



"When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake." Plate 6 429 - 347 B.C.

FLUX, previously known as FLUX OF PINK INDIANS have formed a new record label, One Little Indian. Two years ago they released the courageously assertive *Uncarved Block* LP which has been aptly described as "a percussion-fuelled rainbow of sound and voice". They are a collective of people working together and sharing both artistic and musical skills.

What follows are extracts taken from an interview done by Andy Chapman with Coal, Lu, Smuff and Tim in their South East London tepee.

**MRR:** What happened during the eighteen months between the release of *Taking A Liberty* and *Uncarved Block*? Was it a case of sitting back and taking stock of what you had achieved since the band's formation and/or a time to reevaluate your whole approach and goals?

**Tim:** It wasn't taking stock of achievements or anything like that - it was a case of taking stock of what was happening, what we were doing and what we wanted to do. It had reached the stage that if we had done anything it would have been false because we would have been going through the motions. Basically we needed some space to find out what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it and that took eighteen months.

**MRR:** So how do the aims of FLUX/ One Little Indian differ from those of FLUX OF PINK INDIANS/ Spider Leg Records?

**T:** Apart from the actual music they don't differ - what we're doing now is a progression from what we did with FLUX OF PINK INDIANS/ Spider Leg Records. Like I said, after the release of *Taking A Liberty*, we really needed to find out what we were doing, what we wanted to do and where we wanted to go. So, One Little Indian and FLUX is the follow-up!

**MRR:** For what reasons have you re-released the first two LPs and the *New Smell/Taking a Liberty 12"*?

**Smuff:** There has always been a demand for these records... We - along with other people - had spent several years identifying what was wrong and right as we saw it. You can believe naively all the wrong exists in the world because people can't see a viable alternative, but the reality is that it exists because they can see the alternative, but don't have a choice! Thatcher has got into power three times because the majority of people under the electoral system - as it works - wanted her back in! Where we go from there is that we can no longer identify our targets or issues - things just have to be done!... We've moved from being supposedly activists using art to put forward a message, to becoming artists and the message has become probable to that. It's really weird because I always thought that what CRASS did, what CONFLICT did and what all those other punk bands did was far more important than the stuff which had gone beyond that but it isn't - it's just a form of expression! People write to us and ask questions - and in all probability you will ask - which bear no relevance to the last album's artistic statement. People can make of the band what they want but actually they make more of it than it really is!

**MRR:** Do you feel that this has always happened?

**S:** Yeah, it's happened all along.

That's where punk went wrong - it was pushed and made into something that it never really was. I believed in it as well! I believed in CRASS that they were a revolutionary force who were going to topple the Government and take over the world! Looking back that's a fucking joke, but I'm not being morbid, irreverent or negating what CRASS did because it was vitally important! You make a fucking album and people expect you to be a spokesperson for a generation.

**MRR:** But surely that's a weakness of the individual wanting to offer adulation...

**S:** It was also a weakness of CRASS, a weakness of us and all the other people involved.

**MRR:** So you helped perpetuate this?

**S:** We created it! We enjoyed fanzines and newspapers asking us to solve the world's problems and we naively believed that we could!

**Lu:** People forget that music doesn't necessarily have to have a message.

**MRR:** The feelings presented on *Uncarved Block* appear to be optimistic/positive towards the future but with a strong sense of desperation/disillusionment with the past - would you accept this? Why?


**S:** I don't think we're disillusioned with the past. I think the album was a great leap forward for us coming to terms with the real strength and possibilities of what we had and what we were doing. We also came to terms with the fact that writing anti-war lyrics isn't going to stop war. All that releasing records like that does is add strength to your own personal commitments.

**MRR:** On that LP you state "thinkers and performers can never stop war or start peace although they'd like to" and "I don't feel angry anymore" - so where do you stand now? Is there still a place for overtly political bands?

**T:** Yeah, there's a place, but back to what Smuff was saying - there's always the danger of people taking the lyrics of certain bands to be the great expression of what's going on...

**S:** People can be overtly political in a very insular way! The problem with making records is that it isn't insular, it's international and there are people from Poland, Iceland and South Africa who buy our records. We were releasing records which said "don't eat meat" or "don't use





violence" which is total bullshit because there are people who live in situations where they have to eat meat to survive or who have to fight to survive and that's where it all becomes really negative, rather than positive! You try to express a philosophy in simple, dogmatic slogans, telling people whatever, but you can't do it, it's impossible! So you have to measure the success of what you're doing in terms of the people you come directly into contact with - who are living and experiencing what you are experiencing. For that reason this American hardcore shit - that's in the shops now - means absolutely nothing to me, but I'm sure it means a lot to the people who know where it's at! That's not to say it's bad or good but as an example it's completely meaningless to me on either an emotional or philosophical level, that's where the last album differs so radically from all of our previous releases because it's a step away from taking issues and making them black and white, or identifying targets, because you can't do that! A bit of the punk movement did and it got caught up with animal rights and the cruise missile issue or whatever, and that was done for ten years without seeing any positive results, so people gave up wondering if it was all really worth it.

