


# ZIGZAG

NO. 76 SEPTEMBER 1977 30 PENCE \$1.50



## The CLASH THE BATTLE OF BILLY

NEW WAVE  
Family Tree

SUBWAY SECT  
Wiping Out  
Rock'n'roll

MOTORHEAD  
Kings Of  
Speed

SHAM 69  
Gonna be a  
Borstal  
Breakout

STEEL PULSE  
London Reggae

MIKE  
NESMITH  
In Depth on  
Disc



# ZIGZAG 76

# THIS IS JOE PUBLIC SPEAKING...

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ZIGZAG is published  
monthly by PRESTAGATE LTD,  
distributed by SPOTLIGHT  
PUBLICATIONS LTD.

AD. COPY DATE IS THE 20<sup>th</sup>  
OF THE MONTH before  
publication. Ring Richard  
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Hi Zigzagers! Here we are again... despite the dopey letters a minority seem to think will change the face of Zigzag and the world. The best was from a geezer who said NOW he wasn't gonna to write for the mag - at least we've achieved something! Seriously, response to the last ish was great - thanx for the support. No-one's gonna stop us now!

This issue is something of a CLASH special. Zigzag's new wonder-writer describes the incredible scenes which took place when they played a Belgium jazz festival - he was a Clash roadie at the time. He also managed to get a world exclusive preview of the new single, "Complete Control".

The Clash also pop up in Pete's new wave family tree, which is fascinating stuff and full of surprises.

Zigzag's always tried to cover the lesser-known outfits with something to offer. This month we've got three. Robin Banks has done STEEL PULSE, a reggae band currently devastating London. Danny Baker spoke to SHAM 69, one of the best groups we've seen for ages and a great bunch of geezers. Those of you mystified over the SUBWAY SECT trailer on last month's cover will be relieved to see they're here this month, talking to Steve Walsh... all about

I done MOTORHEAD 'cos if it's honesty and energy they've got it. They're great - bash me head to pulp every time!

With Zigzag I wanted to build a brick wall of the best writers around. That's why Tony Parsons is here - he wrote a piece on the Mont de Marsan festival and the National Front warning. And if you think politics should be kept out of Zigzag just remember there won't be a Zigzag if they get it 'cos there won't be rock 'n' roll, unless you wanna do the Grousestep.

To placate the "we want fax 'n' info on Mike Nesmith" brigade there's two pages unadulterated info on Mike Nesmith. Not to mention a dynamite reviews column.

And also John "Life n' soul of the Vortex" Walters.  
Dutta room! Complete Control. Kris xx



# BELGIUM'S BURNING!

## THE CLASH IN EUROPE

*"Be not the first by whom the new are tried, /Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."*

Alexandar Pope's warning words could well have been heeded for this gig in the cheerless heart of Belgium; where The Clash, The Damned, and Elvis Costello bravely faced the wrath of several thousand stalwart hippies, jazz fans and (read on for confirmation) assorted lunatics.

Being ambassadors of a sort is a full time job, and playing at what was billed as a "Jazz Festival" in a country not renowned for its tolerance of new ideas, musical or otherwise, proved to be a harder task than most. But on August 11th, nearing the end of a schedule that would have knackered Superman, The Clash topped the bill at the "Bilzen Jazz Festival 1977".

Things started smoothly enough, with the three English bands checking in at their hotel only a little late, Paul Simonon having staged a somewhat miraculous

recovery from a mystery disease which briefly had him looking like a man with terminal leprosy. So everyone was in fine spirits as the coach left Liege for Bilzen, a mere twenty kilometres away, and Captain Sensible kept the assorted travellers entertained with his remarkable Penguin impersonations.

