Sun's campaign against it than had previously occurred(131), an accusation that also surfaced in Select in August 1990(132). One does not to be a conspiracy theorist to believe this. It is hard for the police **not** to act once the press has set its face against something and enlisted the support of MPs and other establishment figures in a campaign against it. Cohen has also noted that the police often play a vital role in the process of labelling some form or other of behaviour as "deviant"(133).

This brings up moral panic theory, which I want briefly to address. Its importance to pop is that such panics have often centred on it and even those panics which don't focus on pop can give insights into the censors of pop. Cohen's theory postulates that a moral panic goes through three phases. First a complex issue centring usually on misbehaviour by a subculture is simplified into a law and order issue by the press, secondly the deviants themselves are stigmatised before the movement is finally stamped on(134).

The scares around festivals, punk and raves all have elements of moral panic theory about them. Although the theory has been

criticised for underplaying the political aspects of the issues and over-playing the power of the press(135), once discerned it soon takes on many of the aspects familiar in the censoring of pop. These include the emphasis on children(136), appeals to "commonsense" with little analysis of their target(137), a tendency to move from empirical to moral arguments(138) and elements of xenophobia(139).

Cohen argues that it is the **perception** of threat that is important(140) and there is no doubt that the press plays an important in forming such perceptions of pop. Once a target has been chosen people from within the pop world are called upon to denounce it. So the Mirror was able to headline a story on mods and rockers with: 'They're just louts says Dreamer Freddie'(141). In 1967 the stars interviewed by MM solemnly condemned drugs(142), whilst Bill Haley was used by the Evening Standard to attack punk as 'going too far'(143). With raves DJ Peter Powell and Bros' Matt Goss were used to pour scorn upon it(144). Thus the deviant must be made to appear so not only by the standards of "normal" society, but also, by those of the "abnormal" pop world itself.

Moral panics are perhaps the most obvious case of the power of the press, but pop has to be wary of the press at all times. Whilst Rimmer described the relationship of the press with 1980s "new pop" as one of "interaction"(145), as opposed to the often antagonistic one it had with punk, the usual relationship is more complex. The press uses pop to sell copies, but is also acutely aware of its own role as unelected moral guardian to the nation.

The press, as I have shown, has often played an important role in attempts to censor pop. With the press on their side censors have a much better chance of achieving their aims.

The Daily Mail was active in the early stages of the campaign to prosecute NWA's "Efilzaggin"(146) and so the censorial tradition of at least one major British newspaper continued. The Sun had previously been involved in creating a scare around a proposed gig by the band in Birmingham(147). 1991 also saw the press ensure that a record never even made the market, as it was a Star story calling it 'a sick record about drugs'(148) that led to the cancellation of Skin Up's "Blockbusters" single(149).

There are various other examples of press interference with pop. The press have been implicated in attempts to ban the Stones' "High Wire" in 1991(150) and attempts to prevent GWAR gigs in 1990(151), whilst EMF found the Star running a story that they encouraged fans to take ecstasy(152). The Daily Telegraph was prominent in the attempt to get The Shamen's "Ebenezer Goode" banned by Radio One(153) and sensationalist press reports had previously led to the brewers McEwans dropping the band from a proposed advertising campaign(154)

The role of Britain's music press is also important(155). Generally it is supportive of pop, being part of its overall network(156). But a cosy relationship with established acts has often led to it opposing new movements. For example, MM opposed rock and roll in the early days(157) and Coon notes that the music press got punk a bad name early on(158). Generally this type of

criticism stops short of calls for censorship, although attacks on racist and sexist acts are frequent(159). But generally the music press promotes rather than persecuting pop.

Overall the mainstream press has yet to act as responsibly towards pop as it would often have pop itself behave. Hebdige writes that: 'The media play a crucial role in defining our experience for us'(160) and, the review section of the broadsheets notwithstanding, the British public's experience of pop has often been undermined, rather than enhanced, by its press. Hebdige also notes that the media is always torn between dread and fascination, outrage and amusement(161), but when it has been outraged by pop it has not hesitated to call for censorship. Even when it tries to be objective about pop it has veered heavily toward the sensationalist. In December 1989 an Independent review of a gig at London's Marquee carried the following comments:

'The huge volume of the music, the mechanical hammerings of its rhythms, its sheer physical impact and total lack of nuance left an audience to trail out at the end in a state of complete mental stupor, drugged and impervious to feeling.'(162) When pop is reviewed in this manner, using language akin to that of its fundamentalist critics, it is little surprise that it is subject to moral panics and calls for censorship. Press calls for more "responsibility" could well be met by requests to put their own house in order.

An attempt to do this was made by the Calcutt committee in 1993(163). But it appears that resistance to its proposed changes

will mean that pop will remain vulnerable to press attacks. Little appears to have changed. In 1967 MM complained that: 'Newspapers and magazines are continually hammering pop music and its exponents.'(164) In 1993 the Sun attacked Radio One for devoting a programme to the influence of gays on pop(165) and the Sunday Times promoted Medved, who had pop amongst his targets(166).

This chapter has shown that newspapers have a history of attacking pop both aesthetically and censorially. It would not be true to say that the press is anti-pop, as the broadsheets review it and the tabloids use its stars to sell copies, but its role as unofficial moral guardian has led it into campaigns to censor pop. It retains important censorial influence. In recent years some labels have tried to court the tabloids, but this is a risky business(167). However, the industry cannot afford to ignore the press and its influence. A BSC report of 1992 noted that when the tabloids scream MPs listen(168) and when MPs listen it is often with a censorial ear.....

Notes

(1) Cohen, 1973, p16.

(2) See broadsheets from 10 to 17/1/93.

(3) See NOTW 29/1/67 and 5, 12, 19 and 26/2/67.

(4) See Wyman, 1991, pp520, 529 and 532 and Vox March 1992 p25. See MM 25/2/67, 22/4/67, 8/7/67 and 5/8/67 for coverage of the case.

(5) MM 28/10/67.

(6) On the need for something to be done see Barker, 1984b, p28.

- (7) For example, see Frith, 1984, p30.
- (8) Barker, 1989, p34.
- (9) Pearson, 1983, p63. But the Times also helped make the Music Halls respectable. See Russell, 1987, p85.
- (10) See Barker, 1983, p231 for the Mail as a moral guardian. See also Whitehouse, 1967, p16, Blanchard, 1983, pp35 and 37, Newburn, 1992, p183, Harris, 1984, p142 and IOC Vol 17 No 4 April 1988 pp 6 and 16 for more examples of the Mail as a censorial influence. For the Mail criticising the charleston see Hustwitt, 1983, p13, for it against Jerry Lee Lewis see Martin and Segrave, 1988, p77.
- (11) Vermorels, 1989, p10.
- (12) ibid pp26/27.
- (13) Pearson, 1983, p24.
- (14) For more on xenophobia and censorship see p58 and 565 above and pp588 and 593 below.
- (15) See Whitcomb, 1982, and p282 above.
- (16) Bradley, 1992, p90.
- (17) NOTW 29/1/67.
- (18) ibid
- (19) ibid. Emphasis mine. See Walser, 1993, p143 for more on the use of the word "may".
- (20) See pp85/6 and p266 for more on "The Addicted Man".
- (21) NOTW 29/1/67.
- (22) NOTW 12/2/67.
- (23) NOTW 26/2/67.
- (24) See MM 11 and 18/3/67 and 22/4/67.

