

ROCK AGAINST SEXISM

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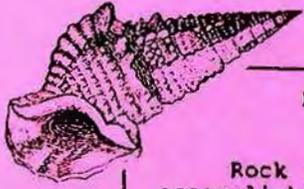
POLITICAL
CORRECTION

CONSOLIDATED interview
BONGWATER interview
HEAVY P.C. DISCUSSION
INTER- and RE-VIEWS
WOMEN WHO SUBVERT TOO MUCH

WIN A BIRD!

1992

ROCK AGAINST SEXISM is a Boston-based group working to fight sexism and heterosexism by promoting women rockers and alternatives to mainstream "rock music." We'd love to hear from you; write us with your opinions, favorite bands, and ideas on fighting sexism while having a rocking good time. Address: POBox 390643, Cambridge MA 02139. Our R.A.S. Rock-line number is 617-437-9593.



R.A.S. 'Banner of Intent'

Rock Against Sexism strives to continue accomplishing these principle goals:

- o To raise the consciousness of musicians, listening audiences, and the music industry to sexist traditions in rock'n'roll.
- o To support and showcase women's and non-sexist bands and their music, not generally promoted by the commercial media.
- o To provide a comfortable playing, listening and dance space for people who don't like or can't get into many of the clubs because of age, race, sexuality or the price.
- o To promote rock'n'roll alternatives to music that is offensive to women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and people of color.
- o To hold workshops and information exchanges, some especially for women, that demystify equipment, technology and the music industry in general.
- o To network with and unify diverse progressive political and musical groups in Boston.

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Cover: Photo by Naomi Rubin. Design by M.A. Peacott. Lettering by PamelabCrawford, Liz Nania, Dan Schultz.

Corrections from Vol. 4: Cover photo (Elvis worship) was by Naomi Rubin. Liz Nania contributed cool art throughout.

UN-P[C B]BG--fashion trend of the nineties?

BACK ISSUES:



For the best in zines, bands (live and on record), and loud angry punk women and men in these days of corporate "alternatives", support R.A.S., with **NO PAID ADVERTISING EVER!** Previous Issues of Rock Against Sexism still available! Prices include shipping (cash only please):

Vol. 2, No. 3 (1989): The Anti-Censorship Issue, featuring Billy Bragg interview, 1st Amendment facts, Censorship's Greatest Hits, poetry, reviews, pull-out poster. (16 pages, \$3)

Vol. 3 (1990): Cultural Subversion Issue, featuring Mecca Normal interview, Tom Jennings of Homocore interview, Graffiti tips, New Lavender Panthers, RAS herstory, poetry, opinions, reviews, RAS actions. (32 pages, \$3)

Vol. 4 (1991): Sex, Drugs, and Rock'n'Roll Issue, featuring Vivians interview; Fugazi interview; discussions of dyke punk culture; views on rap music, protests and censorship, and Queer Nation; centerfold on S,D,RnR through history; pro-sex education; poetry, letters, reviews, RAS actions. (48 pages! only \$4)

SAVE THE WHALES

GREENPEACE



HEY!



Part of it is simple gut reaction. No one has ever liked feeling stupid. Much as someone without an expensive education hates being made to feel stupid about not knowing the traditional literary canon of dead presumably straight white males, so does a live straight white male when the tables are turned.

Say he's a well-meaning guy but makes one of those faux pas. Maybe he's even in the middle of trying to express his sympathy or support for cripples or Indians. We correct his vocabulary, he feels shitty and then, automatically, resentful. Of us, of them, whatever. Hell, I was just trying to be nice, screw it. That visceral rush of fuckyou, which we've all experienced, might have to be swallowed by a rebuked individual. But now it's hitting a large and powerful group who are touchy because they can't shake that sneaking feeling that their monopoly on power is coming to an end.



SAVE THE WHALES



AGAINST SEXISM



AGAINST SEXISM



by Naomi E. Rubin



SAVE THE WHALES

Members of R.A.S. did some soul searching
and rapped a few hours about the P.C. issue.

Politically

CORRECT TACT

Cri: I was talking to people about the Lollapalooza show and just from looking at the bill you could tell this was going to be a testosterone fest. Apparently Ice T offended a lot of people with his "Yo yo bitches yeah, freedom of speech is really important. Gonna shove a flashlight up your cunt..."

S. was upset about it and talked to me the day after the show. She said she felt really bad about what I said because the whole thing was about freedom of speech and who am I to judge. But I think you have to judge. We shouldn't get so paralyzed by fear of the judgement of peers. People who get power or political parties get there because they're opinionated and uni-directional.

Mac: I think they have a right to say whatever they think. But when you buy a ticket you're supporting that.

Cri: But also you have a right to say what you think about what they think. I mean that's free speech too! You get to a point where in the name of free speech you can't criticize it.

M.A.: That's the kind of thing that hobbles the left. You have to make a distinction. It seems that "political correctness" started with what I think of as ultra-radicals on the left ragging on liberals. Then the right wing usurped it to have something to get the masses in step with. Not much else was working. The right doesn't have an agenda that any thinking person would buy, so now they're harping on this "left wing fascism" BS. I feel that I still want to rag on mindless political correctness but I want to be careful to separate myself from the right. It's like the anti-porn feminists being "in bed" with the right in that movement. I don't think the right really gives a shit about women's rights but it was a way to add numbers to the cause.

Stu: Another reason the PC issue is so important for rightists is because it really is a threat to their control of the universities in the next generation. In fact it's an incredibly small threat but when you have feminists on faculties and women's studies departments and very few radical Marxists left it's the last reminder that you have an alternative way of thinking. There were more of those people in the sixties or even the seventies but now there's nothing like that to offset mainstream culture. I think it's particularly a way of hounding leftists or any kind of alternative thinking that challenges the status quo and traditional values out of the universities.

Cri: I actually read a large part of that Dinesh D'Souza book Illiberal Education and he makes the same kind of points in a Mike Barnacle way that makes some sense. When I first came back to the U.S. to go to college I didn't have any money. I applied for some tuition assistance. The guy said this is a minority grant. So even though I qualified for it, I couldn't. I think that is what we're not looking at. Some of the fallacies of Affirmative Action that in this recession era are making people hostile. That seems more realistic than just saying it's the agenda of the right. This is the kind of thing that made me pretty angry.

M.A.: But who did it make you angry at?

Mac: One of the reasons that the PC concept has caught on so quickly is because a lot of people had this nebulous feeling that "maybe this isn't right." People have this resentment about certain things on the left. It's not just a right wing conspiracy.

M.A.: But you didn't necessarily put all these ideas under the term "political correctness"?

Mac: No. I knew there were a lot of liberal ideas I didn't go along with that I thought were ridiculous. But I didn't have the word PC.

M.A.: What I'm talking about is the concept of there being something wrong. That blacks and women and other minorities have been shit on throughout this culture's history and people didn't know how to fix it. So quotas came along.

Mac: I think the majority of people in this country disagree with the concept of quotas.

M.A.: But now it seems like there are a lot of people trying to say there's nothing wrong.

Stu: There is a lot of anger around - like it's payback time or something.

Pam: So we're talking about the backlash.

Also, things like how visible queers are now with Queer Nation and all. People seem to feel why should they get to say what they want to and I can't call 'em fags.

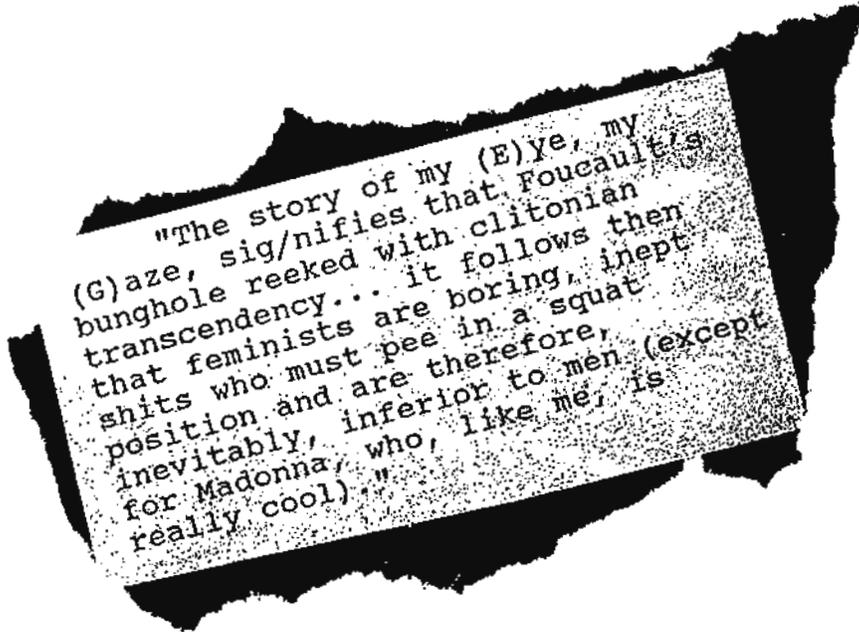


DINESH D'SOUZA

TRANSCRIBED BY MA. PERCOTT
TIRELESSLY EDITED BY MARGARET O'CONNELL & NAOMI RUBIN

- Stu: Seems like a lot of it started because of all the racism and attacks on campus. In order to keep things under control some of the university administrators started making rules about what you could and couldn't say. Then the administrators said "it's our job to make sure people don't kill each other."
- Cri: The whole thing makes me furious. I mean in some states a woman can't get an abortion and we're worrying about whether some RCP boy can burn the flag on the Capital steps. It's ridiculous! I think so much time and energy are wasted on things like this.
- Mar: In that way it may be working - distracting people from ...
- Cri: It's distracting and polarizing people! There is a kind of smugness that some people on the left have in looking down on things like religion that are important to people. People get fed up! "Who do you think you are telling me what to think and that what I do is wrong!" It's that anger that's simmering.
- M.A.: I don't know how long this has been going on but the idea of the liberals monopolizing the media ...
It depends on your perspective. From one perspective the media's a bunch of government ass kissers and from another they're commie sympathizer dupes.
- Nao: It's like there's a need for a scapegoat because people have a lot of resentment. It's a convenient lightning rod for people who feel freaked out that we don't have the Cold War anymore. People can't see why they don't have jobs.
- M.A.: So when the economy sucks and the white boys can't understand why they don't have jobs. I think white men are used to having economic clout and now all kinds of people can't find work. So it's easier to think well someone must have taken my job instead of looking further. It goes back to when we were talking about all the resentment for not getting scholarships and all. A lot of it gets blamed on quotas but if you look at the whole country there aren't a ton of affirmative action programs. The economy just sucks! But it's really to the right wing administrations advantage to focus the blame on welfare mothers and immigrants.
- Cri: Like in the movie Roger and Me - what bothered me through all that is why did those people accept those layoffs? Why don't they raise up in arms and go find this Roger guy and ...
- Stu: Maybe they should have done something like that. But I read some pretty scathing criticisms of that movie where he took ten or more years of events and made it look like it happened in a week. As if those people could have figured it out if they weren't so stupid.
- Cri: The main point was - everyone got laid off, it was the last day, and they had a party! They were drinking champagne and as the last car rolled off the line they were all clapping. This one guy says "Why is everyone clapping? We don't have jobs." How can people see this happen and keep voting the same way -
- Stu: They feel they don't have any power. That's why! They all thought "these people know better than us...We didn't go to college - they did!"
- Cri: Many people who are certainly intelligent enough don't want to discuss politics. They believe they are in a charmed circle and just don't give a flying shit! They don't analyze beyond Time and Newsweek.
- Mar: Is that true in the US in other than the privileged classes? People do care but they don't know what to do about it. They don't talk about "politics" but they talk about how we're going to get food on the table. It's more basic.
- M.A.: Let's be realistic - we talk about how stuff gets done but what do we do? We deal with representation. We change representation of actuality but we don't change the actuality! We get really mad about "why don't they make change!"
- Stu: But that's of value because here we're talking about the representation of all these people getting upset with PCness! What were people in Washington, people in the street, caring about political correctness? It's not an issue - yet it's on the cover of all our magazines. People are worrying about "are my kids going to be corrupted?"
- Nao: It's on the cover of magazines, therefore it's an issue, like the Drug Problem - it sells magazines, becomes more of an issue, and therefore sells more magazines.

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BONGWATER

interviewed by Cristina,
Mac, Mary Ann, and Stuart

This interview with Ann Magnuson and Kramer of BONGWATER took place when they played at The Channel in Boston June 21, 1991. Ann M. writes and sings all the lyrics, Kramer writes the music. Since that time Bongwater released *The Big Sell-Out*; rumor has it they've broken up.

Kramer: Are you going to all ask questions like simultaneously?

Stuart: Yeah, and see how you respond. It's really a psychology experiment.

Cristina: We'll give you affection and then take it away.

Stuart: We're part of Rock Against Sexism, which tries to promote women in music, kind of feminism through promotion instead of censorship.

Ann M.: Feminism through fun! A novel concept.