The first sign of the impending fiasco/disaster came only as the coach reached its destination. The site and surrounding area was completely covered in what appeared to be refugees from the summer of 1967. Complete with arse-length hair, beads and peace signs, the waiting multitudes were intently listening to a group of local jazz musicians who sounded like a bizarre cross between Acker Bilk and The Soft Machine. The coach had suddenly become some sort of time machine, and its occupant victims, The Clash, The Damned, Elvis Costello et al had been whisked back a full ten years into the middle of the peace and love era.

Everybody seemed slightly dazed as we made our way









backstage, and several people were already getting into the "Woodstock" type jokes that quickly became a natural defence mechanism to adopt in the situation.

The bands were each shown to their own caravan dressing rooms, and although Joe had to enter the Clash hide-out through a window to let the others in, everyone seemed to have recovered somewhat from the original impact of arrival, and quietly settled down to the business of preparing to go on stage.

The Clash, ensconced in their caravan, were soon giving interviews to assorted Belgium journalists whose English, or lack of it, gave plenty of scope for Strummer/Jones witticisms. But as Joe said to one particularly bewildered reporter, "It's O.K. mate, we ain't REALLY gonna take the piss."

Meanwhile Clash super-roadie Roadent is struggling vainly to assemble the frame for the now famous back-drop. His endeavours are further thwarted when his partner Baker (on loan from the Subway Sect) falls heavily from the roof of the van. In fact things everywhere are rapidly going awry, and you can just tell it's going to be one of those nights when the usually immaculate Paul Simonon manages to spill a full tumbler of vodka and coke into his lap and onto his stage strides. Do you believe in omens? In the light of further events that evening, perhaps you should.

Eventually the Elvis Costello ensemble take the stage, and the other English musicians dutifully wander round the front to have a butchers. And suddenly, there it is. Fifteen feet from the stage is the ugliest, most vicious looking barbed wire fence that you ever saw. Barbed wire! Now when did you ever see a fucking barbed wire fence at a gig before. And this is ten feet tall, and sprawls right across the front of the dual stages, effecting perfectly an arena within an arena, only this inner arena is where the privileged people hang out, with their pretty back-stage passes dangling enticingly from their smart jackets, and behind this monstrosity of a fence is the other arena, the outer arena where the less privileged paying customers have been herded like cattle. Here the hippies are pressed up so tightly against the barbed wire that they must all be holding their breath. And they all look angry, and it ain't really no big surprise because as the Captain said later, "This isn't Bilzen, this is Belsen."

But the crowd aren't the only angry ones. Mick Jones is angry. So is Joe Strummer. So are Nicky Headon and Paul Simonon. In fact all the artists are angry, and Mick Jones leads the mass exodus backstage, and as soon as he flops down in the privacy of the caravan, he turns to Strummer and says plaintively, "We've got to do something about that fucking fence Joe," and Strummer nods in agreement, "It's definitely got to go."

After Costello's set comes another jazz band, and although it's a different band to the one we came in on, it might just as well be the same one. Throughout the crowd have been quiet and fairly peaceful, with only the occasional beer can thrown at a security guard. But when the Damned take the stage, things take a sudden and drastic change. Most of the crowd haven't seen anything like this before, and they simply can't take it. Out of the blue, the beer cans are flying, and not all of them are being thrown at the security men. In fact most of them are being thrown at The Damned. At first it's hard to tell if the cans are some weird Belgium gesture of appreciation, like gobbing gone over the top, but it soon becomes plain that most of the crowd don't like The Damned at all, and what's more, they ain't even prepared to give them a chance. However, there is a small but thankfully noisy section of the audience who manage to give the group enough encouragement to get through their set, and amazingly do one speedy encore, but the general feeling is that these people aren't going to like anything they get tonight. This feeling, however has not yet spread to the four members of The Clash, who are busily tuning up and looking forward to their set much as they always do.