- (25) See p402 and 404 for more on the press and festivals.
- (26) Hall et al, 1978, p250.
- (27) Clarke, 1982, p179.
- (28) Arnold, 1977.
- (29) Advisory Committee on Pop Festivals, 1973, pp8/9. Emphasis mine.
- (30) See NME 3/10/87.
- (31) NOTW 26/2/67.
- (32) See pp56/57 above. The Telegraph had previously commented that the Oz editors needed medical treatment. See de Jongh, 1991b.
- (33) NME 30/8/75.
- (34) See p498 above.
- (35) See, for example, J.Wade, 1976.
- (36) See pp284/285 above for more on this incident.
- (37) Daily Mail 2/12/76.
- (38) Daily Mail 3/2/76. Emphasis mine.
- (39) All quotes from Usher, 1976.
- (40) ibid
- (41) See Savage, 1991a, for a detailed praise of punk.
- (42) For all this see Daily Mirror 2/12/76. In comparison see the kid glove treatment given to The Goodies by the same paper on 18/12/76, when the BBC banned their "Blowin' Off" single.
- (43) All quotes Daily Mirror 3/12/76.
- (44) See Daily Mirror and Daily Telegraph 4/12/76.
- (45) See Sun 15/10/76. See pp480/481 above for the connotations of using the word "cult".

- (46) See Sun 2/12/76.
- (47) Sun 3/12/76.
- (48) Sun 8/12/76.
- (49) See Daily Express 2/12/76 and pp283/284 above.
- (50) See Pearce and Clancy, 1976.
- (51) See Daily Express 6/12/76.
- (52) ibid
- (53) Daily Telegraph 2/12/76.
- (54) See Daily Telegraph 8/12/76.
- (55) ibid
- (56) Daily Telegraph 18/12/76.
- (57) See pp53/54 above. Note also that EMI mentioned the press' role when they sacked the band, see Wood, 1988 and Vermorel, 1978 p63.
- (58) See Butt, 1976.
- (59) ibid
- (60) See Guardian 3/12/76 and 4/12/76.
- (61) See Guardian 9/12/76.
- (62) See Guardian 17/12/76 p10 for a review of censorship in Britain at this time.
- (63) See pp334-338 above for The Sex Pistols' live bans.
- (64) Savage, 1991a, p260.
- (65) See ibid p264.
- (66) ibid p286.
- (67) ibid p287.
- (68) See pp91-94 above for more on the Pistols' sacking by EMI.

- (69) Savage, 1991a, p287.
- (70) ibid p322.
- (71) See ibid p334.
- (72) NME 28/5/77.
- (73) Sunday People 12/6/77.
- (74) ibid
- (75) ibid
- (76) ibid
- (77) Sunday People 19/6/77. See Laing, 1985, p101 for notes on the idea of manipulation in punk and p100 for more on the press and punk.
- (78) Sunday People 19/6/77.
- (79) Sunday Mirror 12/6/77. Its daily counterpart repeated this on 21/6/77.
- (80) Sunday Mirror 12/6/77. See also Savage, 1991, p365.
- (81) Savage, 1991a, p365.
- (82) See ibid pp365/366. For more on assaults on punks see Laing, 1985, p137 and Vermorel, 1978, pp103 and 125.
- (83) See Robson, 1977. See Sunday Mirror 17/7/77 for a story on a punks against teds battle.
- (84) See Hebdige, 1979, pp97 and 98.
- (85) See NME 10/12/77.
- (86) See pp147-149 above for the Sex Pistols' court case.
- (87) Savage, 1991a, p415.
- (88) ibid p425.
- (89) See pp323/324 above for more on this case.

- (90) NME 2/2/80. See pp267-269 above for more on this case.
- (91) See pp330/331 above for more on this gig.
- (92) Daily Mail 4/7/81.
- (93) Daily Mail 9/7/81.
- (94) ibid
- (95) See NME 11/7/81. See also interview with Bushell in Q September 1992, where he alleges that the Mail attacked Oi because of the Express and Sounds link.
- (96) Daily Mail 6/7/81.
- (97) Daily Mail 9/7/81.
- (98) Daily Mail 10/7/81.
- (99) Observer 19/4/81, quoted by Muncie, 1984, p84.
- (100) Porter, 1983.
- (101) Blanchard, 1983, p35.
- (102) NME 6/11/82. See pp586/587 below for more on this case.
- (103) Street, 1986, p14.
- (104) See chapter on record companies, pp78-125 above, for examples of "restraint".
- (105) See NME 6/1/90.
- (106) Daily Mirror 14/5/87.
- (107) ibid
- (108) See Daily Mirror 14 and 15/5/87. For more on Brunivels see pp588/589 below.
- (109) Daily Mirror 15/5/87. Emphasis mine.
- (110) Daily Mirror 16/5/87.
- (111) For more on this gig and the subsequent trial see NME 6/6/87

and McCready, 1987.

(112) NME 6/6/87. The Daily Mirror of 1/6/87 carried a picture of the girl who had been hit by the can and noted that the Royal Court venue had now banned the band.

(113) NME 6/6/87.

(114) See Street, 1987, p71.

(115) Daily Mirror 15/5/87.

(116) Daily Mirror 16/5/87.

(117) Daily Mirror 29/5/87.

(118) ibid

(119) Daily Mirror 14/5/87.

(120) Daily Mirror 16/5/87.

(121) See Daily Mirror 23/5/87.

(122) Moelwyn Merchant's critique is similar to this. See p498 above.

(123) All quotes Levin, 1987.

(124) See Times 26/9/87.

(125) See pp432-434 above.

(126) Sun 25/10/88.

(127) See NME 17/9/88 and p310 above.

(128) NME 19/11/88.

(129) ibid. See Heslam, 1990, p450 for more on acid scares.

(130) NME 15/11/88.

(131) See Sutcliffe, 1989.

(132) See Select August 1990 p4.

(133) Cohen, 1973, p91.

- (134) See Muncie, 1984, p27, from Hall et al, 1978. See Cohen, 1973, p147 for the flow of a moral panic.
- (135) See Barker, 1984a, p170 and Muncie, 1984, p45.
- (136) See Barker, 1984a, p5.
- (137) See ibid p35.
- (138) See ibid p30.
- (139) See ibid p26. Pearson, 1983, p22 also notes that Teds were blamed on "Americanisation".
- (140) Cohen, 1973, p32.
- (141) Daily Mirror 23/5/64, quoted by Cohen, 1973 p119.
- (142) See MM 11 and 18/3/67 and 22/4/67.
- (143) See Vermorel, 1978, p48.
- (144) See Sun 1/11/88 for celebrities condemning raves.
- (145) See Rimmer, 1985, p154.
- (146) Marot, 1991b.
- (147) NME 9/6/90.
- (148) NME 24/8/91.
- (149) See p171 above for more on the "Blockbusters" single.
- (150) See Beerling on "High Wire" Sunday Times 15/2/91. See also p220 above and 590 below.
- (151) NME 26/5/90.
- (152) See NME 11/1/92.
- (153) NME 26/9/92.
- (154) NME 6/4/91.
- (155) See Negus, 1992, pp115-133 and Frith, 1983, pp139-143 for the role of Britain's music press.

- (156) Keith Cameron of NME described the music press as 'a corporate cog in a corporate machine' in NME 22/2/92.
- (157) See Chambers, 1985, p20 and NME 26/9/92.
- (158) See Coon, 1982, p126.
- (159) For example see Page, 1991 and NME on Oi 11/7/81. See also NME 11/9/76 and 13/11/76 for spoofs on punk and 5/11/77 for Burchill's condemnation of the Sex Pistols' "Bodies".
- (160) Hebdige, 1979, pp84/85.
- (161) ibid pp92/93.
- (162) Independent 28/12/89.
- (163) See broadsheets of 10/1/93 for reactions to this report.
- (164) MM 7/1/67.
- (165) See Vox March 1993 p8.
- (166) See Sunday Times 7, 14, 21 and 28/2/93.
- (167) See Negus, 1992, pp122/123. See also NME 2/10/93 for Piers Merchant of the Sun saying the paper changed its style of covering pop after being sued by Elton John.
- (168) Redmond, 1991.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ROCKIN' THE HOUSE? - THE ROLE OF MPS IN CENSORING POP

MPs can become involved in moves to censor popular music in three main ways. The first is to be involved in changing the law which could have censorial implications for pop. This may be directly - for example Bright's moves against raves, or indirectly - for example by trying to tighten up censorship legislation, which may have an indirect effect on popular music, but which is **not**, generally, aimed specifically at it(1). The second, and most frequent, is to be called upon by the press to make suitably indignant comments about the latest pop "outrage", which **may** then lead to personal campaigns against it. The third is to lead opposition to festivals in their constituencies. Having already covered the latter(2), here I shall concentrate on the first two areas, dividing the main part of the chapter, for reasons of convenience, into sections on the parliamentary parts of the Conservative and Labour parties. (Liberal Democrat MPs appear to have taken less interest in censoring pop).