Stuart: Yeah. We were impressed not only with your former work but with your most recent album, *The Power of Pussy*. It seems that gender issues have come up, and we were wondering how that came about. How did that album come about?

Ann M.: I think it was, I had a story called "The Power of Pussy"

Kramer: And we laughed. The same way we named the band. We heard something funny and we thought this is an interesting subject.

Ann M.: We decided to build an entire album around it. It's a concept album, something I knew a little bit about.

C: Did the band start out as performance, or music?

Kramer: It didn't start as a band, it just started in the studio.

Ann M.: It was performance on record. He called me up out of the blue and told me he had a recording studio at his disposal. He had done sound for another band that I was in, an all-girl band called Pulsallama.

Mary Ann: Oh! That was one of my favorite bands!

Ann M.: Yeah. I don't think I'd ever work with ten--certainly not those ten-- women again. Well, there were only one or two that were really scary. Kramer did sound for us eons ago. I barely even remembered him.

MA: How long was Pulsallama together?

Kramer: Too long.

Ann M.: I think I quit after about a year. I ran this club and we had this women's offshoot group called the Ladies Auxiliary of the Lower East Side which was a girl's only club. We'd meet in people's houses every couple of weeks and have public dinners, and just cruise on our femaleness.

Kramer: I heard they rated guys' sexual performances and had them in a file cabinet on index cards, about what they like and don't like.

Ann M: It was basically a terrorist tactic. We decided it didn't even matter if this thing existed, we just wanted guys to think it existed.

Kramer: To instill fear in men.

Ann M: Psychological warfare.

S: Were you working with them?

Kramer: Me? No.

Ann M: We would have these nights at the club: Christmas, Ladies Wrestling, and one of the events was called Rites of Spring Bacchanal. We decided we needed some Bachanites, some kind of performance, so Pulsilama was drummed up.

We performed and it was a smash.

MA: That's where the togas came from.

Ann M: Yeah, and there was dead meat hanging around, and people were on mushrooms. And so everyone went, 'Oh, this is pretty good!' and we started doing gigs and of course, it turned into a nightmare the minute we got a review--not even in a reputable magazine but a little fanzine. It just went to people's heads, and an incredible amount of dissent and disruption, and friendships destroyed, and really sad, and after that I said "I am never going to be in a band again." I fortunately quit before they opened for the Clash; I was fairly hot on that, but anyway, to make a long story short...

MA: So when you got into this you didn't think it was going to be bad.

Ann M: Well, then I was in a heavy metal band for a while, but it was more of a performance, and then I had a folk band--those two concurrently. So as long as you don't stick in one thing for too long, you won't end up making enemies of your friends. The problem is that everyone wants to get rich and famous off this stuff and then they start fighting, and ... When he called it was just fooling around in the studio, so that sounded like fun. So we did, and then he sent the tape around, and nobody would release it, so Shimmydisk started, and the rest is herstory.

C: You've got a very varied crowd tonight. There's the art-scenesters, there's people who must have heard your songs on 'FNX, so that must be pretty interesting. That's the whole scope of Rock Against Sexism. We don't want to preach to the converted, we want to get even young guys from high school interested.

Ann M: I don't see any Young Republicans down here, but we have a pretty diverse crowd. I love our crowds.

S: Have you been touring out for a while?

Kramer: From the first days.

Ann M: We did a European tour, we did two dates in California. Prior to that we played a couple of gigs.

Kramer: Our performances were rare and scary.

Ann M: Yeah, I get stage fright. Kramer's big on spontaneity and spur-of-the-moment. I guess I'd gotten so si used to rehearsing everything so much, actually it's been really good.

Cristina: Do you get any negative responses?

Kramer: [with German accent] Yes, in Germany they say 'Why do you play so many covers?'

Ann M: And we got this publicist friend of mine to send this guy at USA Today who wanted to do something on the TV show [Ann Magnuson is a co-star of the TV series Anything But Love] a tape, and he did not get it, were his words. And he gave it to the music critic at USA Today--"Can you make heads or tails of this ?-- and she didn't get it either. So it's two different universes .

Mac: How did the networks take to the 'Bongwater' thing?

Ann M: They don't know, and they don't give a shit about it. They don't know anything, as long as I show up and do the work. I did this awards show, this ultra-fashion rock show in Europe. I got to wear this fabulous gown. I wanted them to say, "From Bongwater..." and they did during dress rehearsal, and some fucking prick asshole from ABC said, NO, she's promoting this show, and we're ABC, and fuck Ann Magnuson and 'my lawyers going to hear about this, when I get back to New York' and so they wouldn't say it. I could've probably fought it, but the atmosphere was so wierd that I just let it go.

Mac: So was it that guy who got you on the show?

Ann M: No, it was this publicist friend of mine, who was doing PR for it, who said 'you should be on this show'. So ABC approved, said yeah that's OK, because I'm part of the ABC Family. The dysfunctional ABC family, the black sheep of the Neilsen family.

M: How did you get into the whole network thing?

Ann M: In another life I'm an actress. I've been in a couple movies, and a producer who liked me was brought in to revamp that show [Anything But Love] anyway, and...Heh, you know it's a steady paycheck. It's a good gig, it really is. The writing is definitely better than most. If they'd let me write some of it-- They don't; the division between the writers and the actresses is very clear.

M: You have to say exactly what they write for you?

Ann M: More or less. If something is really offensive, I'll say something. They've changed a few things.

BONGWATER

BONGWATER DISCOGRAPHY
Breaking No New Ground (mini-lp)
Double Bummer (2-lp)
Too Much Sleep
The Power of Pussy
The Big Sell-Out

C: I saw you at the Brattle, a couple of years ago.

Ann M: Oh, yeah yeah yeah!

C: Are you still performing your own material?

Ann M: Yeah, I did a show at Lincoln Center, at the Serious Fun Festival, and I was going to actually tour with that, and then the [TV] show got renewed, and I'm kind of involved with Bongwater, and it's more fun, and it's actually

C: It's being heard by more people!

Ann M: It's helping me develop writing material, in more interesting territory. But I'll go back to that, just not right now. I remember very clearly saying something about the Kennedy's being gun-shy, and I specifically remember a few people getting up and walking out.

C: A few people walked out, but most people were really happy you said it.

Ann M: So what did you all think of *Thelma and Louise*?

C: I was going to ask you that! All this male-bashing thing. I loved it, I nearly came during some of those scenes, especially the truck-driver scene. And it was Hollywood, it's great that Hollywood can do something like that!

Ann M: I guess so, I just think it's kind of sad that there's so few movies that deal with women interacting with each other, that that has to be something wierd and radical and hype, and put on Time magazine like this is news!

MA: It has to speak for all of us, 'cause it's the only one...

Ann M: Don't you think it would have been better if Kathy Bates and Mia Farrow played those two parts. Because I find it hard to believe that two gorgeous, real thin beautiful Hollywood actresses as two white trash women. I couldn't really get over that hurdle, but there were parts of it I liked. And then, she had to fuck the guy. Couldn't he just be some schmoe?

M: It's like they had to have him in there to say they're not lesbians, and he showed her how great sex could be.

Ann M: Right.

MA: Yeah, her post-rape trauma was alleviated with her first orgasm.

Ann M: Well, you can't expect too much.

C: The truck driver scene was pretty good. I was in an audience that was very mixed, and all the women were cheering and clapping.

Ann M: I guess every little bit helps.

C: You know I think the time for being polite is over. I personally am not into that. The criticism too, I mean it was called fascistic by some critics, 'fascist male-bashing'. Like, Eddie Murphy does a film, he sleeps with a woman and then, he fucks her and then shoots her.

S: Yeah, it's like this whole 'P.C.' thing is a way to close down debate. All these film critics come out against this movie because for the first time it starts to open up this area that's been completely closed down, so immediately it's fascistic, it's the extreme. A few women become faculty at the university and their literature is considered with the canon, and suddenly, "They're trying to take over! They're closing down thought! There's no more free thought!"

Ann M: I'm real pessimistic about the state of affairs right now. I mean, I think the media creates an awful lot of "issues" that are really beside the point. I think they're smokescreens and they're decoys. I'm not buying into any big conspiracy theories, I just think the media used to be a watchdog, it's now a lapdog, and instead of talking about this movie, shouldn't they be telling me about 40 million people being infected with AIDS, or the women... They are important things, otherwise we're worrying about what Madonna's putting up her twat, this and that, and so much attention gets put into it. The country deserves Dan Quayle. It should just get so bad, because the Depression... I'm just so... It's Big Brother, totally insidious and disgusting, people are not hip to media's manipulations, it's just frightening. I have no solutions. Just rocking!

Kramer: Rock!



Ann Magnuson as "Follopia"



Ann Magnuson in *The Power of Pussy*

M.A.: Representation is important but it's not how everyone deals with issues. What's the difference between an "issue" and someone's real life?

Cri: You have to ask who are you reaching? Theory and practise - where do they meet?

M.A.: You have the PC argument within academia and in the activist community, too. A lot about this controversy in the press has to do with academia but what about the effect of this backlash on everyday life? Like coming out when queer bashing is increasing and how feminism has become such an unacceptable dirty word! It seems like it's getting to a point where the extreme right says you're a white male boy and you don't have a job because of quotas and a black man or woman got your job and you have a right to go bash some heads!

Mac: Wait! Wait! "White male boys." It's not okay to keep putting down white male boys! That's racist and sexist, just as much as putting down black men and black women, gays, anyone. It's not okay and it's that sort of thing that made people like myself start complaining about it before it became a mainstream thing. It's not okay for say, Greg Tate, in the Voice to capitalize Black and never capitalize white. I think you have to make a distinction, as you said, of people on the left who've said this is no longer right, and right wing people who are trying to use it against the left in general.

Mar: Isn't it true that the voices that started this whole PC thing are predominantly white male? like George Will?

Mac: I don't know. I know I'm a white male and I was against it long before George Will.

Stu: It is true that there have been a lot of extremes on the left that have led a lot of people to get fed up. Like you're saying the sort of worship of any poor, working-class culture no matter how sexist or hypocritical because that group is oppressed. Any representation of that group is godhead! Capitalism has taken a lot of that and twisted it around.

Nao: Do you think that if Dinesh D'Souza were exactly as he is but white-looking that anyone would listen?

Mac: Is he black?

- He's Indian -

Nao: He's not representing brown-skinned people as well as he represents white-skinned people as far as I can tell. But we feel we should at least listen to what he has to say -

Cri: What about Farrakhan?

Stu: I think a white man saying the same things wouldn't draw as much attention to himself because white men in general have had an easier time expressing their opinions no matter what they might be than black men who haven't had the same media access. This only happens when one of them says something so extreme that everyone rushes over to see "What are you saying? White people should be killed. They're responsible for everything!" Suddenly they have this huge national platform when there are lots of reasonable African Americans saying all sorts of interesting things and no one listens to them!

Cri: There's got to be room for criticism. I was reprimanded once for criticizing clitoridectomies for being a white woman criticizing something that was beyond my culture. I could be coming down from Mars and seeing it and criticizing and be right! It's just a fucked up thing. There's this awe and respect for anything that's, say, a Third World culture, a hands-off policy. Why can't we criticize it? There's got to be a point where we have a voice that's strong and can't waver on certain issues. Black men should have a voice but stop oppressing women the way they do.

But I think because the academic community has more access to the printed word that they're going to be pointed at.

Liz: I just think it's treading dangerous ground to think we can look at other cultures and criticize their process. I mean there's so much to work on in white American culture that I don't feel like I want to get into other cultures. You know you said for black men to stop oppressing women. Well, for me personally it makes more sense for me to deal personally with where I'm at. Let's face it. I don't think we can call ourselves sacrosanct.

Cri: That's how you learn - voicing your questions or misgivings about something. I feel that the political correctness about not voicing your opinions becomes a trap. You get accused of being privileged, but I've never felt terribly privileged.

Pam: But don't you think that by being white in this culture you are privileged? Don't you think there are things you can get away with that a black woman can't?

Cri: Yes, absolutely.

Mac: I don't necessarily agree. I don't feel especially privileged to be a white male.

Pam: How many IDs do they ask you for when you go to a club?

Mac: I've been followed around in stores because I'm too young or the way my hair is cut. It feels like I can't criticize blacks, hispanics, women, anyone except people of Irish descent! You have to be able to talk to another and say this is good about you and this is bad about you. I live in a mostly hispanic and black neighborhood and if I see hispanics throwing garbage over the fence all the time I should be able to say this is bad. I don't feel I shouldn't be able to say that because I'm the wrong color. As a white male I've put up with a lot of shit, too. I'm in danger on the street! Maybe I won't get carded as much when I go to a club, but there's a flip side to it.

Stu: I think that points to a reality that in America there are more and more people of color living and creating their own kind of cultures here and white people who happen to run into those cultures do feel threatened. There's a big demographic shift going on right now and it's making a difference. In the past, maybe fifty years ago, there were probably not many places where that would happen to you. Being white you would be in the majority almost every place you'd go.