But tonight they are going to have to do without their back-drop, simply because the new frame has proved too cumbersome to be manoeuvred onto the stage. This is a minor setback only, and soon the band are waiting in the wings. Strummer clutches his throat spray and looks a little nervous, but the second they hit the stage all nerves are dispelled as if by magic. The three guitarists plug in, Nicky gets up behind his kit and... fucking hell, straight away Joe's guitar is refusing to function. Still, even this kind of problem is not insurmountable, and it takes about thirty seconds for some

kind soul to volunteer a guitar, Joe to rush through a quick check for tuning and the band swing straight into "London's Burning." Immediately, Nicky and Paul are dodging the beer cans, and it becomes perfectly obvious that a part of the crowd have no wish to see the band at all!

The cans and other missiles are flying with sickening regularity now, and what makes it worse is the fact that it is pitch black out there and you don't get to see what's flying in your direction until it is virtually too late. Then, the inevitable happens. Paul gets a brick straight in the shoulder. I could hear the smack of it as it hit him, but he doesn't even miss a note, and he maintains his exact position on stage. Like the other three he is a sitting duck, the perfect target for any sick, cowardly lunatic hiding in the anonymity of this vast crowd.

Most of the cans aren't even fucking well empty. Some are unopened, others are half full. Next alternative object to hit the stage is a steel bolt, all of five inches long, and it bounces twice with thuds that can be heard above the music. Then comes a rock. It hits the stage and splinters ricochet everywhere. One rock leads to another and suddenly it's getting completely out of control. Half way through "Police and Thieves" (the announcement of which was greeted with a large cheer), and Mick stops the band. He storms to the mike and says in a voice shaking with anger, "I want the security guys to get the fuck out of here", and the band go straight back into the number, just as tightly and determinedly as before.

Between numbers Strummer is trying real hard to get through, but it seems like hardly anyone out there can speak the lingo. "Break that bloody fence down. I want that fence down", he tells them time and time again. And gradually they seem to understand. The fence is slowly being dismantled, and the security men are having a real job to keep the people back from where they belong...right in front of the stage.

Suddenly Strummer leaps into the inner arena. He streaks straight to the fence, and with his own bare hands he is pulling and tugging at the bastard as hard as he can. For a second nobody knows what to do, and then all hell is let loose. Security men try to grab at Strummer, other people leap from the stage and grab the security men. Somehow, Joe is pushed back onto the stage, and he carries on as if nothing had happened. It really is an unbelievable scene, and to top it all, those bastards out there are still throwing cans, rocks, mud, anything they can get their hands on. Some of it is aimed at the security guys, but a lot of it is still finding its way onto the stage, and the band just play on. Right on through the three new numbers, best of which are "The Prisoner" and "Complete Control", right on through forty-five minutes to the end of the set, and all the while everything round the band, everything except the band, is complete and utter chaos.

Into "White Riot" now, and amazingly the band seem to have won some of the audience over. People are on their feet clapping along and some of them actually know the words. Paradoxically, the cans are still hitting the stage, and Nicky hits himself in the back with a drum stick whilst ducking one of them. "White Riot" is over, and the band get off the stage real fast. They have gone right through the set as planned, and that fact in itself is pretty amazing. To actually have the bottle to stand up there and play whilst under a constant bombardment, is an attribute most bands should give their eye-teeth for. But to have played such a tight set under those conditions is almost beyond belief. It later transpires that the mixing was pretty poor which is a bastard, but what the hell, the band gave everything.

Back in the caravan, Paul removes his sweat drenched shirt to reveal a huge welt-like red mark on his shoulder. Strummer lies motionless on the floor. Mick Jones is outside throwing up. The atmosphere is indefinable. No one knows quite what to say, and anyway, words seem quite useless in the aftermath of what has just gone down. Mick Jones returns clutching a rock the size of a Dr. Martin, and that seems about the most eloquent statement possible. For that rock had come flying out of the Belgium darkness, straight over Mick's right hand shoulder only inches from his face, and that thought suddenly brings home the stark and horrifying realisation that tonight, with the Westway just a distant fancy, the band could quite easily have played their final set.

Robin Banks