The most obvious way MPs affect popular music is by legislating the legal system within which it functions. Being part of the government of the day gives MPs tremendous censorial potential. For example, in 1935 the Ministry of Labour banned American musicians from performing in Britain, thus denying it non-British jazz for 17 years(3). The period I deal with has seen such Acts as the 1967 Marine Broadcasting & Co and the 1990 Broadcasting

Acts, which both had censorial implications for pop broadcasting. These were government initiatives but, as we have seen, MPs also have the option of Private Members Bills by which they can attempt to get legislation regarding their particular interest passed(4).

In the years around 1967 MPs' primary censorial activity against pop came via being involved in opposing proposed festivals in their constituencies(5). A result of this which had grave implications for pop, was the Night Assemblies Bill, detailed in the chapter on festivals(6). In 1973 came an attempt to tighten anti-pornography legislation via the Cinematograph and Indecent Displays Bill. This aimed to counter "objectionable displays" and whilst aimed primarily at the cinema it covered anything which the public might come into contact with. The main implication of the Bill, which reached the committee stage in the House of Commons in December of 1973, for rock was that album covers could fall within its definition of an "indecent display".

The NCCL, which formed a committee to fight the Bill, said that under its proposals: 'the police would only have to go into a record shop and seize the record sleeves of, say, an Alice Cooper album and the shop could be prosecuted.'(7) At the Bill's second reading Philip Whitehead, Labour MP for Derby North, noted that "Je T' Aime" would fall foul of the Act(8).

As it covered anything that was going before an audience, the Bill also had implications for gigs. Clause 8 outlawed the amplified reproduction of "indecent sounds" and allowed private prosecutions by those offended. No defence of artistic merit was

permissible. The NCCL believed that: 'Mick Jagger could well be prosecuted for a live concert because definition is so broadly based on the whim of a magistrate... The implications for the business and freedom of expression in general are great.'(9)

The Bill fell in February 1974 when the Conservative government called a general election and so ended an attempt to "clean up" pornography which would have had a serious impact on rock. By the time the Bill fell the government was considering amending the clause covering "indecent sounds" so that it covered only "artificially reproduced" sounds, rather than including human sounds. An Environment Bill which could have affected sound levels in clubs and gigs also fell at this time(10).

Since this time there have been various acts which have had implications for rock. I dealt with broadcasting laws and legal moves against raves above(11), but all campaigns to "clean up" the media have implications for pop. Tory MPs Winston Churchill, in 1986, and Gerald Howarth, in 1987, both failed with attempts to tighten up the laws on pornography, which could have cramped rock's style(12). Neubert called for new laws after the NWA case(13) and Tory MP Michael Stephens campaigned for tighter obscenity laws in 1992(14). Only one of these was directly aimed at pop, but all would have made the climate within which pop works more censorial.

But MPs themselves have not always seen fit to obey the law regarding the broadcasting of pop. For example, Tory MP Angela Rumbold gave help to her local pirate, Radio Jackie, in the early 1980s(15). With the 1960s pirates Harker notes that: 'Radio Atlanta

was backed by a company whose chairman was Oliver Smedley (Vice President of the Liberal Party)... (and) The former Conservative MP for Cleveland, Wilf Proudfoot, was a large shareholder in Radio 270'(16). So some MPs were willing to circumvent the law in order to get more pop on the radio (although their motivation was doubtlessly more pecuniary than musical), but other MPs have been vocal in encouraging censorial actions against pop and I shall now examine attempts from both major parties to censor rock.

Truly Blue? - Conservative MPs and Pop Censorship

The most common way in which MPs get involved in pop censorship is when the press reports "outraged" Tory MPs calling for the banning of the latest "obscenity" emanating from the pop world. Often the mere expression of outrage has been enough, but in more recent years this has increasingly been followed by attempts to silence the perpetrators of the offence.

Concern on the Conservative benches about the pernicious nature of pop music has a long history. Street notes that in 1949 Tory MP Sir Waldron Smithers 'told the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting that crooning... should be forbidden as it was part of a Communist conspiracy to demoralise people.'(1) In 1956 Robert Boothby MP said of the "Rock Around the Clock" film that: 'As soon as this film is banned altogether the better. It's causing a lot of trouble to a lot of people and giving no pleasure except to a few harmless, but quite irresponsible, lunatics.'(2) Tory MPs were

apparently told to court The Beatles(3), but W.R.Davies MP, told the 1965 party conference that the "'hairy idols" of the entertaining world' were leading their fans into 'anti-social, anti-moral' values(4).

Such concern has remained in the party(5). The main campaigner against the Isle of Wight festivals was its Tory MP, Mark Woodnutt(6). In 1971 the Tory Monday Club sent a message of thanks to the judge who had sentenced the Oz editors(7) and Conservative MPs put down a House of Commons motion praising the RAH for banning Frank Zappa's "200 Motels" show(8). The next censorial action showed how foolish persons pronouncing on matters they know little about can appear.

Harold Soref, MP and Monday Club member, complained to the BBC in February 1973 about their playing of the Strawbs' "Part of The Union". He protested that: 'The lyrics are obviously a serenade to the trouble makers. This song is typical of the subversive propaganda put out by the BBC... It misrepresents the unions and its tone could only lead to industrial troubles.'(9)

Apart from his casual causal claim, the ironic thing about Soref's protests was that they are entirely misdirected. The song is actually **anti** trade union, although its refrain of: "You don't get me, I'm part of the union", has since been song on picket lines. But at the time Richard Hudson, co-writer of the song, admitted that 'we're Conservatives actually, true blue.'(10)

The next incident marked the start of attempts by Tory MPs not merely to protest at pop's latest outrage. In October 1976, as

punk began its ascendancy, the bands Throbbing Gristle and Chelsea played the POUM multi-media event at London's ICA. Items displayed here included tampons and pornographic pictures. Tory MP Nicholas Fairbairn was suitably outraged, calling it "sickening" and "obscene". More ominously he declared that: 'The Arts Council (who partly funded the show) must be scrapped after this' and demanded to know why the ICA had been allowed to put on such a show(11).

Punk saw the censorial activities of some Conservative MPs increase. After Grundy Tory MPs continually pressurised The Sex Pistols and I noted earlier the role of MPs Adley and Howe in the sacking of the band(12). In addition Ray Mawby, Tory MP for Totnes, wrote to Lady Plowden, head of the IBA, protesting about their appearance on Today(13) and Neville Trotter gave support to Labour MP Marcus Lipton's campaign to get shops to boycott the band's "God Save The Queen" single(14).

Around this time the NME tried to place an advert on commercial radio which jokingly suggested that: 'If your parents don't like you reading the New Musical Express maybe it's time you thought about leaving home.'(15) The IBA turned the adverts down. The Sunday People publicised the story and got a quote from Conservative MP Dr Rhodes Boyson which deemed the NME 'an enemy of society' and claimed: 'It is an attack on family life.'(16) Boyson also took offence when a twenty second snippet of "God Save The Queen" was played in a Radio 4 documentary entitled "Listen to The Banned" in December 1978. He called it 'an affront to the public' and further commented that: 'The BBC is a public service and if it

can't keep up moral standards then why should we have the BBC?'(17) With Soref's anti-BBC remarks above, it is interesting to note the proto-Thatcherite mixture of anti-public sector and pro-Victorian morality of Boyson here. The attacks that the Conservatives finally felt confident to make on the BBC in the 1990s obviously have very deep roots and involved pop. But ITV also caused problems. Tory MP Jill Knight took part in a successful campaign to prevent Revolver broadcasting the Sex Pistols/Ronnie Biggs "No One Is Innocent" video in 1978(18). A further sign that some Tories were out to completely silence parts of the pop world came in the next case.