Mar: But we still are in the majority most places we go. Let's talk about academia and the predominance of white male thought there. Although there is an unfortunate struggle in your own living situations, it's still the case that the ideas and decisions that affect the most people are still being made by privileged people who are white.

Cri: There are still only a few women professionals in the department where I work. You've got to look at the fact that things are being run by men.

Mac: Men. Yes, definitely.

Mar: Okay. We can say men!

Liz: Yes, I'd agree with that!

M.A.: Phew! I thought I was having a Twilight Zone experience. I thought my entire everyday experience was being negated before my eyes!

Stu: The only way that change is going to happen is people protesting when they see something really offensive.

Cri: That seems so simple. But it's not. Because even when I protest among my work community, people that are intelligent and very educated, most of them master's graduates, they look at me as if "un hmm" they're bored. They don't want to know about it. They want to go home to dinner.

M.A.: Education has next to nothing to do with any of these biases. You can have a PhD from Harvard and still be a bigot! From most of my education, I wouldn't know black people did anything! If I didn't turn it around 180° the other way I wouldn't think women did anything, either. I wouldn't think women wrote, or painted, or made music, or built buildings, or anything! You can go through the education system and still know so little!

Nao: There isn't enough PC in education.

Liz: It's a couple people making an outcry about anti-semitic remarks or racist remarks or whatever. It doesn't mean that anything is really taken care of with all the bullshit going on. It just means a few people made a stink.

M.A.: But it's such a threat. As if it means if we're going to read Kristeva, we're not going to read Henry James. It doesn't work that way. There are thousands of courses in colleges in this country reading Beowulf!

Cri: I did a women's studies class project and 85% of the books we read in all my courses were by men!

it's sakeznik thing.

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RED TOMATO



Photo C 1991 by Robert Revere

Red Tomato: celebrated Seeds

Out of the garages and basements of Jamaica Plain comes "wuzz rock," that blend of rhythm, noise, and self-conscious statement that calls itself rock/art. Apparently there was something called Uncle Foamy, which you may remember (I haven't a clue, myself). Red Tomato grew from that soil.

The tomato, as a plant, has an interesting history. Horticulturists classify it as either a vegetable or fruit, depending on whether they feel sullen or amorous that afternoon. Historically, the tomato was thought to be poisonous, because it is part of the Nightshade plant family.

Unfortunately for those of you who remember 1970's Boston Lesbian rock, this particular species bears no relation to Deadly Nightshade. Kristin Hohlstein, Luke Gonze, and Jon Hanley make up a trio assisted by various impedimenta, such as pots, pans, film can lids, a typewriter, and an occasional guitar or xylophone.

They have been appearing in Boston area clubs since 1991, although their own publicity says that they sound better in basements. I agree, and now they have released a five-cut cassette, which means that any of us can take a boombox into a basement to hear them.

Luke Gonze, described as a heavy, balding person who looks good in plaids, is the writer and lead singer. After listening to the tape several times, I still am not sure whether he is a talented musician who has adopted the persona of a moronic young

white straight male, or whether at some point in his life he actually had experience as a moronic young white straight male, perhaps playing an extra in Repo Man.

I am leaning toward the former, because he plays this part so well. Without a lot of purpose and thought, no one could sing such patently offensive lyrics ("Skin lampshade on his head, man..."), sing them so badly, add in those pointless guitar solos (a must for all MYWSMs) and have it result in something you really can listen to and enjoy.

Kristin Hohlstein, described as wearing blazers and banging on things, gives us the musical counterpoint behind Gonze's keyless ramblings. She ties together the bangs, clatters, and occasional tones of traditionally-generated music.

Hohlstein's voice isn't featured on every cut, and it makes a difference. "Blue Glass Stairs" and "Paper Doll," cuts which heavily feature Gonze's inept vocals, become downright accessible, even haunting, under the influence of Hohlstein's background harmony and an imaginative rhythmic structure. In contrast, "Skin Lampshade" and "De-evolution #9," two cuts from the incoherent-rambling school of art rock, present a gritty, stupid, drunken sod Tomato. You almost appreciate the abrupt ending to "De-evolution," since you are tempted to turn it off at that point anyway. Luckily it's the last cut, because it would be a shame to have turned off the good stuff, too.

Intensive Care

"Assault Down Memory Lane"

Guilty Records

Charlotte, NC

We got this album in the mail a few months ago, with a note asking if someone would review it. This is a little late, but we haven't put out a 'zine since then:

These days, when you hear a boy band with left-of-center lyrics and some good rock music, you take notice. Especially if they ASK to be reviewed in the RAS 'zine. Shows good taste.

Intensive Care's album starts out with promise. Lead singer and songwriter Chris Piegler sounds a little like a modern-day Phil Ochs, with darkly political words set to upbeat, even danceable, music. The title cut and the following three (Stirring Up Trouble, Song to the FBI, Marijuana Past) build up to a hard-edged Dead Kennedy-esque version of Helen Pardy's Perfect American, the only cut not written by Piegler.

Then it all breaks down. The right-on geopolitics gives way to mildly objectionable sexual politics in Tourist Attraction ("She said 'you treat me like a tourist attraction,' I said, 'I can't help it honey, it's just the passion...'"). The music becomes a mish-mash of '50's revival and pop, and finally dissolves into the undefined liquid that drowns most singer-songwriters, even in the rock genre.

IC tries to end with one more stab at social comment in their final cut, True Seeker. But by then the thread has been lost, and this LP goes back on the shelf, with the only the dim possibility that I may pull it out sometime to listen to the A side again.

Sorry, IC, but don't let that stop you from sending more stuff in.

-- Ken Withers



For home managers who wish to communicate more effectively with their Spanish-speaking domestic help, these two cassettes and booklet make life easier. Included are common Spanish terms and instructions for each area of the house and for each appliance. \$23.95. Order #S24400.

REPRINTED WITHOUT PERMISSION

Combat Rock

The army drafted Elvis in 1958 but didn't do much with him. Today's savior service has enlisted the likes of Mick Jagger, Jon Bon Jovi, and Axl Rose — all in the persona of Sergeant First Class Eugene Cedras, front man for Camouflage, the army's latest weapon.

Cedras explains that Camouflage performs "MTV-compatible" versions of the rockers' hits on a high-school "recruiting mission." Based at Fort Meade, Maryland, the band is called in when "recruiters say they're having a hard time with the principals. We help them with the image of the army and get them into the schools." Given MTV's visual onslaught, the brass knew they "needed more than the music to sell the army to the kids." So Camouflage takes over a darkened high-school auditorium with a flurry of lights, smoke, amplified helicopter noise, and the announcement that the "strike team has landed." In face paint and combat boots, the band belts out rap, salsa, and rock in front of a jungle backdrop and a mock bunker built around the drum kit. "Three or four weeks later," says Cedras, "the kids call up and say they've realized the army has a lot more than guns, tanks, and missiles." His toughest battle, other than nailing down Hendrix's vocals, has been to find songs that get cheers but avoid drug or sex references, which might "put the army in a bad light." And Cedras is "careful not to use any peace or protest songs. We play good-time music. It's presentable to the pope, if need be." Rock the Casbah.

—Gustavus Stadler



Photograph by E. Rampell
Illustration by Tim Carroll

MOTHER JONES/NOV./DEC. 1990

CONSOLIDATED



● MARK PISTEL, PHILIP STEIR, ADAM SHERBURNE

NORMAN WONDERLY

I interviewed the band Consolidated over a year ago before their show at ManRay in Cambridge, Mass. This interview was lost and put on hold and then found after I moved twice across town, and then had to wait for the next RAS issue. I talked with both Philip, the drummer who looks surprisingly like Howie Mandel, and Adam, the outspoken, unnecessarily dominant and hyperintellectualized frontman. I should add that Philip joined the interview about one-third of the way into it, so Adam might be just a smidge less unnecessarily dominant than it appears here. This interview followed the release of their first full-length LP, "The Myth of Rock," but before the writing and release of their second LP, "Friendly Fascism," both on the Network label. Consolidated draws heavily from personal, political experience, a fact I learned all too well after this interview, when I noticed on "Friendly Fascism" that two song titles, "The Sexual Politics of Meat" and "Unity of Oppression," stemmed from topics discussed here. In fact, I felt that much of the interview was an apology for going the mainstream route, or at least an excuse for why their record sales and radio airplay are so poor. Looking back, it's also interesting to note how much "postmodern" terminology is used--buzzwords like "destroyed" and "fraud" when discussing pop culture. I tried as much as possible to retain the flavor of inflection and intonation of the transcribed interview tape, hence the use of capital letters and italics at times. I still can't decide if I like Consolidated yet, or better yet, if I trust the genuineness of their PC-speak. You be the judge....

interviewed by Regina Gillis

Regina: I didn't get the bio from Network yet, so I was just wondering about your musical and political backgrounds.

Adam: We started in '88. Our common background is as professional musicians. Our experience is obviously negative and exploitive--all based around the industry, either major label-level or garage band-level. The three of us wanted to continue playing music, but we wanted to try, not in too much of a utopian or naive way, but in some kind of practical way, to find circumstances under which we could make music that wouldn't just be SO exploitive and with such huge contradictions, and here we are just three years later, finding out that those contradictions are almost impossible to avoid on some levels. But we've at least arrived at a situation with a label, and with a band nucleus that we feel really confident we can address our views and confident that they will be conveyed through vinyl, video and through live performance the way WE want them to, so that's kind of a small victory and a struggle. We're just really psyched to be representing our interests as opposed to those of the industry.

R: When you say vinyl, video and live performance, do you have a ranking or preferences in using media?

A: No. We come from very conventional musician's backgrounds. We'd much rather be referred to or perceived as "bureaucratic entertainment specialists." Our point is that all these mediums are really fucked up. They're really destroyed in many ways. We're just trying to use images and narratives from all of them.

R: I've heard your music described as 'dipping into' a lot of different genres. How would you describe your music.?

A: I'm afraid we're guilty of not diversifying our categories enough for our purposes for our first LP release, so we did get classified as, for lack of their creating a better term, "industrial hip hop." But we do use electronic bats at times, we do use hip hop stylisms and we do expropriate black culture at times, using what other people consider the rap genre, although we don't consider it as such. We would always consider ourselves just 'dorky new wave political pop band'--either 'bureaucratic music specialists' or 'pop band.'

(Philip walks in at this point.)

R: In relation to that, who do you think your audience is?

A: We've done two extensive tours of North America and the first one we went on was a headliner. We found out that our audience was heavily consisting of the industrial audience, meaning progressive, violent, white males, just like the heavy metal audience, but different hair styles, different clothes. Over the course of that tour and this second one, to whatever extent--we have a very small following anyways--it has been evolving and transforming the whole time. I think a lot of those people who found out the first time we played that they weren't going to get their gratuitous assault fix from us kind of stayed away, and the people who were more interested in the kind of music we do enjoy playing...

Philip: Yeah, and we definitely find more women on this tour coming to see us.

A: Yeah, more women, more non-whites....

R: Do you think it was the message that you were conveying that turned a lot of people away--that they weren't getting what they wanted?

A: Yeah, and that's just another sad indication of the lack of power of the medium, and we tried to convey that as bluntly and as oversimplified as possible in the record but...

P: And in our talks at the end of the show, when we talk about feminism and anti-racist ideas, I think a lot of people, especially a lot of the white men, don't find what they're looking for in our band...

A: And they don't find what they're looking for when we turn the music off and they start assaulting each other [referring to the fist fight after the ManRay show on their first tour]. And we made that very clear the first time around.

R: Yeah, I was here for that.

P: Or when you sign someone's poster: 'Feminism and Vegetarianism--The Future' and they're this white industrial guy or white guy or anyone that's expecting...

A: 'Schnitzel and Computers....'

R: Speaking of vegetarianism and how the consumption of meat relates to violence, have either of you read *The Sexual Politics of Meat*?

A: Yeah, we just met Carol Adams [the author] in Dallas and had a chance to hang out with her.

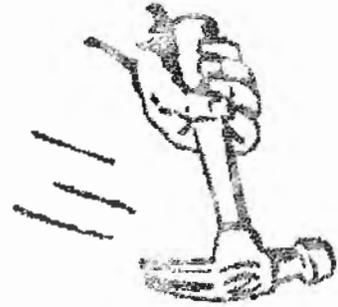
R: I was just blown away by that book.

A: Yeah, it's a great book.

R: Are either of you vegetarians?

A and P: Yes.

A: It's a compelling story and vegetarianism is somewhat of a compelling ideology, whether it's a growth industry or not.



R: The response to 'Myth of Rock' was initially progressive-slash-indie pop. Has it been picked up by any of the other quote unquote black stations?

P: I think one cut was deliberately edited and marketed for urban radio, "Dysfunctional Relationship." There's no way anyone in black radio...

A: Well, black radio/commercial radio never would play us...