**MRR:** But isn't that part of the problem? People wanting instant change instead of working towards it...

**T:** No! I don't think that's true! If you look at the last ten years, the general attitude has shifted to the right. People do give up too quickly because change hasn't happened in the last five years or so, especially in "popular" music, then that's all you've got because there are very few bands who last more than five years and by demanding for that change you're pushing yourself more! It's all too easy to believe that nothing has changed and these things take a long time, so we'll continue with what we're doing for the next thirty years. Surely it's better to have the attitude that things haven't changed - perhaps we're doing something wrong, perhaps we should try something different, perhaps we ought to think about what we're doing and push towards something new!

**MRR:** Many of your contemporaries from the "anarcho-punk" (sic.) movement subscribe to the belief that positive/radical social change can only be achieved in the U.K. by violent confrontation with the state - would you agree?

**T:** History has proved that the only successful uprisings have been the overthrowing of unpopular systems - for example, the action taken by

the Sandinistas in Nicaragua or the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The problem in this country is that the system is popular!... To take on the state through violence you've got to have one helluva lot of support and it's quite obvious that level of support isn't there! In the last General Election the Conservatives got over forty per cent of the electorate and over twenty per cent voted Liberal/SDP - so that's over sixty per cent who voted right of the Labour Party! Unless the state is deeply unpopular, it can't happen! In the future it might be the only way but at the moment violence as a means of social change is definitely a no - no!

**S:** It obviously has a place because the only thing that receives press coverage nowadays is violence. You only ever hear or read about animal liberation issues if a department store has been fire-bombed, or if someone's raided a factory farm and smashed it up. Whether that's right or wrong is debatable but you can't negate the effect of these sort of actions!

**MRR:** Animal liberation was an issue which FLUX OF PINK INDIANS felt very strongly about and you gave much coverage to - for instance, in songs such as "Blinded by Science," "Myxomatosis" and "Sick Butchers" - what is your attitude towards the way in which the Animal Liberation Movement is evolving?

**S:** It's very difficult to say... If you get involved in any scene or action, unless you're extremely careful your activities escalate, especially after years of getting nowhere - lobbying Members of Parliament and handing out leaflets on street corners or at gigs - then inevitably you take the next step which is a more direct form of action. What I find worrying is that those heavily involved in fire-bombings or raids upon laboratories, however long it takes to realise that this is an impotent form of action, will then arbitrarily single out targets and assassinate them. If that isn't effective, then the next step would be to assassinate the consumers - which isn't an action that I could take, but I understand why people would be prepared to do it in the same way that I understand why people in South Africa take up arms and start killing people.

**T:** If you're trying to get across the issue of Animal Liberation, which is considered by many to be a minority issue - then obviously the way to further your cause is to create publicity. Direct action can be used in two ways - like the GND "scams", or what happened at Greenham Common on New Year's Day in 1983, which was so unusual and bizarre to see all those women dancing on cruise missile silos! That was fucking brilliant! But if something like that is done over and over again, the effect soon wears off. The other way is to do something like fire-bomb a fur shop.

**Goal:** That action alienates any potential support! I don't see the most effective way of getting the message across...

**T:** I don't think there is a most effective way! A negative response is better than no response!

**S:** Direct action is always aimed at the people peddling the trash and you don't often get direct action from the consumer. Ultimately it's the consumer who demands an issue... I don't know what the fuck would happen if it ever reached the extent that if you went into your local supermarket with the constant thought of being fire-bombed whilst buying a packet of cereal because someone was angry about the packaged turkeys further down the aisle!





C: The problem is people still want to eat meat. Somehow we've got to reach them and make them aware of what goes on within the meat industry and until they realise that there definitely is an alternative!

T: The peddlers will sell anything as long as there's a demand. They might help keep a demand or they might create one. Handing out leaflets and other forms of action has had an effect because Wimpy and McDonalds cater for vegetarians because there's a demand. If most of the population were vegetarian, then beef farming would be scrapped and the peddlars would be growing vegeburgers out of the ground.  
**MRR: What exactly do you hope to achieve through your music?**

S: In reality, if nobody bought our records, we would still make them! We're not doing it because we're martyrs to a cause and we don't go into the studio to make a record because it's artistically painful. The most important reason for doing it is because it's what we all want to do! Personally, it's fulfilling to say something that's hopefully meaningful and which might create a catalyst for people to explore outside the drab offerings that exist - all we can hope to do is make people aware.

**MRR: Is there any specific message you are trying to convey?**

S: The change is that we discovered that we can't give people anything. We can't supply answers because the answer inherently depends on what the question is!

