

The Bopcats on downers

by Micheal Brennan

Things just didn't go right for the *Bopcats* last Saturday at Dal. Even by the end of the night when tensions had eased up a bit and everyone had sort of been forgiven, nobody really felt that much fun had come of things. It was a failed drunk if it was anything, one of those nights when the bottle lets you down. This was what it was for the *Bopcats* anyway. The concert was a complete letdown for them, a real bummer show that they'd love to have slept off at home, or drunk off at least.

Rockwell/Dal Photo

I felt this from the beginning when I walked in to a half empty room with almost no one dancing to watch the *Bopcats* pump out their coolcat-look rockabilly like it was a bad joke. Highschool and college boys and girls were just too tame and sober that night for the band. They wanted groupies and part maniacs and what they got was a small crowd in too big a room and an audience who only wanted to see a tight rockabilly band and dance a bit.

Pissed off, disappointed and frustrated because no one took them as rock stars, the *Bopcats* let all their vengeance and spite loose. "Can't you assholes dance? Christ, Halifax must be the funeral centre of the world!" complained Teddy Fury, the drummer. He made most of the insults leaving Zeke Rivers, their big, bouncer-looking bassist to make all the ugly, "fuck-you!" faces. Tough shit asshole is probably the best way to describe him.

After a few of these rude remarks, the crowd answered back with as much contempt making the whole affair a needless and silly punk joke.

On with the show. I did like the performance however because the band did play hard and fairly well, if uninspired. I thought they had their sound down well and though it's hardly original, they play with guts and a good Gene Vincent energy. Singer and guitarist Jack de Kezzer was the strongest musician of the band. He's a fine guitarist and fiery, rough-edged singer. He also made the fewest number of remarks and showed more energy for playing than for shouting insults. Drummer Ted Fury was solid, a fine backbone to the sound and his screams fit in well. The tough shit bassist was competent but his Sid Vicious snarls looked so dumb and useless. I just hope he won't beat me up after this.

It would have been much better to see the *Bopcats* in a smaller club in Toronto where they have a following and where no one would have to put up with any anger or conceit. They're a decent rockabilly band, as far as new rockabilly bands go, and they have some original tunes that could be hits. I don't think the *Bopcats* have much new to offer rock'n'roll but they move with some of the gusto of the blues and I respect them for that. If they can keep their egos from getting the best of them and stop cutting anyone they so desire when they have an off-night, they just might get somewhere in Canada.



The Bopcats may have shaken their "Wild Jungle Rock" at Dal last week, but precious few were privileged to catch the 'cats.

None con't

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hounded out of Germany and left the port of Hamburg in the ship *St. Louis* on May 15, 1939. When Cuba refused to recognize the visas which the passengers held, these well-educated, highly-skilled but penniless Germans were refused entry into all of the countries in the Americas, including Canada.

In the words of F.C. Blair, the anti-semitic director of the Immigration department, "No country could open its doors wide enough to take in the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who want to leave Europe; the line must be drawn somewhere."

The real corker to this story is the last and most difficult myth to undermine. Abella and Troper correctly assert that by December of 1942, Hitler's "Final Solution," including the crematorias and death camps, was known to the allies.

The tragic part of this revelation was that there were many Jews — men, women and children — who

were still in Europe — Vichy France, Switzerland, Spain and the Nordic areas — who were appealing to come to Canada. In Vichy France, the pro-Nazi Petain government actually offered interned Jews to Canada to save the expense of the cattle-cars to the eastern extermination camps. After consideration, the King government refused . . .

The only Canadian policy maker of the day who comes off as fair and liberal minded was Hume Wrong, who before the war served as Canada's delegate to the league of Nations. The others — O.D. Skelton, King, Norman Robertson, F.C. Blair, Thomas Crerar and others — appear complacent or like Blair, downright anti-semitic.

There are heroes in this story also. Members of the Canadian Jewish Congress, specifically Saul Hayes and Samuel Bronfman, as well as the Canadian National Committee for refugees (CNCR) worked hard to mostly no avail to gain the admission of at least a trickle of terrorized Jews. For all

practical purposes, however, almost no Jews were admitted to Canada.

Perhaps there is a larger lesson to be learned. King is often blamed for refusing to allow soon-to-be-exterminated Jews into this country. While it is true politicians to some extent shape opinions of the electorate, King believed that a massive influx of Jews to Canada would have cost him the next election. Being self-serving, he became a tool of the electorate's petty prejudices.

In the end, the book is a powerful statement about us, in our "democracy," and our failure to make political decisions on any criterion other than our own short-term best interests.

gingers

Hollis at Morris



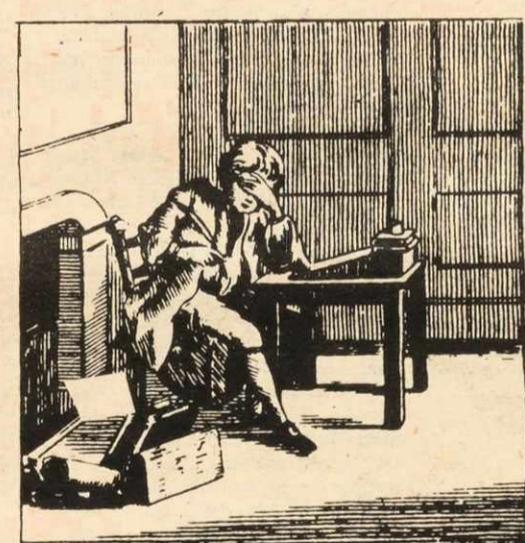
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