P: Just like white commercial radio would never play us... But we were definitely heavily played on the alternative black stations, whatever that is--community radio. We were on BeatBox charts for quite a while...

A: But that has nothing to do with getting charted. There's a huge difference.

R: What's your experience with sampling, which you seem to do a lot of--and being sampled? Have you been sampled?

A: No, not yet. I'm curious to see if anyone ever does. Our samples are so weak. We don't give a shit what people do. We *do* sample other people and we've had to account for that, either financially or ideologically. Wait--I know one band that's sampled us--"Different Story."

R: Coming from Rock Against Sexism, where we try, among other things, to 'demystify rock,' I'm compelled by the title of your album, *The Myth of Rock*. Can you summarize what it is that we [the culture] do?

A: Did you say "demystify"? That's essentially all we [the band] try to do--take all the...

P: Myth about rock...

A: Yeah, the mythological aspects of it--and the euphomythicized aspects of power of pop culture--the enlightening and liberating aspects of entertainment--rock as some kind of statement against censorship--there are all huge frauds. I mean, the album could have easily been titled 'The Fraud of Rock' or 'The Maligns of Rock,' but it seems to be so engrained in our culture now that we took more of a bombastic and historical term, that just to immediately...

P: But it has a lot to do with the literal meaning of what rock means today--the literal word 'rock' kind of means "white" in the sense that in rock music, you automatically think of white music. You think of Guns 'n Roses, The Rolling Stones...

A: You think of Elvis Presley and The Beatles... Or, if you think in terms of rap, you think of The Beastie Boys and Third Bass. Whereas in the word "rock" you could think of it as a cultural black American phenomenon that for years was not listened to by whites, and for years whites said it was unintelligible jungle music--or and now, it's considered white, so I think it's a perfect analogy for society, how things are taken away and...

R: How we assimilate?

A: Yeah, expropriated and them assimilated.

R: How do you feel about folk music and the 'folk renaissance,' if it's at all a response to sexism or elitism in the music industry? You know, Tracy Chapman...

P: Yeah. And Phranc.

A: Yeah, and Faith Nolan and people of that genre. To me, it's still problematic stylism. I would say that any woman trying to express those views, it's going to be hard, in my book, no matter what the genre they're appropriating for use of that. Folk music, to me, also embodies that same kind of arcane racism and sexism as any other music. The fortunate thing is that it has so much less of a macho, violent, sort of musical overtone...

P: But that's why it never reached the audience that it should reach. That's the problem with folk music. It stays in its own circle, and never goes beyond. Tracy Chapman, in some ways, did.

A: She sure as hell did.

P: But I think her message was lost, unfortunately....

A: Well, her message could be construed as non-specific and ambiguous, like anyone else's. It's just a stylism. Stylisms are all part of a music that's been destroyed. Everyone just has to use what they use and try to account for it--try to hope that it operates on their audience in a way that is satisfactory to THEM. I don't know what Tracy Chapman thinks of the impact of her music--I'd like to find out if it's satisfactory to her the way it's being perceived the way it is, or if it's not.

R: Or why she had to add drums to it-- is that, like, to sell it?

A: Is that occurring?

P: SHE ALREADY DID IT!

R: Well, I mean, she started out here, in coffeehouses, with just a guitar....

Rock Against Sexism and WZBC's "A Shot in the Arm for the Needle Exchange Defense Costs Fund"

Harry Leno, an RAS member who has been active in ACT UP's IV League in Boston, as arrested for distributing free clean IV needles. These needles are essential to help stop the spread of AIDS among IV drug users. They are also illegal to possess or distribute in Massachusetts.

Since our state and most of the U.S. still holds such archaic, moralistic views about AIDS and drug use, the work that groups like ACT UP/IV League do saves lives. We decided we could help out with defense costs and raise some consciousness and money for further IV League efforts.

With the invaluable help of Desaray and Martin, the "Shot in the Arm" benefit came together at the Middle East Cafe in Cambridge. We want to thank the bands, artists, and audience for taking part and making the night so great: Lisa King, Karen Cummings, Pop Smear, High Risk Group, and Bulkhead.

PHOTOS BY
DAVID HENRY



POP SMEAR

10/30/91

Hi RAS
Thanks
much for yr
gift. The 9 I
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still wait
judge's decision
case up to the 1
we going to trial
Court will have
Thanks a
support :)

Reve,

a benefit for the IV League/ACT U



ACT UP/Boston
 PO Box 483
 Kendall Square
 Cambridge MA 02142

Rock Against Sexism
 PO Box 390643
 Cambridge MA 02139

Dear Rockers,

I want to express the deep appreciation of ACT UP/Boston's entire membership for K.A.S.'s Middle East Cafe evening benefiting the ACT UP I.V. League. The films and music were terrific, and the chance to get the word out on the I.V. League's crucially important work is always appreciated. The donation was very, very generous, and will go a long way toward supplying the I.V. League's needs.

Because the I.V. League, like the rest of ACT UP/Boston, is made up entirely of volunteers, every cent donated goes either directly toward the purchase of the kits the League distributes, or to help defray the legal expenses of I.V. League members who have been arrested doing this frontline, lifesaving work.

Self-proclaimed "AIDS activists" are a dime a dozen these days, but in all my time in ACT UP/Boston -- which goes back to day one of the organization -- I have met with few people who actually DO IT. The members of the I.V. League are among those few. They do tremendously important work and do it dependably, at high personal risk, and with absolutely no fanfare. These people are heroes, and Rock Against Sexism is the only organization that has yet publicly supported them.

Thank you again. Your support means more than you know.

Stephen Skuce
 Stephen Skuce
 for
 ACT UP/Boston

HIGH RISK GROUP

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BULKHEAD

P Boston

Love, [Signature]

cont. from p. 17

R: How important are gay and lesbian civil rights to you--coming from San Francisco--in your music?

A: The idea of lesbian and gay rights just can't be divorced. It's something we've been called on. One of the last cuts we wrote for our record is one of the first cuts we cut [from the record]. It's sort of a historical assessment of lesbian and gay rights movement in San Francisco, originating with Harvey Milk. We did a cut based on that, and it didn't make the LP because of musical and time constrictions on the album. And we got a lot of flack from lesbians and gays that wrote us, particularly two or three letters. These people were incensed--that we didn't understand the concept of unity of oppression. So on that level, we definitely try to realize that, and we wrote this person back and reassured them that our work in the gay community in the San Francisco area is pretty well documented and has been part of our platform. We just had to think "if we are going to make these kinds of statements in the future, we just can't afford to leave these interests out." They're every bit as critical, obviously. Everyone has to make their decision on how they're going to contribute to the eradication of this kind of oppression, but to view them as single issues is insubstantial. You have to put them all together--racism, sexism, homophobia, oppression of disabled people, species-ism--things like that, or just try to, at least, say in the context of a three-minute pop song, if that's possible, that they can't be taken separately, that they all have to be figured in universally and dealt with, or else none of them individually is going to be eradicated. You know what I'm saying?

R: I know what you're saying, but I'm not sure I agree with it, Tentatively. Are you going to address it on your next recording?

A: Oh yeah, of course.

P: You don't agree with the idea of unity of oppression?

R: No, I agree with that idea, with reservation. I believe in coalition-building and working together, but calling different struggles of different groups 'unity of oppression' has a sort of generic, reductionist tone to it, especially when used by people who have a problem specifically with gay and lesbian liberation. It's a lot easier for people to work around their queasiness with gayness or sexuality by working really hard on something similar, but not the same, like racism or any of the other isms out there.

A: No, what I meant to say is that everyone's got to have to decide where they're going to attack. It's not like "You're going to individually impact all of those areas, or it's not a realistic expectation." Or on a physical level, you can only do so much. But philosophically and intellectually, if you understand in your mind, that all these things are linked, that's where you can make a difference.

DATED

R: Because it sounds like you got over your disillusion of the music industry pretty quickly, what do you think has to change in the industry?

A: We're never going to change anything in the music industry until we change the social conditions around us that give rise to the music industry. That's what we try to tell people at the

show and with the music. You can rebel against the industry, you can be disgruntled and be bitter about the fact that you're trapped within

a corrupt industry, but it seems like an unrealistic expectation to make any changes on that level when our entertainment culture is just a function of our political economy. So we encourage people to try to impact it outside of that and try to get something positive out of it from within and realize that it's not going to change unless there is some kind of sweeping fundamental structural change in our society. I mean, music should be free, but I feel that music will never be free until our society is free. We have all kinds of naive aspirations of what we can do, and yet every time we run into a huge wall trying to evoke these

CONSOL

responses or try to instigate those kinds of changes. We just have to see certain things are added to the music business, the society is still in a commodified mode. It just destroys it. If you want to say "Yeah, we'd love to see more education in music, or in pop music, more information" but that's going to actually destroy the meaning of anything political in our music because of the way society is and the way society treats those mediums.

P: But that's what we're guilty of...
A: Yeah, we're totally guilty of it, of destroying society is and the way society treats those mediums.

R: More artists are attempting to make their art more accessible. Karen Finley, for example, tries to secure child care for her performances. Some artists incorporate ASL interpreters. In your music, you talk about anti-racism and accessibility--how do you try to make your music more accessible?

A: We're very confident that we have a plan to make our music more accessible to stop playing it. You were here last time, right?

R: Right.

A: Well, the Q&A discussions at the end of the shows are probably the most significant contribution we can make. We can be immediately accessible--we can be attacked, we can be

critiqued. As in our music and performance, the mode of focus would work entirely in the spirit of

local agenda, wherein the audience can attack each other and there's no music, no video, no lights distracting it, however long that period of time is. That's our principle of creating accessibility and creating interaction.

R: About the Q&A thing. It's really different and unique and maybe taking things back a step for those who can't quite get up to that level during the time of a performance. It gives a chance for fallout. But when you talk about contradicting yourself--the Q&A is a great attempt, but at the same time, as a female, I saw three, presumably straight, white men directing the microphone around. I realize there has to be some kind of order, but...

P: Meaning us, straight white men?

R: Meaning men up on a stage, directing the discourse, Surprise, surprise.

A: Yeah, that's the only thing that we ask. We could tokenistically make sure that there was a person representing all interests and all backgrounds there to mediate the mike but we just ask to be taken for who we are, and if there's some form of overriding patriarchal tone there, then we're guilty of that. The only thing we can reassure you and the audience of is that we're not Phil Donahue. The audience, at least, gets to drive the questions. And if it looks like there's some kind of uncomfortable patriarchal setting that it's being conducted under, that's because it is. And we just ask each listener/viewer to judge us within the context of what we're providing. People that even ask us outside the context of the Q&A but within the context of the music ask us, "Why don't you have a woman [in the band]?" "Why don't you have a lesbian, a gay? Or a minority?" Well, we don't. We're not tokenists. We're just three white men and this is just the problematic nature of us talking shit about these issues. We don't appear to be giving our perspective of the point of experience of women or minorities. This is all from the experience of us, of three white guys.

R: Yeah, I noticed that disclaimer last time, too.

P: We forget to make that sometimes. There's so much stuff flying around and you don't even represent yourself quite fairly enough. Someone goes away saying, "Those Bastards." That happens--all the time. But that's what so great. People should be able to question their entertainment.

A: Call them bastards--and write them--vehemently.

R: I think when you try to see yourself as less than perfect, you get, undeservedly, and deservedly, sometimes, set up for more criticism. Maybe that's where that's coming from.

A: That's interesting. I would think the entire concept of success in the music industry is based on the idea of creating an image similar to that of a political candidate creating his image, that is, of perfection, of having all the answers at the right time, to fairly represent everybody. Maybe your point is better in that people like George Bush do win, even though it's quite apparent to most of us the level to which the deception occurs--it's so obvious--"I am a human being and I do have my faults"--and end up within our system being castigated and taken down even further.

R: Like Muskie?!

R: Can you explain the militaristic stage presence and the podium you use in your show? Are you spoofing on religion and militarism, or was that your way of showing strength in your message?

A: That's all gone now. They're all just destroyed images of fascism and control and power and legitimacy. The podium also afforded us the ability to not have a light guy where the lights could actually be done from the podium. This time we're presenting an equally destroyed cosmetic appearance of the "historical rock band."

R: Who do you think right now is the most dangerous person or institution?

A and P: White American males.

R: Specifically Americans? I can think of a few Austrians...

A: You're talking about in the world?

R: Yeah.

P: First world.

R: Do you mean that figuratively? White male as like person in power?

A: I would say people that control economic power, people who control imperialist power. People who control the powers of the world.

P: I could also add males in general.

A: Or give you a personal account of his upbringing.

R: Why?

A: Just kidding. It's just such an impossible question...

P: It's only impossible because he doesn't want to put any subjectivity into it.

R: Jesse Helms?

A: He's just a product of his interests of the corporations that keep in power. But who's behind them and what's behind that? And what is his stuff? Thomas Jefferson--huge founding father/slave owner who started the tobacco industry.

R: What do you say to people who view you as a band that suffers from straight white male guilt? Guilty?