Tim Eggar, MP for Enfield North, was told about Crass' anti-Falklands War/anti Margaret Thatcher single, "How Does It Feel? (To Be The Mother of A Thousand Dead)"(19) and tried to bring a prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act, but was told that this was not possible. He was left with insulting the band. He complained of the record's "bad language" (in fact this occurred on another track called "Don't Tell Me You Care") and said that he believed in free speech but the record was an insult both to Thatcher (which the band accepted) and to families of those who had died (which Crass denied). Eggar said: 'It was purely the way they expressed themselves that I objected to. Authority has to draw the line somewhere. In fact, I used to enjoy and still do, many of the anti-Vietnam (war) songs that were made, but they carried their message in a sophisticated way, without resorting to foul language.'(20) Crass made the point that it was the war and not their record that was obscene.

Eggar is here both a "golden-ager" and misinformed - as Country Joe MacDonald's popular anti-Vietnam war song "Feel Like I'm Fixing To Die Rag" starts with the "Fish chant" of "F-U-C-K". He shows the usual reluctance of the censor to be labelled as such, merely noting the need to: "Draw the line somewhere". There are allegations that those higher up in the Conservative Party told him not to pursue the case and not to respond to provocation by the band(21). Around six Labour MPs sent letters to Crass telling them to keep up the good work(22). Crass were also investigated by a Commons Select Committee for possible breach of parliamentary privilege for using radio broadcasts from parliament on their "Sheep Farming In The Falklands" single(23).

November 1982 saw Tory MP John Carlisle protest to Channel 4 over the antics of The Virgin Prunes on their "Whatever You Want" programme(24). Others signed a Commons motion telling 4 to clean itself up or face closure(25). Carlisle also attacked the BBC's broadcast of the 1988 Wembley Stadium concert celebrating Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday, claiming that during it the BBC was 'hijacked by left wing extremists'(26). The Freedom Association tried to prevent the BBC from showing a concert celebrating Mandela's release in 1990, unless the BBC gave an assurance to retain political impartiality. Although threatened with legal action, the BBC went ahead with the broadcast on the grounds that the concert was a major public event and covered it all, including Mandela's speech(27).

In 1983 former Lindisfarne singer Alan Hull's "Malvinas

Melody" single, which attacked the loss of life in the Falklands War, was attacked by Tory MPs as 'sick and cynical'(28) and in 1985 Tory MP Piers Merchant attacked Bruce Springsteen's donation to Durham Miners Women's Support Group(29). But the most active Tory pop censor at this time was MP for Leicester East and member of the Church of England's General Synod, Peter Brunivels.

He first came to pop prominence in January 1986 when he described a French single by Renauld Sechan, "Miss Maggie", which was anti-Thatcher, as 'in the worst possible taste'(30). But it was the Beastie Boys who really engendered his rage. After the Daily Mirror reports of the band insulting disabled children(31), Brunivels set out to prevent them performing in Britain, trying to ban them under the 1824 Vagrancy Act, which was introduced to stop Waterloo veterans displaying their stumps whilst begging and forbids 'wilfully exposing to view, in any street road, highway, or public place, any obscene print, picture or other indecent exhibition'(32). Brunivels said the band were 'obscene and violent, they undermine family values and they encourage anti-social activities like glue sniffing.'(33) In a causal remark he said the band 'shouldn't be allowed to corrupt the nation's youth'(34) and exhibited the censorial trait of xenophobia when he declared: 'Look, why do we need the American filth, we have got plenty of British bands'(35).

Brunivels tried to to ban the broadcasting of Beasties' records, which some DJs undertook(36). He asked Secretary of State for the Home Department, David Mellor, 'if he will introduce

legislation to provide for a mandatory system for licensing of new audio and audio visual recordings for broadcasting or public performance' and 'what representations he has received on the playing of obscene, indecent or violent records.' Mellor replied that the relevant broadcasting companies had responsibility and that existing legislation was sufficient(37). So ended an attempt by an MP to seriously curtail the activities of a pop group. Brunivels' own activities were somewhat curtailed in 1987 when he lost his seat in the general election.

Another Tory MP to get involved in censorial activity was Teddy Taylor who, in 1986, was asked by the Sun what he thought of the title of The Smiths' "The Queen Is Dead" album. It subsequently ran a story that he had called for the the album to be banned, which Taylor denied. But he said that: 'I don't believe that publicity should be gained in this fashion and, therefore, I had hoped the broadcasting networks wouldn't play the record. But I really have no way of banning it.'(38)

In 1990 Taylor was back in censorial action and this time he **did** believe he could stop his foes. He was amongst a number of Tory MPs who called on Home Secretary David Waddington to prevent a tour by American band Revolting Cocks, after it was alleged that lead singer Al Jourgensen simulated sex with a mechanical horse on stage. Taylor said: 'Present laws can prevent people like this from performing in this country. The real tragedy is that so little is done to stop them.'(39) In a nose-thumbing gesture the band threatened to decapitate models of the Queen Mother on stage and,

when the tour subsequently went ahead, they invited Taylor to join them on stage(40).

When rave and acid-house came to prominence Tory MPs again called for censorship. John Hebble, a mid Staffordshire MP, failed in an attempt to pursue legal action to prevent Children Of The Night's "It's A Trip" reaching the shops because of its references to acid and ecstasy, but the commotion caused by Tory MPs resulted in the IBA cancelling the broadcast of the song on independent television's late night "The Hitman and Her" programme(41). Concern about raves eventually resulted in Bright's Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act(42).

In January 1989 it was reported that Conservative MP for Stockport, Tony Favell, opposed plans for a gay radio station in Manchester on the grounds that it would be 'trying to influence people'(43). The Gulf War in 1991 saw much media censorship and some Tory MPs wanted this extended to pop. Several called for The Rolling Stones' aforementioned anti-arms trade "High Wire" single to be banned. Sir John Stokes called it: 'Appalling in the time of war... why can't they do something with a bit of jingoism in it.'(44) Johnny Beerling's remarks about this record(45) came in the context of such comments. The passive censorship broadcasters constantly work under is censorship made all the more pervasive by MPs like Stokes and Anthony Bowden, who was involved with Alex Maloney in moves against the broadcasting of records containing backmasked messages(46).

These examples, along with the attack on Radio One's gay

programme by Tory MP Geoffrey Dickens(47), help show that Tory moves against rock have got more overtly censorial over years. As the Party has consolidated political power, so it has increasingly resented any attempts to challenge that power or to deviate from mainstream morality and behaviour. In rock this has meant a move from expressing outrage to moves towards outright suppression, from criticising dissident culture to attempting to suppress it. I found little direct intervention in pop by Tory MPs in the early years of this thesis, but much more in later years. Rock has suffered less than other areas, such as video and television, in the new censorial climate but, whilst it may be naive to posit a major clampdown on rock, it would be equally naive to think that rock will escape from the impact of further censorial actions. The Conservative Party might be a prime mover here, but the parliamentary Labour Party also has a history of attempting to censor pop.

Labouring Under Misconceptions? The Labour Party, The Left and The Censoring of Pop

Generally the Labour Party has had a more liberal attitude towards the arts than the Conservative Party(1). However, MPs within it have taken censorial actions and, as feminist causes have taken root in the party, it has become increasingly aware of portrayals of women in the media which has had the effect of moving the party towards a more censorial attitude in certain areas,

albeit for different motivations than those of the Tories.

