



These pix by Paul Slattery.

ANTI-NAZI PIX: The Clash onstage (above), Martin Webster effigy (top right), Tom Robinson (below right).



Black and white ready to fight

Carnival Against The Nazis Hackney

TRAFALGAR SQUARE on an overcast Sunday morning. Thousands of people jammed into, spilling over and swarming around all sides of the Square. Banners galore, steel bands, clowns on stilts, grotesque monster-heads of Messrs Webster, Tyndall, Hitler. And thousands of whistles, deafening and chaotic, sending the pigeons berserk.

Glad day! Glad to be black and white and ready to fight. An estimated forty thousand of them, stretching endlessly up the Strand, through the City and into the East End. The sun came out, people danced in the street and chanted against the (absent) Front.

By the time the main body of the march reached Victoria Park in Hackney, X-Ray Spex were ending their set. Another forty thousand, too lazy to march, were already there soaking in the hot sun as X-Ray Spex rocked out with 'Bondage'.

Enter Patrik Fitzgerald for probably his shortest set ever. Strumming out strident, envenomed versions of 'I Wanna Be A Straight Boy' and 'Banging and Shouting' his set was abruptly curtailed by a can in the face. Exit Patrik, cussing. So much for prole solidarity, eh kids?

For a crowd well over double the expected amount, the PA was abominable. A third-way back from the stage, I still had to strain to hear. God knows what the people in the trees at the back could hear.

The Clash's set suffered considerably from this. Try as I might to squeeze nearer the distant stage, their set lost any kick due to the low volume. 'Clash City Rockers', 'Tommy Gun', 'Palais' and more; it wasn't until 'Police And Thieves' that the sound increased to do them any justice. The set was finally redeemed when they brought on Jimmy Pursey to lead an encore of 'White Riot'. Cue much pogoing and people

getting beaten up at the (by the?) front.

Meanwhile, the loo queues got longer, the ground muddier and Steel Pulse came on. We danced reservedly as they tried to get their sound past the mixing desk. There were points when they began to burn but any involvement in the music was nixed by the ongoing inaudibility situation. Warm music for a warm day, but it was like listening to music from a farther room.

The ambulances skidded off with the victims of the head-cases down front, a small hot-air balloon hovered up from the stage and someone announced the Tom Robinson Band. The crowd rose and moved forward for a glimpse/earful of the distant Man. As they hammered into 'Up Against The Wall' they were met with cries of 'Turn it up!' and 'Louder!' Alas, this was not to be.

They continued quietly with a new song, 'Let My People Be', a bluesy, mid-tempo song with an unhealthy resemblance to 'Woodstock' in places. 'Glad To Be Gay' had everyone singing along; ditto 'Martin'. 'Power In The Darkness' blew the lid off what had been a musically poor afternoon. Tom's Establishment spiel (this time as a GLC Parks official) was perfect, powerfully theatrical with enough faked disgust in the audience to win them over completely. He ended the set by bringing on Jimmy Pursey (Flavor Of The Month in libertarian circles) and Steel Pulse for a jam and got 80,000 people clapping and shouting against the Front. It went on a bit but nobody minded. They were the revolution and they were being televised.

There was nothing left except to join the thousands queuing for buses and tubes home. The sun was still shining and everyone was wasted but pleased. It was the biggest anti-Nazi demo London has seen since the days of the Blackshirts.

What do you say to that, Martin dear?

JOHN GILL

The Thrillers/ The UK Subs Railway Hotel

IRONICAL, THIS gig. The UK Subs did their subversive punk (remember?) bit about fear and loathing etc. but, lyrically, were as tame as a neutered moggy. The Thrillers, who take a more casual, middle-way view of life, eventually came across as the more provocative. Grisly in their sexist stance and their attitude towards women generally — as *The Stranglers*-type kitsch 'Meat-eater' testifies — The Thrillers find themselves in the position of being extreme at not being extreme. See? (Well...? — Ed.)

First on, the UK Subs were surprisingly adept. Fast and clear, the band occasionally indicated they are quite capable of breaking out of the usual punk conformity and laying down more, er, thoughtful and idiosyncratic songs.

Better numbers included 'Live In A Car' and 'Telephone Numbers', both familiar 'cos they are on the Roxy's final fling album.

The Thrillers are more accomplished, playing music to dance to rather than singing about injustice. Colin Martine is one of the more powerful vocalists to emerge recently. Lotsa soul and movement. This was only their seventh gig together, having formed a few months back in their native South London. But you wouldn't have known it 'cos The Thrillers remained tight throughout, with very few loose edges.

There was music for everyone here. Traces of funk, punk, pop and so on, but essentially melodic heavy riffing full of twisting guitars and urgent rhythms. A record deal is in the wind, and with so much more to come...

lar runs or stinging solos. The rhythm section, for want of a better term, the usual drums/bass configuration was adequate and had the ability to lay down a fast beat, lots of hi-hat and snare.

Visually they presented a tense front with the exception of the bassist, so cool and professional looking he was almost limp-wristed. Simon the singer resembles a surrogate Joe Brown and openly admitted on stage to being 'slightly overweight', while introducing what would be their single if they got a contract — 'SLAG' or South London Average Girl — a Beatlish ditty in which he wraps his tongue around the sound like a certain J. Lydon.

Now, if they can all be bothered to change into stage gear, why don't they unify it; one with tie, the rest not, some in white shirts, Simon in white towel sweat shirt, that's not what I call presence. You couldn't even see the drummer behind his kit. I bet the street clothes were more wonderful.

To sum up: another enjoyable band to drink Guinness and dance