A: No, definitely not. We stress accountability. We don't stress defensiveness or guilt. Accountability is based on action. Guilty just further internalizes it and makes it more subjective and delays action.

**Nichts hören?
Nichts sehen?
Nichts sagen?
... gib dem Ha// keine Chance!!**

Recent Berlin Anti-Hate Sticker

Cont. from pg. 12

Cri: That's not realistic though. What record is banned all over the country?

Stu: It's totally realistic! It doesn't have to be banned. It just won't get made. Let's say feminism isn't very popular...

Liz: Yeah, let's pretend!

Stu: Right, and for 200 years women weren't allowed to really publish anything.

Mar: Why should you care, though, if one bookstore won't carry it?

M.A.: One reason is it could be you next.

Pam: Exactly!

Stu: I can't walk down the street with my arm around another man without the threat of being beaten up. That's about freedom of expression. There are plenty of situations where people can't put out records or do this or that because their house will be firebombed.

Pam: I have this magazine called Frighten the Horses and in it is this article where they quote Bush as saying ACT UP has an "excess" of freedom of speech with their demonstrations! Pretty interesting. That's our president!

Stu: Well, he's said a lot of stuff about PC too! He jumped on the bandwagon pretty quickly.

M.A.: Yeah, at some commencement speech he gave -

Nao: I was trying to figure out where all these cover stories came from. I think that commencement might have been the point where PC got into Time, Newsweek, Mother Jones, etc

M.A.: So much for the liberal monopoly on the media.

Stu: Even if the media wasn't behind this story because it makes money, there are all those professors in academia who are threatened by these ideas who've been trotted out by the media to give expert opinions on everything. They're on Nightline enough and they say "There's this serious crisis in education! People are not even listening to me any more!"

Pam: When we talked about having this discussion, I wasn't really even aware of this big hoopla! I was thinking about things in my own life. Say like with feminism, certain types of sexual expression are bad, like S/M. That's where the repression comes in. When people I identify with are telling me that I don't have any right to express that, that's where this conversation was intriguing to me. The rest of it I'm sort of out of touch with.

Mac: I know. I really wasn't aware of all these cover stories.

Nao: That's 'cause we don't pay attention to mainstream media!

Liz: As you were saying, Pam, we've probably all used the term "politically correct" in a derogatory way.

Nao: It's not a term anyone would use to describe themselves.

Mar: It's all labels!

Pam: It's all pretty subjective -

Cri: It's subjective especially if your experience has been of these people who have grand causes but are shits to the people around them! That's something to take into consideration too.

Nao: You can't become so theoretical that what you actually do doesn't matter.

Pam: Speaking very personally ...

Liz: Good!

Pam: That's when I can actually talk about this. This is really personal, but something as simple as deciding to shave your legs or not! Theoretically, I knew it was bad to shave your legs when men don't have to. But I really hated walking down the street with hairy legs and people staring. I felt uncomfortable. But it was a decision to come to this point where if you feel comfortable it's okay for you to do it. But it was hard because I was affected whether feminists would think I was feminist enough! It's such a small thing but it's interesting to look at this whole process I had to go

through. I was really convinced at one time that if a woman dressed up in a dress and wore make-up she was bad! We shouldn't have to put on all this artificial stuff to beautify ourselves and show off our bodies. Now I'm at the point where I think people should do whatever they want. That's very liberating for me in terms of feminism in sexuality. So in my own life, at times, the idea of political correctness kept me from doing some things.

M.A.: I don't think the original intentions of those people now called politically correct were to bug people. The intention was to create change ...

Pam: and they attacked and closed ranks ...

M.A.: and got sort of self-righteous. But they paved the way for us to be able to choose.

Pam: To make an informed choice - you're doing it not 'cause others are but because you've had the space to think about it.

M.A.: So are we fighting this thing? I guess there are groups springing up at universities all over ...

Stu: There are?

Cri: Yes. There's one at B.C., M.I.T., ...

M.A.: So what are we non-academics doing? And should we?

Cri: T-shirts!

Stu: I think now it's important within our circles to demystify what's going on. It happens all the time in the alternative music scene, or whatever scene you're in. Some things are cool and some aren't. Whenever you try to bring politics to it, that's just not cool.

Pam: Or what if you like something that's not political.

Stu: Right. Among people like us, something that's just grungy and says politically incorrect things ... or Madonna.

Cri: People have to be able to argue, say, totally disagree.

Pam: Mud wrestling is the answer!

Cri: Next R.A.S. event, we challenge some right wing honcho to mud wrestle!

M.A.: Let's get Allan Bloom.

Stu: I just don't want to see this PC thing turn into an excuse to shut up people like us.

M.A.: Is it shutting us up?

Stu: It is affecting people. Like bands who don't want to make political statements because people don't want to hear it, they're no fun ...

Cri: I guess that's true, but I think the majority of people who don't make political statements don't because they're lazy.

Stu: But what about the people who are actually scared?

Cri: Have you met any?

Stu: Yeah! I'm one of them!

M.A.: It's happened to me too - around issues, say, of pornography. I went back and forth a lot, and had a visceral reaction against some feminists allying themselves with right wing censors - then on the other hand if I'm anti-censorship I end up defending Bob Guccione!

Mar: What a choice!

Liz: That silencing is the only negative thing I can see coming out of this. When I first heard about this debate through M.A., remember how you had to explain this? I thought wow, they're finally taking us seriously! You said, "No, Liz. They're using us!" I thought if they're up in arms about PC types, they must really be hearing what we have to say! But I am afraid it will have the effect of making some people afraid to speak out. I know how it happens to me (not because of right wing pressure) but through communities I respect. I might imagine their disapproval of opinions I'm in the midst of forming! I used to write more opinion pieces for, say, R.A.S. or whatever. I just

cont. next page

ALLAN BLOOM

Y WARKEST WAYS



stopped because I could hear all the censors in my head and they were from outside, what I call "PC types" saying "Wait. That terminology's incorrect...That isn't cool Hmm..." I'd get confused and feel fenced in. I'm just starting to do it again! I just wrote one today for Lesbian Visual Artists Newsletter. I've realized I just can't be worried about stepping on toes. You try, you do your best.

Nao: Well, there are real toes and then there are these red herring, kind of manufactured ...

M.A.: Toes!

Cri: There is stuff where legitimate analysis is needed. Like rap music, where any rhyme that was made. It's incredibly patronizing, in my eyes. Any rhyme: cat, bat, hat! People would make a big stink about it!

Pam: Who? ,

Cri: Critics, the music industry. Like in England there was this blanket admiration for rap. Not looking at the sexism, this admiration for Public Enemy. I think some of it's really good and some of it really sucks. Just like Rock n Roll! So why because you're a black artist should I have to bow to you because of it? I think that's on the consciousness of a lot of people, especially on the left.

Mar: Until 2 Live Crew who were so blatantly untalented and sexist! and while we're at it, N.W.A!

Cri: Yeah, people said, well, we can't criticize them! As women, we have to be able to speak out about it! My favorite example is a party in Brookline, a room full of white people dancing to "Fuck tha Police." And I bet if your car got stolen you'd be kissing those cops asses! There seems to be an essential hypocrisy!

Nao: Are you saying that if you're white you're not allowed to dance to that song and if you're black you are?

Cri: I'm saying it seems hypocritical to glorify that song because growing up in white suburban culture haven't had a lot of clashes with the police and are, by osmosis, hating them.

M.A.: I think what you're saying is pretty true on the left because it identifies with oppressed groups. I think this culture in general thinks rap is noise and should disappear down the toilet! I think a lot of what you're reading is the alternative media. I agree that we should be able to criticize rap ...and it's starting to happen.

Cri: But rap is popular everywhere, kids in malls listening to it, all sorts of radio stations ...

M.A.: MC Hammer maybe, not N.W.A.! Don't misunderstand. A lot of rap is terribly misogynist and has to be addressed but in this culture, as a whole, rap is mostly seen as an aberration ... I think a lot of white kids groove to it 'cause it's hip. But if they really heard some of the black nationalism in some lyrics they'd be scared out of their socks! You see on the train a guy gets on with Public Enemy on a boom box and the whole car goes into apoplexy!

Cri: That's because it's shoved in your face! Naomi doesn't go around blasting Peter, Paul, and Mary!

Pam: Do it, Naomi! Do it!

M.A.: I think a lot of young white boys are into it because it expresses a lot of rage, they can't rage against authority and women, whatever - I think the crossover appeal in the lyrics certainly doesn't happen around black nationalism and this won't be popular - but I think the crossover appeal is in the ego and misogyny.

Mar: Definitely!

Pam: Oh yeah! I think so too.

Mac: It wasn't always that way - the early stuff had really positive messages - Grand Master Flash - the message ...

Pam: It's a lot of the same old ego like in rock n roll, Guns 'n' Roses, whoever -

Cri: But I can feel free to speak against Guns 'n' Roses!

N

FEBRUARY 1992

WHY ARE DEER PRO CO PAR SCA F

Ice Cream
zips his



THE MEKONS



JAYNE WICKLER

THE MEKONS

The Curse of the Mekons, 1991 (Blast First)

Live at Nightstage, Cambridge MA 7/3/91

Live at TT The Bears, Cambridge MA 10/28/91

The Mekons' latest album is a masterpiece, so it's only fitting that "The Curse of the Mekons" nicely sums up their fates in the music business. At over ten years old, the Mekons are one of the few early British punk explosion bands still together, even though it's been done with endless personnel changes. Says Jon, "That's the wierd thing about the Mekons--we can't reform to play in America 'cause we were too stupid to even split up."

Co-writers Jon Langford and Tom Greenhalgh have written some of the decade's best music combining a socialist-feminist political persuasion with powerful hooks and hauntingly beautiful melodies, many sung by vocalist Sally Timms. But until last year's *The Mekons Rock and Roll*, which was their first major label record, they have been largely an indie phenomemon. Their success in America led to the deal, which produced one of the great rock and roll albums of the past few years, containing such gems as "Memphis, Egypt" and "Empire of the Senseless" (with lyrics "This song promotes homosexuality; it's in a pretended family relationship with the others on this record").

Always critical of "rock", the Mekons then faced the curse of the music industry. They were dropped when their record failed to reach company sales expectations, and when they turned in this latest album, which wasn't "commercial" enough. Like so many other indie bands of late, in a collapsing economy and an indie scene nearly dead from multinational speculation and the CD conspiracy, they were signed, barely promoted, then kicked off. Fortunately for them they have so many fans they have been able to put out this record on a small Brit label. And despite the fact that it's only available here as an import, they've gotten unprecedented coverage in the indie press, telling their tale of death and misery.

The Curse of the Mekons is a dark lunge at the heart of capitalism, with beautiful songs summing up the terribly depressing age we live in by recasting it as a horror story. In "Sorcerer" Tom sings of "a bourgeois sorcerer/In a million factories department stores and mills and banks dark powers walk in broad daylight, social forces driven in dreadful directions, whole populations conjured out of the ground." In "Authority" life in the "fully controlled simulacra" (gads! that french intellectual stuff makes it into music!) is described in ways that most in the MTV age can identify with: "Watch me express myself/in the peak of fitness and health/in bondage I'm really free/these chains are really me." "Brutal" tells the history of drugs as a brutal weapon of oppression from the English in China to the CIA and the EEC, with the insistent refrain of "Here comes McDrug" over an almost reggae beat. "Funeral" makes fun of the glee with which so many ideologues have greeted the so-called death of socialism, noting "This funeral is for the wrong corpse." The unrelenting bleakness of the material does not ever come off as either depressing or preachy, though. The Mekons have mastered that elusive pop art of commenting on the contradictions of capitalism while eeking some joy out of living in it. "You don't find any answers, you find a few problems you can sympathize with," noted Tom in an interview.

And Sally Timms soars with a country-folk tune that harkens back to the early albums *Honky Tonkin'* and *The Edge of the World* with a cover of John Sherrill's "Wild and Blue", a sure hit in any other world. Being in love is what the Mekons are all about, and despite their strained personal relationships (Jon and Sally were a pair, it seems), they sing with a simple authority about life, maybe from those years of experience.

Live, The Mekons are a rowdy English pub band, bringing a drunken glee to the songs on their albums, and exchanging quips and witticisms with the audience and each other. In the show I saw at Nightstage they were touring with the bassist and drummer from the Blue Aeroplanes, theirs having quit. By the show at TT's months later, they had returned with another woman bassist and Jon's brother on drums, blasting through songs from the new album and even newer songs from their next album, which will be full of love songs, "cause the Mekons are full of love!". Their drunken antics led them to do a hilarious cover of R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" at Nightstage, the band fumbling through as Jon made mock-Stipe arm movements. At TT's they were so 'pissed'(drunk) they were a little too loose, but always entertaining. Sue Honeyman ("Honeyperson"), The Mekon's violinist, had just gotten married before this latest tour. Her honeymoon would have to wait for the end of the tour, they quipped. Too bad the sound was so terrible you could hardly hear her beautiful playing. Like The Mekons, life goes on.