In the early 1960s Labour tried to court The Beatles and in 1964 Mary Wilson assured everyone that: 'Harold and I are both tremendous fans of The Beatles'(2). Wilson awarded them with MBEs in 1965 - officially for 'services to export', but unofficially as a crude attempt to court the youth vote. But this rebounded later after Lennon returned his MBE and the band confessed to smoking dope at Buckingham Palace when they received their medals(3).

As noted above, Wilson was less keen on The Move and sued them for using a picture of him in bed with a secretary to advertise their 1967 "Flowers In The Rain" single. The band's manager later had his home raided by Special Branch(4). It was Wilson's government which took the censorial action of closing down the pirate radio stations, but Barnard argues that the flouting of the law by the pirates would have compelled the Conservatives into similar action had they been in power(5).

Individual Labour MPs began censorial campaigns from the late 1960s onwards. Gwilym Roberts, MP for South Bedfordshire, made MM headlines in January 1969 when he tabled parliamentary questions about the noise level at some concerts. This followed reports he had read of 'teenagers in Bournemouth suffering certain types of epileptic fits after being subjected to loud pop for a long time.'(6) If there was any danger to health said Roberts, 'there should... be some sort of legislation'(7). He also, as a socialist, objected to pop stars with little talent earning large sums of money, especially when compared to classical musicians who had

spent a lifetime learning their art. Roberts was unsuccessful in his attempts to control volume level, but his concern was also voiced elsewhere and led to censorial action in the 1970s(8).

More positively Labour MP Tom Driberg put down an amendment to a Commons motion which countered the Tory one applauding the banning of Frank Zappa from the RAH in 1971(9) and actively opposed the anti-festival Isle of Wight County Council Act(10). He had previously tabled a Commons motion deploring a Glasgow magistrate's anti-Rolling Stones comments in 1965(11).

In May 1973 Alice Cooper's plan to bring his show to Britain did not please Labour MP Leo Abse. He tried to get the Home Secretary to ban Cooper from Britain, accusing him of 'peddling the culture of the concentration camp' and of 'evil attempts to teach our children to find their identity in hate and not in love'(12) In a xenophobic tone Abse noted that Cooper was 'an American import which I am sure our parents, teachers and welfare offices can well do without.'(13) Cooper's subsequent British gigs went ahead with no problems, but children had again been used to justify censorial action.

During punk another case exemplified how the censorial atmosphere is often shaped by contemporary events. Mid 1970s Britain saw a minor moral panic over glue-sniffing, with 20 children held to have died from its effects in Scotland between 1974 and 1975(14). Against this backdrop The Ramones released their eponymous debut album, containing the track, "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue". Jack Dempsey, MP for Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, learnt

about the record via a complaint from a constituent whose son had bought it. Dempsey, who was then preparing a Bill to make it illegal for children under 16 to buy solvents, set out to get the album banned and received support from the Royal Society for The Prevention of Accidents who said they hoped 'the record stops selling'(15). Dempsey was unsuccessful, but his campaign **did** have a censorial effect later, when the track "Carbena Not Glue" was kept off the band's "Leave Home" album after The Ramones' British label, Phonogram, received correspondence from the Home Office regarding glue-sniffing(16).

The "Leave Home" moves came in March 1977 by which time The Sex Pistols had been through Grundy, EMI and A&M. They were also the next target of a Labour MP. When "God Save The Queen" was released Lambeth Central MP Marcus Lipton commented that: 'If pop music is going to be used to destroy our established institutions it ought to be destroyed first'(17) and thus tied his colours firmly to the censorial mast. He also raised the spectre of faceless businessmen exploiting pop's audience, saying that: 'It's a pure deliberate commercial exploitation by... managers'(18).

Lipton mixed his concern for children with the racist beatist critique by saying that in punk 'they work up the kids into a state of frenzied excitement, just like witch doctors in Central Africa... you keep on **banging** the drums and that sort of thing, and they start foaming at the mouth'(19).

With the help of Tynemouth's Tory MP, Neville Trotter, Lipton began a campaign to get shops to boycott the record. The band's

label, Virgin, asked if these MPs 'have nothing better to do'(20). Several shops boycotted the single(21). Lipton later objected to the band's next single, "Pretty Vacant" as the "B" Side contained swearing(22) and when he heard that the band had recorded a song called "Belsen Was A Gas", he commented that: 'They've had a go at the Queen, now it's the turn of the Jews.'(23) Lipton's censorial efforts were only partially successful as, whilst the band had many of their records banned from the airwaves and some shops, they continued to sell well.

Meanwhile Labour MP for Walsall South, Bruce George, told the Commons that punk was something 'about which we should be concerned'(24). (Hansard reported Bruce's remarks by mis-spelling Eddie Cochran's surname with an "e" on the end[25]). Outbursts from Labour quarters about pop seemed to die down after punk as Rock Against Racism, Live Aid and Red Wedge seemed to make pop respectable in left wing quarters. However, this was not to be a case of endorsing all popular music.

The rise of feminism within the party made it increasingly aware of representations of women in the media. In 1989 MP Joan Richardson objected to a t-shirt of a withdrawn cover for Guns and Roses' "Appetite For Destruction" album, featuring a robot assaulting a woman. She wanted a consumer boycott of the shirt (a popular tactic with American censors) and commented that: 'This shirt displays a complete lack of sensitivity towards rape victims, it's disgusting that someone should exploit such a harrowing experience just to sell pop music.'(26)

Labour expressed disapproval of NWA's "Just Don't Bite It" in 1990(27) and in December 1991 EMF's "Schubert Dip" album, was criticised by Labour MP for South Glamorgan, John.P.Smith, for containing the word "fuck", but no warning sticker. He called for 'guidance stickers to be placed on the band's album sleeves clearly stating that some of the material is unsuitable for children'(28). The band's label, EMI, regretted the offence but said that 'we think that stickering can have a detrimental effect, encouraging the kids to buy the records.'(29) So it remained unstickered.

This is the last example of a Labour MP calling for the censorship of pop that I will look at, but I now want to look briefly at other examples of left wing censorship of pop in Britain. Thus far most of the censors I have looked have tended to be reactionary, if not actually right wing(30). But the left has also censored pop. Most obviously this has involved Labour councils banning gigs(31), but there have been other examples which need considering.

First it needs acknowledging that some on the left have always been suspicious of pop. Many socialists opposed the Music Halls(32), whilst Adorno saw pop as catering for a false need(33). Hoggart implicitly attacked Radio Luxembourg in his comments on 'lowbrow gang-spirit of some gramophone-record features' in The Uses of Literacy(34) and A.L. Lloyd praised youth for returning to folk after indulging in the "depravity" of the Rolling Stones(37).

So the left has always been adept at providing cultural critiques of pop(36), but it was not until punk that the British

left really got into censorial mode. Partly this concerned the reactions of trade unions to the movement. The Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in The UK" and "God Save The Queen" were both subject attempted industrial action; at the EMI's Hayes plant(37) and CBS' Pressing plant(38) respectively. In 1978 union intervention led Ivor Biggin and the Red Nose Burglars to rename their "Wankers Song" the "Winkers Song"(39).

In the live arena strike action by University staff led to the cancellation of a punk gig in Southampton in May 1977(40), whilst NUPE got the cancellation of a Siouxsie and The Banshees gig at Liverpool University because of concerns about security(41). I have noted attempts by various Student Unions to ban acts(42) and the Musicians Union has also been involved in censorial activity over the years, most farcically in banning the anti-apartheid activist Johnny Clegg from playing Britain because he had played gigs in his South Africa home(43). The Labour-run GLC also tried to ban artists who had played South Africa from its halls(44).

