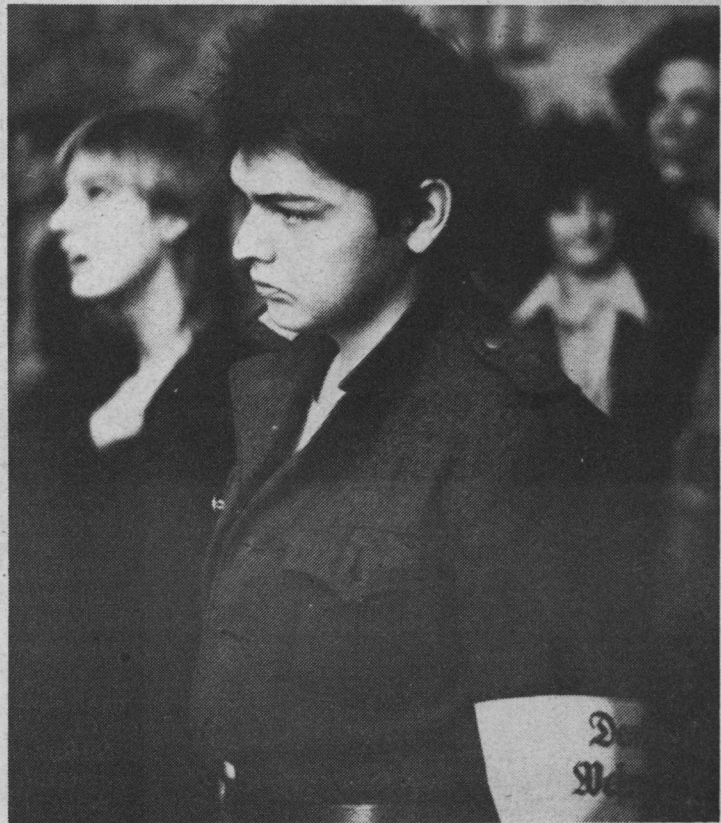


A necessity in Britain, a

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And that fool by the coke machine stuck a safety pin through his nose.



An old army never dies.

Feature by Barry Lee

Photos by: R. Sampson, B. Keith

and K. Wilberg

Squeezing through the back-alley door that reads "Sid Lives", I begin to understand what "underground" means. Inside, the walls are covered with painted slogans like "no one leaves alive" and "Sex Pistols rule", apparent testimonies of punk affinity and belief. On the dark dingy dance floor, the crowd is frenzied, most of them pogoing wildly to a back beat, the vocals and guitar being basically unintelligible.

Onstage, the Subhumans are doing their finale, an original called "Fuck You". The band sings (?), "we don't care what you say; FUCK YOU!", at which point sweaty and slobbering front man Wimpy (that's all, no last name; just Wimpy) is attacked by Buck Cherry, Modernettes' guitarist. A fight ensues; the mike-stands fly out into the crowd. Gerry Useless throws down his bass, flips up a menacing finger, and hollers a final "fuck you!", stomping offstage. The mike stands fly back at the back. The light comes on but the crowd wants more. True to stage punk, no band shows. True to crowd punk, hey, that's just great.

Is this London underground? Malcolm McLaren's? Is this where the Sex Pistols got their start? How about the Who? No, this is Edmonton. Downtown-on-the-weekend late-at-night Edmonton. This is "The Club". The city's latest underground musical joint, it is run by the Apathetic Assent Society, whose founder is Randy Boyd.

Boyd, a Toronto transplant, initially intended "The Club", like the now-defunct Hovel, to be an alter-

native to the present local pop-rock scene.

He went ahead on a shoestring budget, with the present dive the result. No P. A. no liquor license, no chairs or tables. In effect, very raw and unpolished; the standard sort of sleazy joint where you'd rather not have your picture taken.

Because of its starkness, "The Club" is somewhat reminiscent of the underground British punk scene. But the biggest difference between what goes on there and here is in philosophical commitment.

British punk was, and still is, a musical-political movement whose objective is total freedom. Punk stars of the Sid Vicious - Johnny Rotten type were the champions of a cult that attracted mostly young working class. Vicious and Co.'s blatant assaults against the state were part of the rebellious feeling that came out of the laid-back Seventies. The violence of their music is an energetic violence aimed at conservative conformity in government and society. The use of shock tactics in music is not new - rock and roll has always thrived on it - with Buddy Holly, The Who, or The Clash, the shock or the violence was always a personal or political statement.

The obvious question is, then, what kind of personal commitment to punk is there in Edmonton? If "The Club" is any indication, there's a copious amount of energy available, but it is virtually non-directional. Most of those who show up at "The Club" on any given weekend seem to be white middle-class Edmontonians; hardly the downtrodden of society.

For most of these "punks",



G. Useless is from beautiful B.C.

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