• Stuart

THE EX

Scrabbling at the Lock with Tom Cora, 1991 (RecRec Records)
1991 Singles set
Live at CBGB's, New York 6/18/91



The Ex are an anomaly. Anarchists from Holland, they sing in English, put out vinyl records in an age of CD acquiescence, sing political songs and play experimental music, and do it themselves when everyone is rushing to sign to some multinational corporation. And live, they're unbelievable, energetic, explosive, powerful. I don't think I've ever been so blown away by a live performance, with the guitarist wailing away on his guitar with bottles, mike stands, elbows, strings flying everywhere while the bass and drums pound a relentless, polyrhythmic heartbeat and G.W. Sok spits out his questioning of everything we know while spinning and jumping back and forth. With no resemblance to the macho posing that the "intensity" of so many bands consists of! Then the band shifts sonic gears as Katrin leaves her drums to come forward to sing a song attacking "Stupid Competition" among women, or to play steel drums for a frenzied instrumental.

Fortunately, The Ex have become more well known here since Homestead Records put out 1989's *Aural Guerrilla*.. Their work has spanned the past decade (see discography below), going back and forth between punk intensity and experimental sound collage. All with uncompromising lyrics and politics, and packaging that is fun as well as educational. Their recent singles series (complete as usual with Rodchenko-inspired sleeves and a cool box to collect 'em all in) shows their fingers always on the sick pulse of political life. The first single "Slimy Toad" makes fun of Amsterdam's mayor who embraces Nelson Mandela while presiding over a city built on the profits from apartheid and ending sanctions to sell Nelson out. The second single "Militan" is a couple of Kurdish folk songs by exiled Kurdish singer Brader Musiki, living in Holland, and comes with a booklet telling the history of the Kurdish people, so important to understanding the Gulf War and the Middle East. The next single includes the beautiful Hungarian folk song "Hidegen" and the anti-rape "She Said", both sung by outstanding Ex drummer Katrin; it's inserts are focused on violence against women, not only in general, but through the mental health profession and Dutch women's organizing to confront their oppressors.

The new album was recorded with Tom Cora, the famous cello player, and combines the explosive anger of The Ex with the experimental arrangements most recently seen on the band's *Joggers and Smoggers* album. Every song is a powerful, angry cry, some from the European world, some inspired by Turkish and arab figures of resistance. As Tom Cora writes on the album cover, "It seems like The Ex show their respect for other people's music by making it as true to their own as possible." How do you write about a band like this? I'll quote a few lyrics:

KING COMMIE

Out of the sewers come the rats
old rats! young rats! comrades?
a mishmash of misinformed reds
The deformed reform confirmed
conform the roots of all rats,
a firm con to show where it's at?
King Commie is dead?

Who's to blame?
he wasn't even fat, how about that?
Lazy slavish chewers down the sewers?
too many reds to be fed?
oh King Commie is he dead?

The real face is down the sewer
where the rot tends to grow to renew her
in the eye of the reborn consumer
says the presumer, turning red
Redecorate the sewers, say the rats
Anything will do but that
but King Commie, is he dead?

Hung by a massive thread?
a ratrace in the sewers?
time to place your bets!
Divers and strivers and
survivors in the red,
they all wanna get fat
ready for another prat
but what about King Commie,
is he dead?

A DOOR

To me, war...
it means a door
opened, and then:
in one
split
second
the whole world collapsing

Someone standing there
with the terrible news,
that voice that says
your child is dead.

THE EX "6" SERIES

This is **ISSUE 6.5**, (it was scheduled for October but, hum, well, it's true, we're indeed about two months late). Anyway, it contains a 7" record, a poster, leaflets and the sticker for the cardboard singles box (which comes with issue 6.1). **Issue 6** will be out end of the 13th month of 1991.

Issue 6.1 (February): a 7" record (with Slimy Toad/Jake's cake) by The Ex, leaflets, a real Amsterdam scam-bag, and the cardboard collection box.
Issue 6.2 (April): a 7" record with Kurdish music (Militan/Çemê Rynê) by Brader Musiki and The Ex, leaflets, a 24-page Kurdistan-booklet, and a sticker.
Issue 6.3 (June): a 7" record (with Hidegen tujnak a szelek/She said) by The Ex, Steunpunt Zellen-leaflets, a poster, and a sticker.
Issue 6.4 (September): a 7" plus bonus 7" with live recordings from the special Ex+quests-concert in the Amsterdam jazzclub Bimhuis, leaflets, and a sticker.

DISCOGRAPHY

ALL CORPSES SMELL THE SAME - 7", EX 001 (6-80) H6 Records
NEW HORIZONS IN RETAILING - flexi 7", 003 (6-80) Ping Pong Records
LIVE SKIVE - 7", EX 004 (11-80) Eh Records
+ DISTURBING DOMESTIC PEACE - LP, EX 005 (11-80) Verrevords
WEAPONS FOR EL SALVADOR - 7", EX 006 (3-81) J3,50 Records
VILLA ZUID MOET BLIJVEN - split flexi 7", 007 (8-81)
HISTORY IS WHAT'S HAPPENING - LP, EX 008 (3-82) More DPM
DIGNITY OF LABOUR - 4X7", EX 010/11/12/13 (3-83) VGG Records
TUMULT - LP, EX 014 (4-83) PAI Records
GONNA ROB THE SPERMBANK - 12", EX 015 (5-83) Sméllcèer Records
- EX 016 (still coming soon?)
THE RED DANCE PACKAGE - split 12", CNT 017 (11-83) CNT Productions
BLUEPRINTS FOR A BLACKOUT - DLP, EX 018/019 (3-84) Pig Brother Productions
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH - split 7", DRI 975 EX 21 (8-84) Gramschap
SUPPORT THE MINERS' STRIKE - LP, RAT 001 (2-85) Records Against Thatcherism
PAY NO MORE THAN 6 FR. - split MC, KZ 01 (4-85) Calypto Now
FOKKHERRIN - LP, EX 024 (9-85) Peckabilly Records
1936 (THE SPANISH REVOLUTION) - 2x7" photobook, EX 028/29 (7-86) Ex Records
TOO MANY COWBOYS - DLP, EX 031/032 (6-87) Ex/Ron Johnson Records
DESTROY FASCISM! - Audio 7", TUNE 2 (6-87) Loony Tunes
LIVE IN WROCLAW - MC, KZ 1 (8-87) RED Tapes
HANDS UP! YOU'RE FREE - LP, EX 035 (5-88) Ex Records
AURAL GUERRILLA - LP, EX 036 (6-88) Ex Records
RARARAP - 7", WAWA 01 (6-88) Lala Records
JOGGERS & SMOGGERS - DLP, EX 040/041 (11-89) Ex Records
TREAT - split MC, KZ 02 (1-90) Convulsion Cassettes
LIED DER STEINKLOPPER - 7", EX 043 (1-90) Ex Records
DEAD FISH - 3"CD/10", EX 044/EX 044 (6-90) Ex Records



RALBÖR, P.O.Box 14767,1001 LG Amsterdam, Holland;
THE EX, P.O.Box 635, 1000 AP Amsterdam, Holland.

•stuart



PHRANC - "POSITIVELY PHRANC" - Island Records

Hurray! Phranc is back and in a welcome change from last year's "I Enjoy Being a Girl" LP, her new record avoids her prior pitfalls of being overproduced and campy. Don't get me wrong, she's still a bit nerdy, intergrating film titles into the appropriately named "Hitchcock" - "You were flying North By Northwest, you were climbing 39 Steps, and I watched through my Rear Window as you walked away", but even at her goofiest she still doesn't make you wince like you might at a bunch a trekkies doing Mr. Spock impersonations. At her worst she's your crazy uncle Bob at the family reunion telling jokes older than his teeth, at her best the incredibly cool older sister who always seemed to be one step ahead of your thinking. The singing is brilliant, frequently shifting gears from delicate to strong and demanding Phranc is truly a vocalist, knowing that passion is often the most important part of one's performance. There's some fun little songs here too, "64 Ford" which proclaims "It's not crazy for a girl to love her car", "Surfer Girl" an acapella 60's style torch song, and "Gertude Stein" a mock cover of Pablo Picasso with a few lyric changes- "When she walked down the street girls could not resist her stare, Gertude Stein never got called an asshole, except by Alice". Also some very sweet love songs which boldly but non-obtrusively state their female subject. To me the high point of the entire LP is "Tipton", an ode to the late Billy Tipton who spent her life masquerading as a man, playing piano in a big band, building up ~~the intensity~~ intensity with only a guitar and voice to hold up the framework it leaves me teary eyed and that's a lot!

Although Phranc would label herself a folksinger she certainly avoids any stereotypes of sluggish hippies drowning in Peter Paul and Mary. This primarily acoustic album is far from placid, the minimal instrumentation is easily overlooked for the general fullness of sound achieved and the songs bring this LP much closer to a fine pop record. Play it for your parents and see if the lyrics get noticed.

Erin Amar

"The press tends to focus not on the lesbian aspect of my music, but just on the lesbian aspect, period," she says. "They don't seem to be very interested in the music, which is very frustrating to me because the only reason I say I'm a lesbian is because I really think that it's no big deal. I really think my music is for everyone, and I think my songs address many, many issues, and I definitely don't think I make lesbian records or lesbian music. I'd rather discuss the music because that's what I am. I'm a professional musician, not a professional lesbian."



BVP (Byches With Problems)- "The Byches"- No Face Records

BVP are angry and have they have a right to be, they're black women, and they're women tired of being pawns in a white man's world. Through 12 tracks Lyandah and Tanisha spin tales of exactly what it is to be a black woman in modern America, and it's just as pretty as the TV news. Songs run the gamut of female angst; from an angry woman who has her cheating boyfriend shot down (Hit Man), to how to deal with rude comments etc. from construction workers (Comin' Back Strapped- "Byches like me got a fuckin' gun...so go ahead yo' and press your luck"), to women with abusive boyfriends (Shit Popper - "three to the head/leave the motherfucker there lying for dead), to date rape (No Means No-"We went out and you spent some cash/that don't mean you bought this ass"), and the mercenary side of boyfriend selection (We Want Money). A large brunt of the music, however, is focused on sex which includes explicit, and I mean EXPLICIT sexual lyrics which have gained BVP the title of the female 2 Live Crew. What is ignored by persons who would make such comparisons, is it is a relatively new concept for a woman to present ideas like using men for sex and money (not to mention foster a healthy/realistic vision of women as sexual beings with desires). The selfish and often harsh way in which these women speak is more about empowerment and women taking no shit from men, rather than a Cosmopolitan-esque 'how to please your man' guide to sex. Arguably the beats could be harder, the raps could tighter and less overdone, running into gratuitous and continuous cunnilingus references, but this album is overall the kind of thing to bring an evil smile to the lips rather than a look of shock. The "PARENTAL GUIDANCE - EXPLICIT LYRICS" sticker is guaranteed to make you want to buy it for children immediately.

BAND FORMING!
 Non P.C. Feminist Singer/
 Performer seeks guitarists,
 bassist, percussionist to indulge
 in many musical styles &
 Performance - Thrash, Torch, grunge,
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FACTORY RECORDS
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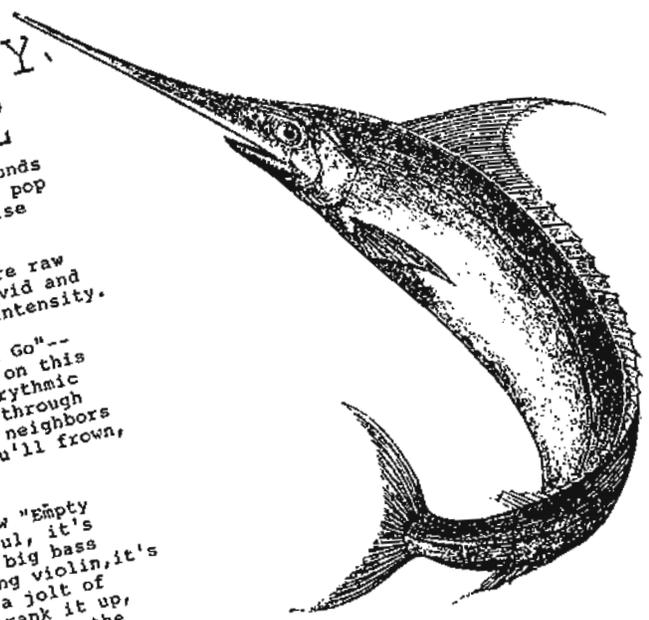
CRAY,
 Records
 CERILLE

Tim Alborn has an ear for stirring sounds that run the gamut from the beautiful pop of Magnetic Fields to the crunchy noise of Crayon. A few new releases:

MECCA NORMAL: "How Many Now?" +1--More raw emotive playing and singing from David and Jean, few performers achieve this intensity.