This form of censorship on the basis of "political correctness" has lain behind many censorial actions coming from the left in recent years. Feminists have often objected to pop's imagery(45) and were involved in attempts to prevent Rapeman from playing Leeds Poly in 1988(46), took action against Torri B's "This Bitch Raps" single in 1990(47), against Fabulous' "Fucked By Fabulous" t-shirts(48) and Spinal Tap's "Bitch School" in 1992(94). Homophobic attitudes have also drawn attack(50), including the banning of Buju Banton from the WOMAD festival in 1992(51). When

Shabba Ranks supported Banton's record the gay rights pressure group Outrage! flooded to the BBC with protest calls after Ranks appeared on TOTP(52). This appears to be a new development in the censorship debate, but "political correctness" is essentially an offshoot of offence arguments.

It also illustrates that the left has its own censorial agenda and again disproves Wells' allegations that all of pop's censors are conservative(53). Miles Copeland, former manager of The Police and owner of the IRS label, accused the music business of censoring anything that was pro-Conservative, claiming that if a pro-Tory band came forward 'they'd be blacklisted'(54). But it is capitalists who control the business, not the left. Ironically leftist critiques of racism and sexism have now been appropriated by organisations like the PMRC and NVALA(55). The British left's main critique of the media has been denial of access to it(56), a form of censorship which needs addressing.

Returning to MPs, it is still the case that their actions against pop are generally more to do with isolated outbursts rather than concerted campaigns against the music, but this trend is slowly changing. As the mass media expands and ever more treatises are put forwards about its effects, MPs have moved from criticising pop to trying to stop certain aspects of it. Street is incorrect to say that MPs have 'continued to show little interest in the music industry'(57), rather what has occurred is a slow, uneven, but increasingly censorious attitude towards pop from certain parliamentary quarters. Occasionally this has had, as in The

Ramones case, a direct censorial effect. Most of the cases I have noted came after punk and the subsequent onset of Thatcherism. With ever more government concern over regulation and control of the media, and the possibility of further EC intervention, it may only be a matter of time before pop in Britain gets much closer attention from Members of Parliament.

Notes: Introduction

- (1) Neubert's campaign to change the law in the light of the NWA case may be an exception here, see p166 above.
- (2) See Clarke, 1982, pp35-61 and pp383, 386/387, 389, 395 and 396 above for more on MPs opposing festivals in their constituencies.
- (3) See Godbolt, 1984, p120.
- (4) See pp25 and 29 above for examples of Private Members' Bills.
- (5) See note 2 above.
- (6) See pp399/400 above for more on the Night Assemblies Bill.
- (7) MM 8/12/73.
- (8) Hansard 13/11/73, Vol 864 Column 404.
- (9) MM 22/8/73.
- (10) See MM 16/2/74. See pp399/400 above for gigs' noise problems.
- (11) See pp179-182 and 425-427 above.
- (12) See pp30 and 31 above.
- (13) See p166 above for Neubert's call to tighten up the law after the NWA case.
- (14) See Hansard 9/7/92, Cols 678-689.
- (15) See Barnard, 1989, p172.

(16) Harker, 1980, p79.

Truly Blue?

(1) Street, 1987, p71.

(2) NME 19/2/77.

(3) See Johnson, 1964, p326.

(4) National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, 1965, p119.

(5) See, for example, the support given by Tory MPs to NVALA, pp453/454 above and other pressure groups, pp477 and 482 above.

(6) See pp386/387 above for Woodnutt's opposition to the Isle of Wight festivals.

(7) See Sutherland, 1982, p124.

(8) See MM 23/7/71.

(9) MM 17/2/73. Soref also linked festivals to pot taking. See Clarke, 1982, p61.

(10) MM 23/7/71.

(11) NME 30/10/76. See also Daily Mail 19/10/76. See NME 27/5/89 for Fairbairn paying damages to Jim Kerr after calling him "left wing scum" for supporting Mandela gigs. For a profile of Fairbairn see Independent 6/10/92.

(12) See pp94 (for Howe), 577 (for Adley) above and Savage, 1991a, pp 286/287.

(13) Daily Mail 14/12/76. See pp284/285 above for more on the Pistols' Grundy affair.

(14) See NME 18/6/77. See pp594/595 above for more on Lipton.

(15) NME 13/8/77.

- (16) ibid
- (17) NME 6/1/79.
- (18) NME 19/8/78. See pp286/287 above for more on the Biggs/Revolver case.
- (19) See pp562 above for Eggar's informant.
- (20) NME 6/11/82.
- (21) Crass, 1991.
- (22) ibid
- (23) Street, 1986, p17.
- (24) See pp294/295 above for more on the Virgin Prunes case. See also IOC Vol 12 No 2 February 1983 p42.
- (25) See NME 11/12/82.
- (26) NME 18/6/88.
- (27) see IOC Vol 19 No 6, June/July 1990.
- (28) NME 1/10/83.
- (29) NME 22/6/85.
- (30) NME 10/1/86.
- (31) See pp563-565 above for more on the Beastie Boys, Montreaux and the Daily Mirror.
- (32) Vagrancy Act 1824. Statutes in Criminal Law.
- (33) NME 23/5/87.
- (34) Daily Mirror 14/5/87.
- (35) NME 27/5/87.
- (36) See p233 above for Beastie Boys radio bans.
- (37) Hansard Commons Vol 115 p183. 30/4/87.
- (38) NME 5/7/86.

- (39) NME 15/9/90.
- (40) NME 21/1/91.
- (41) See NME 12/11/88 and 3/12/88. See p289 above for more on this case.
- (42) See pp425-427 above for more details of the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act.
- (43) NME 14/1/89. Note also the homophobic nature of many of the religious and pressure group censors. See relevant chapters above.
- (44) NME 23/2/91. See also p569 above.
- (45) See Sunday Times 17/2/91 and p220 above for more on Beerling and the reaction to "High Wire".
- (46) See pp181/182 and 519 above for more on Bowden and Maloney.
- (47) See Vox March 1993 p8.

Labour

- (1) But see pp596-598 above.
- (2) Carr and Tyler, 1975, p32.
- (3) See Denselow, 1989, p92.
- (4) See Denselow, 1989, p100. Here he also notes that an advert for the Edgar Broughton Band's "Trust" featuring a Ralph Steadman cartoon of Wilson and Edward Heath as buttocks was banned by London Transport.
- (5) See Barnard, 1989, p46.
- (6) MM 18/1/69.
- (7) ibid
- (8) See pp349-351 above.
- (9) MM 27/3/71.

- (10) See Clarke, 1982, pp54ff.
- (11) Wyman, 1991, p389.
- (12) MM 26/5/73.
- (13) ibid
- (14) See Savage, 1991, p260.
- (15) NME 11/9/76.
- (16) NME 12/3/77. See also NME 5/3/77 and pp96/97 above.
- (17) NME 18/6/77.
- (18) Vermorels, 1978, p211.
- (19) ibid. Emphasis in original.
- (20) Sounds 18/6/77.
- (21) See pp129, 130 and 132 above for shops boycotting "God Save The Queen".
- (22) See NME 16/7/77.
- (23) NME 1/2/86.
- (24) Hansard 14/6/77 Col 337/338.
- (25) ibid Col 337.
- (26) NME 16/9/89.
- (27) NME 20/10/90.
- (28) NME 14/12/91.
- (29) ibid
- (30) But see Durham, 1991, pp161-178 for the problems of labelling NVALA etc as right wing.
- (31) See pp335/356 and 349-351 above for Labour council bans.
- (32) Russell, 1987, p111.
- (33) See Adorno, 1990.