The problem with that area of punk in which we were involved was that it tried to give answers.

**MRR: And the tendency to over-simplify...**

S: It simplified it to the point of giving people black and white answers, which was totally unrealistic. So we've moved away from that to do what we do and you can take it or leave it! It's a reflection of how we feel in the situations in which we find ourselves... It's important that the back catalogue is out because the poignancy of the last album is reinforced by seeing how our material has evolved.

T: For that reason you asked if there was a message, then we can't give an answer because what we write about are things that have moved us, that we do feel strongly about, that we do care about and we want to put forward! We can't give an answer in one or two lines because the message is in the whole.

L: People who listen to our lyrics may get different ideas from them which mean different things to different people...

T: For example, the line "same children playing revolution in the park," from "children who know," may be picked up by someone disillusioned with the CND rallies in Hyde Park. It depends purely on the individual's situation what they take out.

**MRR: Which is top-side—lyrics, music or production?**

C: They're all very much part of one thing, but they're separate at the same time, so obviously we put everything into it!

S: We're involved with people who are very good at art, with people who are very good musicians and with people who are very good at recording. We do the best we can and if that happens to be better or worse, then so be it. I don't think it's fair to hold us up against someone like QUEEN - who have several millions of pounds and countless years to spend making an album - or some committed musicians who have twenty quid and do it on a cassette recorder. We do everything to the best of our ability.

**MRR: Would you ever consider signing a licensing deal with a major record label? Is the EMI label still "lurking with bags of toffees"?**

S: That's another of those weird questions and we can't give a blanket answer. EMI did write to us, we went and saw them, but it didn't work out. If EMI had been prepared to market us in such a way and give us total artistic freedom, then obviously we would have weighed up the pros and cons.

**MRR: And you would be prepared to receive the same back-**

lash given to other so-called "socially aware" bands, like NEW MODEL ARMY and VICE SQUAD after they had signed to EMI? What with the Thorn - EMI corporation's involvement with manufacturing weapons systems and their close links with the Arms Trade...

S: This is it... We would have had to have looked very carefully at what they said.

T: For what we're doing to be true, we basically have to give much thought to what we're about, what we want to do - not what other people want us to do - and take it from there! As far as a backlash is concerned, The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks caused a backlash - that album felt right for us at the time and we did it! We knew the lyrics would cause a reaction and they did and we would still do it today! As far as a major label is concerned, it would have to be something pretty special... We've got distribution sussed in the UK but if a major offered us a deal that would license records to Japan - where we haven't the facilities to send them - or if someone offered to distribute our records, which would leave us totally in charge but our records would get into WH Smiths and Woolworths, then we would obviously consider the possibilities.

**MRR: Do you ultimately want chain stores like WH Smiths and Woolworths to stock your material?**

T: I don't know, because that's something you tackle when you're confronted with it. You can't say "no" full-stop! Situations change and we're all older.

S: Obviously, we would like our stuff to reach as many people as possible. Take someone like CHUMBAWAMBA and their Pictures of Starving Children album - which attacked multinationals. Now if that had been released on EMI and had sold eight million copies, then I would personally reconsider the argument that it was a cop-out and wrong. Personally, I don't think that record would have been negated and the message would still be the same on EMI and if EMI had been mugs to release it, then so be it!

T: Proof of that is people. John Lennon or Edwin Starr's song "War" - which was on a major label and reached millions of people...

**MRR: So why should people buy your records?**

T: Because I buy them!

C: Well, they might like the music.

L: Why not!

S: It isn't why people should buy them but why more people don't buy them! It always surprises me when I look at the independent charts and see all the shit that's about...

The aim of the One Little Indian label is to provide both individuals and bands space to create and promote new/ radical ideas. Other artists involved with One Little Indian include ANNIE ANXIETY BANDEZ, D. AND V., LOUD-SPEAKER, THE SUGARCUBES, and THE VERY THINGS.

Meanwhile FLUX themselves have tentative plans to record a 12" - possibly entitled Visions - but there are definitely no plans to gig anywhere...

Since the interview took place FLUX, along with One Little Indian, Spider Leg Records and their publishing company Second Wind, have been charged on sixteen counts under the 1956 Obscene Publications Act in connection with The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks LP. The charges are divided into four sections - corrupting minors, the distribution of obscene material to shops, the distribution of obscene material through the post and the publication of obscene material. FLUX have circulated a statement to established independent labels and all major record companies throughout the UK, requesting a donation of £250/\$450 towards a bust fund. The bust fund will also be open to other labels and bands who suffer a similar plight to FLUX.

A compilation LP is currently being organised and all profits will be donated to the bust fund. Contributions have already been made by CHUMBAWAMBA, CONFLICT, CRASS and DEAD KENNEDYS. FLUX c/o One Little Indian/ 3 Fransfield Grove, Sydenham/ London SE 26/ England