POP SNEAR: "Angel Talk" b/w "Gotta Go"--Six Boston women kick up a ruckus on this two song platter. It's harsh and rhythmic and raw, it's a dark journey through a trailer park and a peek in the neighbors window. You'll bob your head, you'll frown, you'll enjoy.

HIGH RISK GROUP: "Daddy Rolex" b/w "Empty Hands"--It's tense, it's powerful, it's memorable, it's thick guitars, big bass and drums and hypnotic squealing violin, it's what you put on when you need a jolt of something fast and loud. You crank it up, lie on the bed and don't answer when the neighbors pound.



Harriet PO Box 649 Cambridge, MA 02238



JACK O'NUTS--Live, Laura is a maniac, jumping into the crowd, walking in circles, howling away. This lets me focus on the crunchy guitar and solid smacking rhythm section, it makes me edgy and crazy and I walk in circles and howl and I don't want it to end.



BAND/LABEL ADDRESSES

BRATMOBILE: 3 song single on HOMESTEAD records, all three women put out 'zines of their own, I haven't seen them yet but here's the addresses TEENAGE GANG DEBS \$2+2 stamps, po box 1754, Bethesda, MD 20827-1754; GIRL GERMS \$1+stamp, po box 1473 Olympia WA 98507; ACTION TEEN \$2+2 stamps, same address as Teen. Gang Debs

MUDWIMIN: 3 song single on IMP records, \$3 PO Box 34, Portland, OR 97207

AUTOCLAVE: 3 song single on DISKORD records, 3819 Beecher ST NW Wash., DC 20007 or Box 7154 Olympia Wash., 98507

JACK 'O' NUTS: 2 song single on SOL label, band address is Center of Malcontinance, PO Box 1144 Athens GA 30601

COME: 2 song single on SUBPOP, probably snatched up by collector scum and unavailable but try 1932 First Ave, Suite 1103, Seattle Wa 98101

Babbk by Pam N

'ZINES 'ZINES 'ZIN

Taste of Latex, \$4, PO Box 460122, San Francisco, CA 94146

They call themselves an omniseual magazine and each issue is guaranteed to arouse as well as disturb. Among the highlights of volume #5: a terrific editorial by Lily Braindrop on sexual fantasies, an interview with gay playwright Robert Chesler, a "Practicing Pervert" column detailing the do's and don'ts of vaginal fisting, a consumer's guide to body modification (piercing, tattoos, etc) and a disturbing story by Maria Jimenez detailing the thoughts of a man attracted to a young girl. Why do all these sex 'zines come out of San Francisco?



94104 Frighten the Horses, \$4, 41 Sutter St #1108, San Fran., CA
 Frighten the Horses reprints loads of news stories detailing the erosion of first ammendment rights along with a wide variety of erotic stories, drawings and photos. #6 has a piece by Pat Califfa stories, #7 has a letter from London about their lesbian sex wars and more. They don't call it "document of the sexual revolution" for nothing.



SECOND SKIN (\$2 Alyssa Isenstein, One Mead Way, Bronxville, NY 10708)
 Alyssa writes from the heart about being a woman and a human in a fucked up world. She also writes about music. #2 has interviews w/ Buzzcocks and Smashing Pumpkins, and lots of show/record reviews. Off to a great start.

PUSSY GRAZER (\$4 Sexual Orgasm Prod., PO Box 20553, Tompkins Sq Station, NY NY 10009)
 A hip funny homo'zine that likes, dish. Targets include queer nation and mainstream gays. Read about gender bending dancer Trash, surreptitiously taped conversations, and much more. Comes with a free condom!

SCREAM BOX (\$3 7985 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 709-51 Los Angeles, CA 90046) Way cool dyke 'zine. #2 has dildoes of your dreams, a Pat Califfa poem plus tons more. #3 is the therapy issue, it comes complete with a chain so you can wear it around your neck!

HOTHEAD PAISAN (\$4 Giant Ass Publishing, PO Box 214, New Haven CT 06502)
 A comic book for the avenger in all of us. Hothead is a lesbian terrorist who turns pigheaded men to dust and enjoys every minute of it. See your murderous fantasies in print, you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll purchase semi-automatic artillery. A must read.



CUNT (\$4 Queer City Prod. c/o A Different Light, 489 Castro St., San Fran., CA 94114 include age statement)
 Nesto dyke 'zine, CUNT number 2 covers dyke photographers, WHAM! (not the insipid musical act, but the women's activist group), trendy lezzie bars, safe sex, etc. etc. You know you want it.

HOLY TITCLAMPS (\$2 Larry-Bob, PO Box 3054, Minn., MN 55403)
 The queer 'zine that keeps on ticking. Larry Bob does a great job with HTC, and the extensive queer 'zine listings alone are worth the price of admission.



ANGRY WOMEN, Reasearch Publications #13, available from Last Gasp, 2180 Bryant, San Fran., CA 94110, 415-824-6636

At last Reasearch Publications have put out something worth buying. ANGRY WOMEN collects interviews with 16 stereotype smashing women performers- Diamanda Galas, Kathy Acker, Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, Wanda Coleman, Susie Bright and many more share their insights about sex, race, language and destroying society's constraints. An impressive work from the modern day Medusa on the cover to the poisonous flowers bordering each page, ANGRY WOMEN is a must have.

INCITING DESIRE (\$3 343 Soquel Ave, Suite 151, Santa Cruz, CA 95062)

A sex 'zine that aspires to appeal to all preferences. #1 was mostly homo with stories, photos, poems and more. HOT!

FEMZINE (\$3? 2 Bloor St W, Sta 100, Box 120 Toronto, Ont., M4W 3E2 Canada)

Femzine is huge and packed with articles on civil disobedience, sexism in the hardcore scene, interviews with the bands Chicken Milk and Mourning Sickness and tons more. Big and necessary.

Reviews by PAM N.

whipped, how come we can't allow that a lot of class. Underclass people who have been struck by AIDS are actually indifferent to it. One reason why the disease became such a horror is because of the sentimentality and notions of the idealism

Wives like the kind of sex they are getting in these battered-wife relationships. We can't consider it women which have taken these can we?

venge—if you get raped, if you get beat up in a dark alley in a street, it's okay. That was part of the risk of freedom, that's part of what we've demanded as women. Go with it. Pick yourself up.

my father made me this way. I'm this way because my husband made me this way." Yes, we are indeed formed by traumas that happened to us. But then you must take charge, you must take over.

Impressions of Camille Paglia, as interviewed in Spin, Oct. 1991

- *****
1. Give or take a few drops of Wite-Out®, she has reviewed herself in this dismissal of ACT UP:

She is showing such contempt and scorn for other people's spiritual values. The idea that you attack and declare that you override all other human concerns, this kind of thing is a disaster. It's infantile. She seems to have her own private psychological agenda; she is addicted to rage and she has no philosophical understanding of life, of the kind that was demonstrated by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Morton Downey, Jr. in skirts.
3. BFD. Flash in the pan.

Whipped, how come we can't allow that a lot of class. Underclass people who have been struck by AIDS are actually indifferent to it. One reason why the disease became such a horror is because of the sentimentality and notions of the idealism

Whipped, how come we can't allow that a lot of class. Underclass people who have been struck by AIDS are actually indifferent to it. One reason why the disease became such a horror is because of the sentimentality and notions of the idealism

That's why so many serious artists from the '50s consider Warhol a traitor. Where today? It's not in high art—it's in understanding of life, of the kind that was

by Naomi B. Rubin



RAS
P.O. Box 390643
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear RAS,

Thanks for sending me a copy of volume 4 of your publication. It was interesting reading, and I'd like to get a copy of volume 3, so enclosed is \$2 for that.

I liked several of the articles. The "where are the Punk Dykes" dialogue made me remember a discussion I had with one of my classes recently. I teach English at a local college, and one of my classes this term is Women and Literature. We were talking about the importance of positive role models for women, and because of my interest in music, I steered the discussion to the area of women in rock music. I asked my students to imagine a teenage girl with musical ambitions. Based on MTV and top 40 radio, what would her role models be? The answer is dismal. In mainstream music, once you get beyond the mindless pretty faces, there's just not much out there. Someone like Paula Abdul looks good in a video, but does not play an instrument, write songs, or produce. So where are the role models for budding female guitar players, drummers, etc? The examples that come to my mind (people like Kim Deal, Kim Gordon, Throwing Muses, Scrawl, and others) were not ones that the people in my class had ever heard of. Once you get outside of cities like Cleveland or Columbus, the music scene in small town middle America is depressing. If it is not on the TV, radio, or mainstream media, then for these students it might as well not even exist. It's made me realize how important the dissemination of information is, which is why I am glad to support publications like Functure and other music magazines.

Keep up the good work. I'm glad to see that there are others who realize music can be loud, aggressive, interesting, challenging and just plain good, without being sexist or otherwise stupid.

Sincerely,
Mark Putnam
Mark Putnam

QUEENS!



HIDE RECORDS & TAPES
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DEAR PAM & EVERYONE AT R.A.S.

HI! I SHOULD HAVE WRITTEN BACK SOONER, BUT I'VE BEEN ON THE ROAD - IN CHICAGO FOR A ZINE CONFERENCE CALLED 'SPEW', WHICH WAS GREAT, ~~THE~~ (AND WHERE FIFTH COLUMN PLAYED, AT THE BK PARTY AFTER THE CONFERENCE) AND THEN TO NEW YORK FOR A SHOW OF MY DRAWINGS. I HAD - (THE DRAWINGS I DO FOR J.D.S AND OTHER ZINES)

SO, THANKS FOR THE MOST RECENT R.A.S., IT WAS GREAT. ARE YOU WORKING ON A NEW ISSUE? OR JUST THE COMPILATION TAPE? THE TAPE SOUNDS GREAT! TOO, IT'S A REALLY GOOD CONCEPT. FIFTH COLUMN WOULD LOVE TO BE INCLUDED! PERHAPS YOU COULD JUST TAKE ONE OF THE SONGS OFF THE NEW L.P. "ALL-TIME QUEEN OF THE WORLD" FOR THE COMPILATION, WOULD THAT BE COOL? CAUSE WE HAVEN'T GOT ANYTHING NEW RECORDED YET - BUT IF YOU DON'T THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, LET ME KNOW. I'M SENDING A PHOTO OF THE BAND YOU COULD USE FOR THE COMPILATION OR THE ZINE OR WHATEVER, AND IF YOU COULD INCLUDE OUR ADDRESS, AND THAT THE SONG (WHICHEVER ONE YOU WANT TO PICK IS COOL) IS FROM OUR L.P., THAT WOULD BE GREAT!!! - LET ME KNOW...

I'M TRYING TO GET A NEW ZINE TOGETHER, PLUS I'M WORKING WITH 2 PALS ON "BITCH NATION", HERE'S AN 'APPLICATION' - XEROX IT! PASS IT AROUND! WE WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW BITCH NATION IS HERE! SO LOOK OUT FOR FIFTH COLUMN IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER MAYBE, AND WRITE BACK TO LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Dear Pam,

March 20, 1991

Once again, RAS proves to be a fascinating & enjoyable read! I especially enjoyed the bit about the seminar for 12 year olds on Sexism & censorship. I kept thinking, Wow! They let kids go meet with RAS, cool! Good to hear in light of all the censorship/obscenity controversy in the US lately.

I have some comments on some of the other articles: -concerning the protest against porn - why not spend the time used to organize & protest against porn in a more positive manner such as promoting & distributing non-sexist erotic materials thereby giving consumers of porn an alternative? For example, The Sexuality Library in San Francisco (1210 Valencia Street, SF CA 94110) distributes non-sexist videos & erotic books as well as educational books - the same company also distribute sex toys & products selected especially with women in mind. we should support businesses like this (no, I don't own stock in the company, I just think they're really great!) Also, any organization promoting 'non-sexism' helps - RAS, for example.

Also about "where are the punk dykes" well, I don't exactly know the answer to that, but I think the answer to "where's all the exciting alternative music" has to be networking. There's not a heck of a lot going on here, ^{in my area} although something - but it's very male-dominated. This is hopefully changing a bit, though, with a new all-female groups on the scene. But basically, the alternative

scene is small, but spread out all over the world. So lets start writing letters & trading tapes! Although, just as an experiment, you could get all the punk dykes you know to write to Olivia records demanding a wider range of styles - if they think there's money in it they'll probably do it. Can you imagine the Olivia punk sampler? (But then we'd have to support them instead of the real independent)

Lastly, we'd be very happy if you used one of our songs in your compilation tape. We do think of many of our songs as being political - "Little Wet Ball" - about nuclear destruction "Neighborhood vigilantes" - about the dangers of no gun control "Litigation" - about manipulating justice with money & others in a more vague way. Our new tape is finally, finally being copied at this very moment & we'll send a copy as soon as it's finished. Some songs on it "H.I.V." - tells how to clean needles among other things "Nester Payne" - from the scarlet letter "f's kur" (fisk) about waste in the fishing industry...