- (34) Quoted by Bennett, 1986, p10.
- (35) Chambers, 1986, p146.
- (36) See Street, 1986, p57 and Wicke, 1990, for more on this.
- (37) See Sun 4/12/76 and Street, 1986, p97.
- (38) Savage, 1991, p347.
- (39) Radio One, 1993a.
- (40) Laing, 1985, p136.
- (41) See Sounds and NME 18/11/78.
- (42) See pp312-314 above for more on SU bans.
- (43) See Heslam, 1990, p381 and NME 2 and 16/7/88.
- (44) See p348 above for more on GLC bans on acts that played South Africa.
- (45) See pp101-102 above for feminist objections to covers.
- (46) See pp313/314 above for more on Rapeman at Leeds.
- (47) NME 8/12/90.
- (48) NME 15/2/92.
- (49) NME 14/3/92.
- (50) See, for example, SU moves against First Offence, p314 above.
- (51) See p390 above festivals chapter for more on Buju Banton. For more on ragga as homophobic see Independent 1 and 4/10/93.
- (52) See Vox June 1993 p7.
- (53) Wells, 1990a, p19.
- (54) See Denselow, 1989, pp222/223.
- (55) For examples see Durham, 1991, p97 and Wells, 1986, p17.
- (56) See Williams, 1984.
- (57) Street, 1986, p17.

CONCLUSION

In the chapter on British censorship I said that I hoped not only to show that censorship of popular music **has** occurred in Britain, but also to give insights into the **type** of censorship that has taken place. As I conclude my study I think it is better to say that I have given insights into the **types** of censorship and illustrated recurring characteristics. I have shown a series of censorial incidents and methods in pop starting from the point of production, going through retailing and broadcasting and incorporating live events. I have also given portraits of some of the main censorial agents.

British pop censorship emerges as a somewhat disjointed phenomenon. No set pattern is apparent and the overall picture is one of periodic intervention rather than sustained attack. Nevertheless, a number of characteristics can be discerned. These include the ebb and flow of censorship (rather than continual liberalisation or suppression), the link between censorship and contemporary events (partly because pop often **is** a contemporary event), the way the market itself enters as a censorial agent and the perennial concern for the welfare of children. It is to be expected that these features will continue in the future, varying only in their prominence and relevance to particular cases.

There is nothing in the history of the censorship of popular music as I have outlined it which suggests that it will come to an end, but there is much evidence to suggest that it will continue to

change its shape and parameters. Each sector examined will continue to have its censorial history and rock's opponents will continue their attempts to increase their influence. The battlelines are too well drawn for retreats. I have merely told part of a continuing story.

The goal of this thesis has been to draw together for the first time a lot of material in an attempt to reveal British pop's secret history. I noted in the introduction that books on censorship rarely mentioned pop and I believe that I have filled a gap in our knowledge by bringing this material together. The length of this thesis is testament to a sustained attempt to provide scholars with a research resource of considerable detail. The more casual reader should be able to find his or her area of interest easily. I have also quoted the censors themselves whenever possible so that readers can judge for themselves the merits of particular cases.

Pop historians now have a place from which to draw cases of censorship and in future such historians should concern themselves with a number of issues. First, the work I have carried out here essentially concerns the **outcomes** of censorial decisions and thus points the way towards more work on the **processes** of censorship. Negus' Producing Pop is a valuable contribution to decision making in the industry, but too little is known about the specific processes of decision making at Radio One, at local government level (for example the records of council leisure committees in 1977 should make fascinating reading), within venues, of artists

themselves and by retailers. More knowledge about who the "member of the public" who instigates legal cases would confirm or deny my suspicions about the pressure groups that I have discussed.

Where the industry is concerned access will remain a problem (Negus' book is filled with un-named sources) and artists themselves can be difficult to get access to. But their story also needs to be told. I have not dealt with self-censorship to any great extent here and this could be a fruitful area of research. In order to see the effects of the market as a censorial agent we need to know more about the way artists shape their work with reference to it.

With regard to broadcasting, the BBC must become more open to the public who finance it. There seems no good reason why I could not be given information about the decision making process behind, for example, the bans on "Je T'Aime" or "Give Ireland Back To The Irish". The secrecy with which the BBC surrounds itself gives rise to the suspicion that it is much more censorious than it actually is. A more open BBC would both engender more public confidence and contribute to the censorship debate.

The censorship of popular music also needs to be thought of in much broader terms than is usually done. Too often during this research when I spoke to others about the censorship of pop I was met with enquiries about banned records on Radio One. I believe that I have at least shown that the issue is more complicated than that and goes beyond pop in its recorded form.

Censorship of British pop is rarely a matter of sinister

figures putting blue pencil lines through texts, but often an amalgam of processes from market-led decisions over what artists to sign, through broadcasting marginalisation to the control of live music, all under the auspices of an occasionally interventionist law. These processes combine to limit musical free speech, without involving conspiracies, the efforts of various pressure groups notwithstanding.

My initial definition of censorship was partly an attempt to broaden the way censorship is thought of and also to show that the dividing line between censorship and regulation is very hard to draw. In places I'm not even sure that it **can** be drawn. A label not signing an act or One not playing a record are at one level simply commercial or editorial decisions, but their net effect is censorial and more attention needs to be given to decisions which censor product before it even reaches the market.

I noted earlier that the debate around pop censorship takes the censorship debate as a whole into uncharted waters and I believe it is in the live arena that this is most obvious. Here the right of free expression meets the need for social control. The needs of residents can clash with those of fans. There is no simple resolution of this issue and any attempt to control live pop has censorial overtones. Again more knowledge is needed about the times when venues ban and when councils withhold licences. Live performance is a vital part of pop's "speech" and its silencing needs explanation. If one person's "regulation" is another's "censorship" then the processes behind such regulation need the

fullest exposure.

The thesis has also shown that it is dangerous to make assertions about censorship. Wells was wrong to say that rock's opponents 'are all conservatives'(1) as the left has its own censorial agenda. Street was wrong to say that the censorship of pop was 'ineffective'(2), as what emerges is uneven effects, rather any lack of effect. Smith was wrong to say that censors have realised that their activity 'almost always backfires'(3), as increasingly British censors have gained the upper hand, as video legislation and bans on broadcasts by "terrorists" have shown. What emerges is a confusion both of methods and outcomes. Again the object of future research should be attempt to clarify the censorial process.

I have been unashamedly Anglo-centric here, but a comparative study would also prove fruitful. This need not involve lazy comparisons between Britain and the US, which are, in any case, of limited use as the American situation is complicated by the 1st Amendment which tends to make censorship debates political issues much more quickly than is the case here. Instead a comparison with a European country or a more authoritarian regime might prove instructive. In the latter case it would be interesting to see if ideology and threats to the welfare of the state fill the space taken in Britain by notions of childhood. But the increasingly international nature of censorship also needs further consideration. The "Cop Killer" case showed how a censorship decision taken in one country effects Britain and such cases have

continued(4).

As to the future, a number of possibilities emerge. I have already commented in several of the chapters on future prospects, but some further comment is needed here. Whilst British pop censorship has taken a haphazard form, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the research and a number of possible scenarios present themselves.

Within the industry several factors are of importance, not the least of which is the George Michael legal case. A shift in the relative power of major artists vis a vis companies may leave such artists freer to put out what they want, but severely handicap those lower down the scale. Meanwhile, the issue of sampling again shows how control and censorship can blur. It is still a moot philosophical point as to whether free speech involves the right to use the recorded speech, or instrumentation, of others. The industry itself will continue to follow the logic of capitalism, selling where it can and censoring that which it feels won't sell or might damage its commercial profile.

Retailers seem to be nervous about the present law and willing to comply with stickering in order to keep sales. Their hand may be forced by the government. The Conservative Party conference of 1993 saw more calls for new obscenity legislation and John Major's speech mentioned moves against pornography(5), whilst some MPs called for tightening in the law earlier in the year(6) and the government has agreed that 'the law could be usefully tightened'(7). It remains to be seen whether new legislation is

forthcoming, but certainly a swing to the right in Tory ranks is apparent and any new legislation on pornography would inevitably have effects on pop. For example NWA's "Efil4zaggin" may not have passed a tighter law. A change in the 1959 Act may yet stifle pop's message.

