

# TIER - AUTONOMIE

Jahrgang 4, Nr. 1

ISSN 2363-6513

Oktober 2017

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## *A listen-and-read* interview with Andy Martin

Singer and songwriter of the anarcho-punk band The Apostles, writer and with the band Unit today.

**Background:** Andy Martin is the former singer of The Apostles, the band initially formed as a punk band, but they took a special role within specifically the very insider anarcho-punk scene. As Andy describes in the interview he has never understood himself as a punk though. We however know The Apostles from their involvement in the early 1980ies stream of the punk movement that was intensely political and critical of social mechanisms of almost all segments of society. This fraction occurring within (or alongside) punk also brought forth a diverse range of Animal Rights / Liberation music of protest culture, which, as impactful as it has been in this subculture over the due course, is still being neglected by the cultural reception about the Animal Rights / Liberation movement's history. The independent voicing of criticism of a speciesist society in this music scene is unique and hardcore bands have been continuing the thus paved paths, whereby of course contextualities of time have changed effects and they always differ in how to such expressive impacts can be culturally located. Andy Martin's work is continuously critical and does not stick to patterns of mainstream, but stays outstandingly original, he does not sell out his own originality like many artists did by taking up underground mainstreamism. The form of independent expression by the Apostles and Unit inspire the recipient for individual thought and expression, one of the rare artforms that can bolster critical thinking, inclusively for the Animal Rights / Liberation ( Autonomy protest culture.

- Andy Martin about the Apostles: <http://www.unit-united.co.uk/theapostles.htm>
- Unit: <http://www.unit-united.co.uk/>
- Andy Martin's comprehensive youtube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIcEPCuyEuEgALNdMZrAl8w/videos>

**Tags:** Interview, Andy Martin, Unit, The Apostles, political and anarcho-punk history, music as art, social justice and individualism.

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## *A listen-and-read* interview with Andy Martin

**Please note:** Andy prefers the uploads of all tracks on the Unit channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIcEPCuyEuEgALNdMZrAl8w/videos>), for time limitation reasons we uploaded onto our server some recordings with a slightly poorer sound quality. For the optimum versions please use Andy's music file collection.

### Transcending subversiveness

**Andy Martin:** Preface: it was my original intention to type most of my replies in German but I discovered (to my shame) my grasp of the language is inadequate for the task so – regrettably – I must restrict myself to English. I am obliged to state this because it disturbs me that well over 50% of the world wide web is written in English (even by people for whom English is not their first language) yet far less than 50% of the world speaks and writes English. This, therefore, is an example of cultural dominance that is not acceptable. The worst example of this is pop music – how many European and even Japanese pop and rock groups sing in English? This is daft! After all, how many British and American groups sing in, say, French, Italian, German...or Japanese? This is why I respect the German group Rammstein – they proudly sing in their own language – although their music is horrible! It is also why I enjoy the Japanese pop group Shocking Lemon (who sing in Japanese) even though their CD titles and the names of their tracks are printed in English...a provocative fact. This is partly why UNIT include numbers in German. However, my predilection for Latin titles is pure self indulgence on my behalf – I love Latin!

**Tierautonomie:** Where do you personally locate subversive change in our current Zeitgeist?

**Andy Martin:** When Guy Debord wrote his interminably tedious book *Society Of The Spectacle*, many of his descriptions apply to much of the devices (and the concomitant behaviour patterns they generate among the twittering mutter line of humanity addicted to its brightly flashing lights) that we call 'social media'. I am reluctant to use the term because 'social media' implies a form of technology that involves people engaged in communication whereas the reality is rather different. Indeed, communication is not the appropriate word – deception and empty gestures are much more accurate descriptions. People are encouraged to

create avatars for themselves in which they can appear as personalities re-invited (Frankenstein monsters for the digital age) on their websites and Face Book sites. We may give ourselves new names, new faces and even new personalities (on-line) in order to create a false impression of who we are. This deception is able to function because we are also encouraged (indeed often obliged) to spend most of our time staring at computer screens, smart phone screens, tablets, i-pads and whatever other high faluting device they'll invent next month, rather than engage in genuine social communication where we talk to each other without the intercession of electronic hardware. As much of our communication is now filtered through digital technology, it seems to me we talk more yet actually say less.

Where, then, do I locate subversive change in our current zeitgeist? Es ist furchtbar schwierig! When a person refuses to be connected to the internet at home (so advertising companies and multinational corporations do not have instant access to that individual) then they create a tiny bubble of uncertainty, a discontinuity in the matter line. This is not merely the desperate bleating of a man unable to utilise or even comprehend most modern digital technology (although that, too, may be a contributing factor); it is a plea for sanity. Yes, that is how crucial I perceive the issue to be. Walk along a street – any street – in any industrial nation. How many people do you see staring at mobile devices, thumbs twitching back and forth? Sit on a bus or a train and count how many people stare at these same mobile devices while the war, the countryside – real life – whisks by the windows outside. I see a group of people with laptop computers, smart-phones and i-pads staring at a digital recreation of a glorious sunrise above a waterfall (look how skilfully the computer generated images replicate cascading water droplets) while outside is an actual glorious sunrise above a waterfall...completely unseen by any of those same people.