If you want to use any of this letter in your next issue please do so & if anyone is interested in trading tapes please write - we are interested in literally all styles of music. Our tapes are a mix of noisy, pretty, & goofy. If anyone wants a tape but doesn't make music themselves, then trade something else artistic, ^{for money} or send \$5 to cover costs.

Thanks for passing this info on, & thanks for the magazine. Keep up the good work.
Laura Valentina Tryggvason
Paul Lydon 101 Reykjavik Iceland.

Dear RAS --

I don't know if I ever wrote back to tell you how much I loved your piece. Because of them I found out about that wonderful stuff I never heard of before. Liked the band and the spine Paralelle.

Things are pretty bleak here in Chicago -- very few women in bands. I think Chicago is just a really macho, conservative town.

It seems now that some bands are starting to reject the philosophies of people like such as Touch and Go and Wax Tray, like Shrimp Boat and Sealed American. Maybe the rejection of macho narrow-mindedness will open up opportunities for women on the scene as well. I know there are women who want to play in a band or who already do around here, I just it seems that they get discouraged or don't get the support they need.

I love them playing drums on and off for about 2 1/2 years now. First I was in a band with two women friends of mine. It didn't work because of the guitarist felt threatened by our creative abilities and basically wanted to use the band to gain the approval of certain male musicians on the scene. The band fell apart when this guitarist got what she wanted -- she moved in with

one of her friends. It's heart-breaking to see that that stuff still goes on all the time -- somebody selling themselves out for a guy! And this was someone whose character I admired until this happened, then it was all chucked down the toilet!

So then I formed another band, this with a male guitarist, female bassist and male violinist. Only now the guitarist is hitting on me, as if he can't fathom the concept of friendship with a woman, huh! I intend to participate in musical activities, however! I'm more interested with music than anyone I know and I feel it's my duty to be in a band, as well as an incredible joy.

What killed my gonads was seeing the graffiti on the wall of the bathroom at Strange Ax, a popular bar. A year ago it seemed all the graffiti was about what male musicians have hot, which ones were a good lay, etc. A friend told me that the public bathrooms that were covered in graffiti plugging various bands who had obviously paid there, the last weekend I went down there and there was graffiti supporting various women musicians (like The Nice Girls) --

as well as messages urging women to respect and stand up for themselves. Most amusing was a cartoon of two women in a car, labeled Thelma & Louise. So, I had a marker in my hand and I wrote in huge letters -- GIRLS! For heaven's sake -- START A BAND!

I said how it pleased me to see graffiti supporting women. Sometimes you feel alone because it seems (at least around here) that a lot of women interested in rock are hesitant to talk to me, because it's "recool" or something. It was so inspiring to see all that graffiti and to inspire to see what people like RAS or Terri Sutton are doing. Thank you, and I hope to hear more from you in the future.

Kerry

Kerry Keape

Chicago, IL 60657

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Making Music, Making Waves

All-female Chinese rock group tests limits, finds acceptance hard even from male musicians

By James L. Tyson

Staff writer of the China Source Monitor

BEIJING

Li Yu Jin has to do is switch on her keyboard, lean into a few notes, and she has defied etiquette in China with enough daring to make Madonna seem like Mary Poppins.

Unlike Madonna, Ms. Yu feels no compulsion to flaunt sacrilege or to flounce about the stage in gold lame lingerie.

Yu and other members of Cobra, China's first all-woman rock-and-roll band, break plenty of ironclad proprieties simply by tearing into a few roaring bars of classic Rolling Stones.

Cobra is arguably the freest and boldest force for feminism in a country where the state-controlled "women's movement" is as restrained and predictable as a garden club meeting.

"The traditional concept for what women in China should do is to give birth to children and cook," says Wang Xiaofang, Cobra's drummer.

"Chinese people traditionally don't think women can achieve anything, but I think we can achieve a lot," she says, sweeping her palm through a head of spiky black hair tinted brown at the tips.

Even members of all-male rock groups belittle Cobra because of the gender of its members. Although many of China's male musicians trumpet a defiant message, they ironically fail to appreciate Cobra's own feminist iconoclasm.

"A lot of men who play rock-and-roll despise us and say there's no way we'll play well," according to Yu. "But after hearing us, many of them have changed their minds and accepted us," she says.

Cobra's social overtones have offended not just sexist but also officials from a totalitarian regime that deems any group beyond its control a potential enemy. Like other rock groups in Beijing, Cobra performs with the threat that officials will pull the plug on their act at any time.

The band last year stirred up a Beijing concert audience so much that its first large public performance turned out to be its last.

"It is as if my feelings were burning and I could even hear the wonderful sound of my blood flow as it went gurgling on," the magazine "Women's Friend" quoted a



Cobra: The Chinese rock group was conceived during the euphoric Beijing Spring in 1989.

young woman as saying after the concert.

Officials have indicated that the band is unlikely to gain approval to play before a large audience again, says Yu.

Appropriately, Cobra was conceived during the euphoric Beijing Spring in 1989. It made its first music soon after the massacre of pro-democracy activists that June, as the vast police apparatus seized dissidents nationwide. But band members claim they came together not because

The band stands tall as a symbol of defiance by playing at full volume songs by the Beatles, Dire Straits, and other groups whose music is officially viewed as part of a capitalist conspiracy to subvert socialism. Yet, band members say that because their repertoire is controversial they do not feel compelled in their own songs to strike directly at issues that are politically proscribed.

of discontent with state repression but because of a loathing for the state-approved, kitschy renditions of Chinese folk songs.

All but one of Cobra's members have spent years with state bands, playing pat versions of folk songs over and over again on the accordion, dulcimer, piano, and erhu, a bowed instrument with two strings.

"I love folk songs played from the heart that truly express the feelings of the Han people," says

Yu. "But the songs I played with the state group lacked life; I can express myself with Cobra," she says. Yu quit the China Light Music Ensemble in June to spend more time leading Cobra.

Jeffrey Choen, an American music producer based in Hong Kong, says that the band's biggest contribution to music could be in how it adapts Chinese folk songs and traditional instruments to rock.

Cobra plays a handful of traditional songs like "Riding Horses on the Mountain," a Sichuan love song, by harmonizing the melodies and prodding the tunes with a rock beat.

The band stands tall as a symbol of defiance by playing at full volume songs by the Beatles, Dire Straits, and other groups whose music is officially viewed as part of a capitalist conspiracy to subvert socialism.

Government leaders apparently allow the music of Cobra to con-

trast as a raucous counterpoint to the incessant drone of state propaganda. Band members say that because their repertoire is already controversial, they do not feel compelled in their own songs to strike directly at issues that are politically proscribed. So when Cobra sings about China, it condemns people's passive acceptance of repression but shies away from calling for widespread activism.

In one piece in three-part tar-

mony, Cobra rebukes conformity under socialism but backs away from suggesting the political alternative:

Just like a madman in his own private heaven, I'm satisfied, I don't have to be the same as others.

I don't need grain tickets or money for food and clothes, And I don't have to be the same as them,

I don't need a bed to sleep on, I'm satisfied and healthy. Just like a madman in his own private heaven.

But in at least one song, Cobra tweaks the turned-up noses of China's veteran revolutionary leaders.

The band routinely plays "Nan-niwan," an old Communist Party anthem extolling Brigade 359, the unit led by senior leader Wang Zhen during the revolution.

But Cobra does not sing the lyrics -- "Brigade 359 is the model, let's go forward and give them fresh flowers" -- to the steady, trite beat familiar to Chinese. Instead, the band accents the offbeat by playing the song in reggae.

"Maybe Wang Zhen would be touched if he heard us play the melody," says guitarist Xiao Nan with a grin.

"Yes, after all we're making rock-and-roll with Chinese characteristics, along the path of socialism!" says Ms. Wang the drummer with a giggle, lampooning a maxim of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

From C.S. Monitor!



TARA KEY FROM ANTIETAN

Contraceptive Methods—For Men !



Can you think of a male contraceptive other than the condom and vasectomy? Probably not, and for good reason—though more than eight methods now exist, none has been publicized. The methods include:

- Nonsurgical vasectomy;
- Permanent contraception by injection—an injection of chemicals is used to close off the vas deferens (sperm ducts), rather than cutting them surgically;
- Potentially reversible contraception by injectible plug;
- Potentially reversible contraception in which a plug, or "shug," is implanted in the vas deferens in an operation similar to vasectomy;
- Temporary injectible contraception—the interior of the vas deferens is coated with a sperm-killing solution that remains effective for up to five years and can be reversed with a simple injection;
- Wet-heat method—uses heat to impair sperm maturation; the testes are bathed in hot water every night for three weeks, providing six months of contraception;
- Artificial cryptorchidism—special jockey shorts are worn during the day to hold the

testes close to the body, thereby achieving the heat effect;

- Ultrasound method—ultra-short sound waves are applied to the testes for five to ten minutes once every six months, efficiently achieving the heat effect. This may also be a permanent method in much greater doses.

Any of these methods would improve the health, economic status, and survival rates of women in all countries where inadequate medical care makes many female birth control methods unsafe or unavailable. All of these methods are nonhormonal (and thus not prone to complicated side effects). Two of the methods (artificial cryptorchidism and wet heat) require little or no doctor intervention and could be put to use immediately.

Our Bodies,

Our Selves

Do you wonder why you've never heard of these? Research bias plays a large part. Male-directed funding agencies find reasons not to fund research on male contraceptives; male researchers are reluctant to tinker with the male body. As a result, the public is not aware of alternative methods. Scientific and governmental establishments then claim that there is no demand for these methods.

How can this be changed? Read up on the subject and make it one of your priorities. The more that women share this information, the more change will come. (Additional resources: *Issues in Reproductive Technology—An Anthology*, ed. H. B. Holmes, Garland Press; or contact Elaine Lissner, P. O. Box 449, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061.)

—Elaine Lissner

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PHOTO: DAVID HENRY

Rockline Report:

FOR A GOOD TIME, CALL 437-9593

We've had the RAS Rock Line in operation for a year now. It hasn't exactly been ringing off the hook, but we get a steady 4-5 calls a week from all over the map. One caller saw an RAS flier at a flea market outside Edison, New Jersey.

Most people just call and listen. Only a few leave their messages of their own. And they seldom leave their own name and number so we can call them back-- even when they ask us to. Maybe their minds go numb after experiencing the power and creativity of the pre-recorded message. But I doubt it.

Some don't leave their names on purpose. One caller identified himself as a "part time DJ," and said that he saw our flier. He thought we "had some good ideas, but..." had to give us a condescending lecture about how we "don't understand how broadcasting works." (Unfortunately, we do... that's the problem.) Sooner or later, he said, we'd discover that popular music is market driven, and we can't change people's tastes by censoring. Apparently this "part-time DJ" didn't bother to really read the flier, he just wanted to talk. Lonely, maybe. I could understand why.

Thanks to the volunteers who came over to the Kilmarnock Brewery to tape messages. We need more. It's really easy: just bring your favorite background music (no CDs) and a list of all the things you think no one else can live without knowing for the next couple of weeks. Then we have a few beers, then we record. We'll get the pinball machine fixed soon, I promise.

If you don't want to actually record a message, but want to put an announcement on the line, just call and leave the details. We'll put it on the next message. You don't get any free games on the pinball, but it's broken anyway.

Thanks also to people who sent stuff in: Intensive Care from Charlotte, NC sent their LP "Assault Down Memory Lane" (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) and Band of Susans from NYC sent a really great t-shirt.



THE OFFICIAL RAS
T-SHIRT!!

BLACK (OF COURSE)
WITH RED RAS LOGO

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(CHEAPER AT RAS
EVENTS)

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(NONE OF US ARE SMALL ANYMORE)

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BOSTON, MA 02215

All proceeds go to RAS



I
e
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If Not For Anita

If not for Anita
Those posters and photos
Would be calendar pages
And not exploitation,
Dominion and vice.

And if not for Anita
Those comments and hoots
Would remain unacknowledged
While riding away.

For it's now not enough
To say "offices, locker rooms,
men's clubs and *Playboy*
Aren't part of my world,
So I don't have to care,"

And it isn't enough
To throw money at shelters,
Or to look at the hookers
Without wondering why,

Because now, since Anita,
51 ain't a dollar,
And half of the world
Should be half as important,
And questions arise,

Like where are the rapists,
While the victims degrade,
And where do wives go
When their homes are unsafe?

And the shelf that supports
Our Bodies, Our Selves
Seems shaky and fragile...

Like *Roe vs. Wade*.

But the workers still struggle,
And the death squads still roam,
And the natives have yet
To regain their just due,

Education falls short,
As do health care and jobs,
AIDS spreads like wildfire,
While ozone depletes,

And the benches and gutters
hold human debris.

Oil runs our nation,
While PAC's govern funding,
And corporate ethics
Are contrasting terms.

This isn't the time
for *another* agenda,
But now, since Anita,
Is there even a *choice*?

Siouxie D (Sue Davidson)



Artwork - Naomi Rubin