The immediate future of broadcasting seems to lie with the market. Radio One's changes came in October 1993 and as I write they have yet to fully reveal their effect. It may be that a more diverse approach is adopted(8), but the lack of listener representation and of explanation of editorial policy look likely to remain. On the rare occasions that One bans records it should declare them. It has nothing to lose from debate. Meanwhile commercial radio has yet to prove that it can do more to prevent the marginalisation of genres than One has.

In television TOTP seems set to continue and BBC2 continues initiatives such as D Energy. The fact that independent stations periodically have to bid for their licences means that a long running pop show remains unlikely there(9). Meanwhile, as satellite builds its audience, exclusion via profitability seems likely to increase. MTV aims at a Europe-wide audience and the slow growth of the EC superstate also has a censorial potential, especially if pan-European broadcasting policy becomes adopted

The lack of purpose built venues for pop and the lack of a permanent festival site are blots on the British cultural landscape and constitute indirect forms of censorship. Lack of resources again limits the space for free expression. Another indirect form

of censorship comes via government restrictions on funding. Local authorities now have less to spend on the arts and thus pop suffers at the crucial local level(10). The important college circuit is also threatened by government proposals to end Student Union closed shops and make students opt in for membership, thus denying unions and their entertainments sections funds with which to promote gigs.

Ironically as the world gets more technological, the problem of travellers - those committed to a nomadic, almost pre-capitalist lifestyle - linked to raves is causing problems. The free festival spirit lives on here, but may be extinguished by legislation restricting convoys etc, which becomes law in 1994(11). Such restrictions could restrict raves and thus again censor pop by limiting its space for growth. Meanwhile reports on safety at gigs are awaited and may yet yield censorial proposals(12). The demand for permanent sites for festivals remains un-met and the future of festivals like Glastonbury uncertain. Such uncertainty shows that the battle over where and under what conditions live pop can be heard continues.

The censors I outlined in part five will continue their activities. The only changes I anticipate here is in their relative power. NVALA gained publicity in early 1993(13) and will be lobbying strongly for changes in the obscenity law, as will the various other pressure groups I examined. Changes in the censorial climate may aid their cause, as may debates such as those surrounding the family in 1993 which gave credence to those upholding traditional notions of morality. This was especially so

in the light of "back to basics" calls from a government which preaches the virtues of pre-1960s, notions of "commonsense" and "responsibility"(14). Any change in the law would further strengthen the moralist lobby and give it confidence to widen its attack. The international links I noted in the chapter on pressure groups means that censorial campaigns, like pop itself may yet go global. The global village means that censors can take their messages throughout it and form networks within it.

Religious censors seem set to carry on combatting the devil's music, and may claim the odd local victory, but their main role seems destined to be that of providing the censorial bullets for organisations like NVALA and the PMRC to fire. However the rise of Islam may yet yield a more censorial climate and the rise of more Christian fundamentalists in America(15) mean there are more battles ahead.

The press will continue in periodic outbursts and moral panics, although the centralisation of media ownership raises the possibility of record companies and newspapers becoming owned by the same corporations and such papers treating the products of their sister labels somewhat leniently. But as popularisers of critics like Medved the press' censorial role looks certain to carry on.

MPs' censorial role will also remain of vital importance. They have the power to change laws and may do so to the detriment of pop. Elements within both major parties have their own censorial agendas and growing intolerance is the hallmark of both camps.

Victorian morality is paralleled by political correctness. But again MPs may find their powers increasingly restricted by Europe.

The censorship debate itself will continue to be dominated by the twin axes of offence (now underpinned by notions of political correctness) and causality (similarly underpinned by notions of "commonsense" and shifted in places to notions of "encouragement"). But changes in technology may change the parameters of the debate. Already there is a shift from concern about the effects of television and pop upon children to the effects of computer video games(16). Concern about computer porn and the illicit use of virtual reality technology seems set to expand the debate. Whether they add anything to it remains to be seen.

Thus far virtually all resistance to British pop censorship it has been led by artists themselves(17), but if artists face a struggle and inevitable compromises in order to get heard, then British fans have hardly begun to struggle. Pop may be an active agent and may provoke censors, but its fans have generally remained passive recipients of censorial actions. Although ravers organised against Bright, much of this was done by those whose main concern was the profit motive(18). Otherwise fans, with rare exceptions such as the free festivals and campaigns to change One's output, have put up with cancelled gigs, stickered albums, radio bans, record prosecutions and so on almost without a whimper. The lack of a body analogous to CAMRA for pop fans is a noticeable one. As the pop audience matures it is to be hoped that something similar emerges to defend the rights of consumers of this country's most vibrant

cultural medium.

The wealth of evidence presented in this thesis may leave the reader wondering how **any** pop gets produced, marketed, broadcast or seen live, but I noted in the introduction the need to keep a sense of perspective and it was never my intention to propose a pattern of authoritarian state intervention in pop or to suggest that pop in Britain has been subjected to indiscriminate censorship. It is undeniable, however, that censorship has taken up a growing amount of the music press and that in Britain a creeping process of censorship via increased state pressure has occurred. I think that, historically, pop has suffered more from the insidious forms of marginalisation(19) and denial of cultural value (hence the importance of aesthetic critiques) than it has from overt censorship. But as economic adversity and uncertainty take on the status of something immovable in British society so more and more attempts are made to blame that society's ills not on its material deprivations, but its ill-mannered popular culture. Such attempts should be resisted. Vigilance remains the watchword of liberty.

I would like to end by emphasising why I think it is important to defend pop. Morrison's 1992 survey noted that pop was 'the music of the people'(20) and it is this that needs defending. Pop music **is** popular, in the sense of being enjoyed by the vast majority of the population. It is therefore defensible on democratic grounds. I also believe it is also worthy of aesthetic defence. Popular music remains a vital part of British cultural life. If it is to continue this role attempts to censor it should

be resisted. Rock and roll **is** here to stay, but the nature of its residence remains a battleground.

Notes

- (1) Wells, 1990a p19.
- (2) Street, 1986, p115.
- (3) R.Smith, 1991, p53.
- (4) See for example NME 6/11/93 for Warners taking a more cautious attitude to the material it releases in the light of the "Cop Killer" case.
- (5) See Guardian and Independent 9/10/93.
- (6) See Guardian 25/2/93.
- (7) Michael Jack, Home Office Minister, Hansard 9/7/92 Col 683.
- (8) See Observer 17/10/93 Arts section p4.
- (9) ITV's Chart Show seems to have carved itself a niche and may be an exception here.
- (10) For the importance of the local see Sara Cohen, 1991 and Street, 1993.
- (11) See NME 10/4/93 for moves against raves.
- (12) For safety as censorship see the Libertarian Alliance in Saunders, 1993, pp216-222.
- (13) See, for example, Peters, 1993.
- (14) See, for example, the remarks of Home Secretary Michael Howard, Guardian and Independent 11/11/93.
- (15) See, for example, Guardian 2/11/93 Part Two pp2-3.
- (16) See, for example, Guardian 13/4/93 Part Two pp8-9, Guardian

and Independent 18/5/93 and Independent 15/10/93.

(17) A notable exception here were the No More Censorship gigs organised in Britain to help the Dead Kennedys defence against censorship charges in America. See NME 26/9/87. It should also be noted that America has several fan-based anti-censorship organisations, such as Music In Action (see Billboard 24/10/87, 21/1/89 and 2/9/89), the National Coalition Against Censorship, SLAM, Coalition, Rock Out Censorship and the Free Music Coalition. The best source for information about such group's is Dave Marsh's Los Angeles-based Rock and Roll Confidential.

(18) See pp421/422 above for Colston-Hayter and the defence of raves. See also Saunders, 1993, pp216-222.

(19) For the marginalisation of pop see Morrison, 1992, p4.

(20) Morrison, 1992, p24.

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