Fringe theatre, alternative radio and grime (the non-commercial, counter-cultural response to rap and hip hop) are the 2 areas where I have seen and heard genuine subversion. Punk (in Britain anyway) was never subversive because its exponents sought to attain fame and celebrity status: one bunch of miserable white middle class bastards sought to impress another bunch of miserable white middle class bastards. This is why the punk movement here was tolerated – even encouraged – by our society: it never posed a threat to anyone anywhere because its members, being white and middle class, had a stake in that society. They had too much to lose in the event of genuine revolutionary change. Punks in Britain merely wanted to shock mummy and daddy for a couple of years before they discarded their silly costumes, returned to college and joined the regime after their brief flirtation with the appearance of rebellion. This is why you never saw punks involved in Class War. In a genuine revolution, their parents might lose their social status and that would be intolerable, especially if daddy lost his job and couldn't provide the family with all those lovely trinkets to which they had become accustomed.

Class War was a genuinely revolutionary movement, an angry political group scattered across the nation. It remains the only political organisation to which I was ever affiliated because it

was the only such group who spoke on behalf of people like me. It actually represented me and my peers. What did punk represent for me? Boredom, idiocy and excess – a lot of noise, waving and shouting that signified absolutely nothing. The music was horrible, too! Indeed, it was ridiculous – a punk band makes a racket that is enjoyed only by other punks who already agree with the sentiments expressed in the music. Where, then, is the ability to proliferate subversive content? The phrase ‘preaching to the converted’ comes instantly to mind. Mein Gott, there is more genuinely revolutionary content in a single bar of Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman or Gil Scott Heron than any number of puerile pox ridden punk bands. I despise these white middle class clothes hangers with their wretched slogans and tedious cacophony bereft of any hint of individuality or originality. Punk rock is merely ineptly played rock and roll with swear words and safety pins.

What can even be subversive, when subversiveness functions more like a label, a superficial claim where no question marks are set that would reach beyond the small and big boulders of society’s-continuously-kept status-quos? Does our ‘seemingly continuous enlightenment’ – a society where everything and nothing is subversive – seem to overlook some odd mechanisms that undermine self-critical debate and thought?

Here I return to fringe theatre, alternative radio and grime. Note: I do not include allegedly anti-establishment political groups in this. Marxists are profoundly offensive to me, their inanely messianic utopianism reserved only for people who kneel at the altar of tenets and injunctions which insist everyone must possess the same beliefs. Their notion of an alternative society to the one we have now is a nation where everyone is forced to adopt the same set of social behaviour patterns and political beliefs. It is the source responsible for ‘political correctness’ which I utterly despise. The only reason I never joined the British National Party is because I don’t see any advantage in hating a person purely because their skin colour happens to be different to my own. That said, the BNP speaks for more working class people than any number of Marxists. Do you require proof of this statement? Look at any march by the BNP or their Rottweilers, the English Defence League – there you can see almost exclusively working class people in their ranks. What kind of people comprise the crowds who attend loony left marches? Middle class geeks who, being innately insecure, want everyone else in the world to be just like them.

There is a radio station in London called Resonance. (I invite people to go to <https://www.resonancefm.com/>) This is the voice of genuine subversion...which is why it is a local radio station not allowed to broadcast to the wider population. The government are (at the moment anyway) able to tolerate its presence because they can claim they defend freedom of expression...but if Resonance was given a massive financial grant by an eccentric millionaire and suddenly able to broadcast nationwide, we would soon see just how far the government was prepared to sanction freedom of expression. In 2012 and early 2013 it hosted a weekly programme called Sick Notes, presented by Michael Colville, a 17 year old working class lad who invited his friends into the studio to play various examples of rap, hip hop and

grime interspersed with social commentary that included fiercely critical diatribes against the police, the British legal system, the British education system, American foreign policy and the rise of far right political groups in Europe. For the first time in many years I found myself able to listen every week (indeed I never missed a single programme) to a programme I realised was genuinely subversive.

I admit I had virtually no interest in the music. True, I'd much rather listen to 60 minutes of grime than 60 seconds of punk rock but it still did not appeal to me. Remember, of my approximately 200 CDs, nearly 160 of them are of classical works (baroque and 20th century mainly), the others comprising progressive rock plus a few discs of selected tracks by The Pop Group and Wire. These latter 2 groups are as close to punk rock as I am ever liable to go. I turn to J S Bach, