

A BITTER PIL IS HARD (but not impossible to swallow)

by Craig Snyder with Caryn Hirsch as shotgun diplomat



PIL. Public Image Limited. Whatever. We were late. Question: If being late is fashionable, then is being late for a Public Image show even more fashionable? I have a theory that some people are always late and that they're the ones that say it's fashionable to cover their own bottoms. Anyway, we got there at 10:45, not at 10:00 like we planned, therefore I lost any chance (within reason) of getting a snug spot up against the stage. The Channel is one of the larger clubs in Boston and its main room was already quite filled. The crowd was really amazing, I'd never seen such a variety of people under one roof for one event. And that's what it was, an event. There were all types of people around from severe underground sorts to average Joes to the Trans Am excess and

the redundant Pistolites. And to think they paid ten bucks to get in. That price is OK if it was New York, but this is Boston and that's ridiculous. Thanks to Marty Atkins we didn't have to succumb to doorway robbery. Otherwise, I wouldn't have made it to the club that night (there, I've justified my reason for being there.). I thought it might be interesting to see John Lydon sing or see PIL live, but most of all I thought it would be interesting to see what kind of audience would show up and also put together some kind of thing to keep Boz (our editor) from bothering me all the time. I felt very lucky when we were informed we were on the guest list. At their first gig, the Roseland show in New York, Lydon refused to put Harvey Keitel (the movie actor) on the list. You see, Lydon



had recently been acting with Keitel in Italy on a picture film. Poor Harv. PIL shirts everywhere. And yes, you walking billboards, they even had them for sale, whether it was PIL's idea or the Channel's (they have a 'souvenir' shop) remains unknown.

It's been about a year since their last gig (remember video and the riot at the Ritz?). Lydon still sings and Levene still plays guitar. Different this time around are the addition of two-thirds Brian Brain, Martin Atkins, and Pete Jones, who fill out the Public Image. Martin, as you might remember, was their original drummer and has permanently rejoined PIL. Martin had left them on a previous occasion when agreements that had been made were not kept. Pete is touring and recording with them, but his future with the band is not known at this point. Martin and Pete are still part of and will continue to be involved with Brian Brain. Jeanette Lee is no longer with PIL since she lost interest in the project. PIL is pretty much fed up and through with video as a medium for their company. Another note, PIL is not on tour as Lydon has noted by calling their gigs "isolated performances". PIL is based in New York. The city thus serves as a home base when they are giving these "isolated performances". The group prefers to return home after every one or two gigs. In between these performances (and previous to the Roseland gig) PIL had been in the studio recording.

The opening act tonight was the Young and Useless, an early-teen New York foursome which includes the son of the guy from RORR cassettes. Big Deal, right? They gave an anarchic, antagonistic, insulting performance doing a variety of mashed-up covers and originals like "Kill PIL". Hardcore/Pistols/Lydon proteges? They gave an encore regardless of audience opinion and returned once more, without instruments, for an encore which consisted of total verbal abuse.

PIL engaged the use of a large Winnebago camper which served as transportation and a dressing room. It brought them to the Channel and scooted them away only seconds after the performance concluded. The stage had three large panels covered with what appeared to be huge white tiles. It seemed like a long time before the PIL logo was projected onto the left tile section and the band climbed onstage. By the way, word has it that the logo will soon be replaced by a new one. The crowd began to swell and shove and all that bullshit. In a typical cynical tone Lydon asked the audience "Did you come here to be punk or did you come here to have fun? I don't know, but I came here to have fun...don't know about you." They started off with a new number and then proceeded to play a mixture of their first and second LP's. After one of the songs ended, some girls in the front started yelling "Johnny, Johnny". Lydon replied with disgust, "You cunts are so lame" and he continued to the crowd, "Well we're just going to make up some stuff, you'll still serve the same purpose". They then jumped into a semi-funky

number. This is where Pete's influence in the band became evident. Levene switched back and forth from guitar to synth with even transitions. "Mad Max" was probably the name of the song since that was practically all Lydon was screaming throughout the thing aside from phrases like "the open road" and "burning gasoline". Part way through, Lydon looked across the audience and asked if anyone had seen "Road Warrior". His next action was a grin as he gave a thumbs-up sign showing his favor of the film. Public Image played very well (let's not forget Lydon's imitation of the funky chicken) and they'd have been great to dance to had there been more room. Say maybe a small club with a crowd of 20 (my ideal). John Lydon came off very honest and seemed like he very much enjoyed performing, doing what he was doing. I had never seen PIL or Lydon before and I was glad I did in a way. What other people might see them as, is beyond my comprehension. They are good, but they certainly aren't God



LORI LAMBERT

or Heroes or the greatest thing in the world. No one is.

After the seventh long song, PIL left the stage and never returned for an encore. Somehow I expected it. The stage lights went down and the DJ began spinning records, and the crowd still stood around as if some great miracle were to happen and they'd reappear.

PIL was really disappointed with the show that night. The band anticipated a more intimate setting due to the smaller venue (small?) and they had good feelings about it. Well, the Boston audience turned out to be too concerned with being cool and less energetic (thus no encore) than the Roseland



BUSINESS AT HAND

Lydon and Levene are constantly reorganizing their working structures. Recently they have joined with a man who remains behind the scene, Bob Tulipan. Together, they have formed Multi Image Corporation (MIC) which is the parent company of Public Image Limited (PIL) and Public Enterprise Productions (PEP).

MIC is the main company involved in various creative projects. This includes films, satellite TV, and computer graphics. MIC will become involved with the graffiti artist, Futura 2000, and also plan to provide their computers for use by medical research, among other things.

PEP will assist PIL by taking care of engagements, recording, and other musical-type functions.

PIL are now with, and will release records on, the PEP label. They do have an obligation left with Virgin records for an LP. Whether "Commercial Zone" will be on the PEP or Virgin label has not yet been determined.

Also under the PEP umbrella will be Brian Brain and Cowboys International, although the names of the labels may be different for each. Brian Brain's new set-up with PEP will give them the financial backing, support, and freedom they felt Secret Records did not sufficiently provide. PIL obviously has the same feelings toward Virgin.

Stiff Records will handle distribution for any PEP products. That's all they will do- Stiff is just a middleman and is in no way involved with the company.

And that's the story so far...



gig where the audience danced around more and gave the band more feedback. Also, the Channel's stage was too small and only a third of the actual set was used, due to the lack of space. The ceiling was too low, and Lydon got a kick out of yanking down one of the Channel's tiles during their performance. PIL had one more gig to do in Boston before they returned to New York. It was an all-ages gig the following Saturday, same place. Martin was really excited about that one. The all-ages show did turn out better for both parties, despite the 2 hour wait in the rain that the crowd was subjected to. Lydon made comments during the show referring to the other "audience", and seemed much more pleased with this one. PIL played more songs at that performance and also included an encore.

PIL is planning future dates in Canada and the on the West Coast as well as others. Would they dare play Florida? Would it be worth it?

After they complete their isolated performances Keith Levene will be getting married.

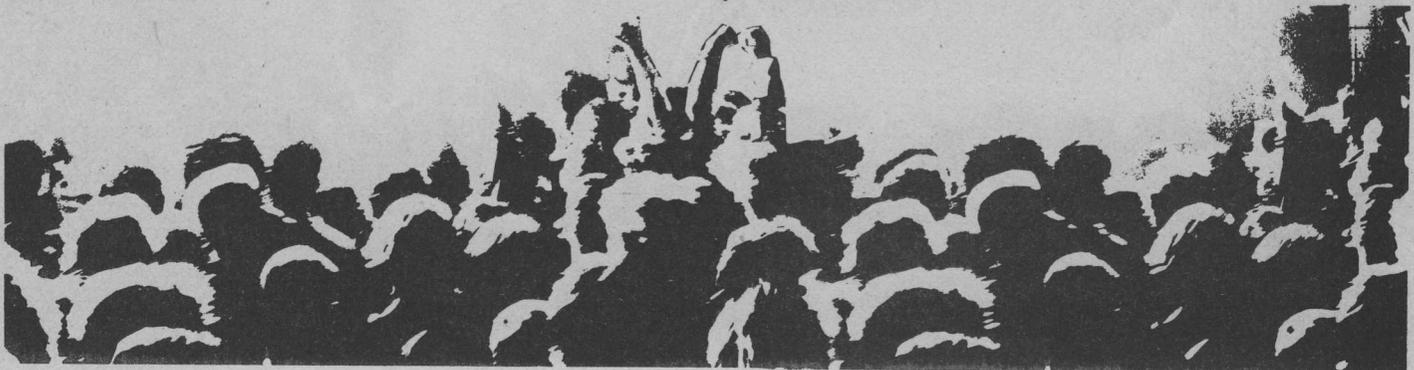
In a brief interview, Martin said the reason they chose to tour at this time was not because of an

LP release, although there is one in the works, titled "Commercial Zone". I'm sure Lydon was getting tired of sitting around in his N.Y. loft. One can only wonder if Public Image has become Lydon's own irony (real profound, eh?).

(last minute update by Boz)

--- OK the latest as we go to press is that the future of Stiff America is questionable- supposedly they only have one person left on their N.Y. staff(?) so who knows what the new PIL shit will be coming out on over here(?). Also I got the chance to see PIL in Atlanta and everyone can say what they will be they were fuckin' great that night- Johnny was havin' a good ole' time (he even admitted as such) and Keith didn't look so junked out either. Johnny didn't do the funky chicken but did pull off some great John Travolta impersonations (ala Saturday Nite Fever). Yeah Lydon's not god although he may be insane (he wore a Bellview Hospital shirt). They even did two songs for an encore- definitely a band you love to hate.

(LAST MINUTE UPDATE)





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