

The pros and cons of hardcore

by Melanie Aguila

"They punch and shove and push you down
It's just no fun when they're around
They sure know how to wreck a show
But next to that what do they know?"
-NUNFUCKERS

People in the hardcore scene do not share one common belief, although they all want an alternative from mainstream society. This would change according to what each individual perceived as being alternative. Aside from that, musical tastes also attract people to hardcore.

The one thing hardcore does offer is independence from the mainstream. It encourages do-it-yourself projects, such as fanzines, records and tapes. These projects need money, although, unlike the mainstream, profit is not the artists' main motivation. People can also voice their opinions through their work, and hold benefit shows to support progressive causes.

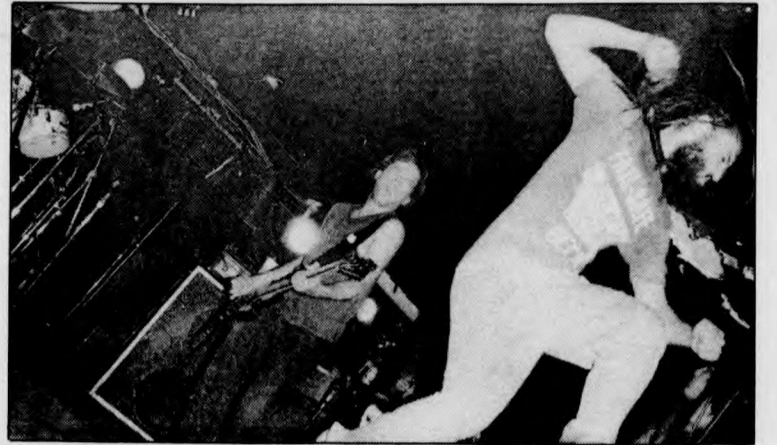
Although the hardcore scene offers some alternatives, it certainly isn't perfect. There are still problems within the scene that reflect society at large.

The lines above, for instance, are taken from the song "Decimation," by the Nunfuckers. It critic-

izes the individuals in the hardcore scene that slam dance. Slam dancing occurs at the front of the stage; it creates an area exclusively for those who are physically stronger and pushes viewers away from the front.

Toronto-based One Blood shared this sentiment when they played a cover of this song to an enthusiastic crowd at the Apocalypse Club on August 4. Without hesitation, people continued to slam dance to "Decimation," even when it was addressed to them.

The tables turned when One Blood gave the stage to the audience to tell their jokes. One of the jokes was very offensive, making fun of a particular ethnic



One Blood's intricate but catchy riffs and strong political lyrics question society and the audience that continued to thrash about the Apocalypse Club on August 4.

group. What was scarier was that nothing was said about it.

The joke telling had the potential to break down the barrier between the audience and the band. Instead, it strengthened the barriers between ethnic groups and the band refuses to open the mike in the future.

"It's unfortunate that a lot of humour is based on people's stereotypes, especially minority groups. It's also disheartening when you think that Oi Polloi (the headlining band), has a lot to say about oppression; yet when their audience is given a chance to say something, the only thing that comes out is the same kind of spew that comes out in the mainstream," says One Blood vocalist Stephen Perry.

Ironically enough, the Rock Against Racism event in Ottawa was going on at the same time.

This was an event which featured several hardcore bands and workshops on racism.

However, the Oi Polloi and One Blood tour had some positive elements in it. In Hamilton, a member of the audience challenged Oi Polloi, because he disagreed with the political ideology in one of their songs. The person was able to voice his opinion, giving Oi Polloi a reaction to one of their songs.

This challenged the idea of hardcore shows submitting to passive entertainment. In this case, there was communication between the band and the audience, and not passive consumerism. We have to constantly question ourselves and others, and not accept everything we are exposed to because it is our scene.

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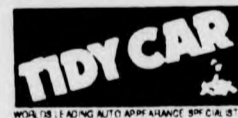
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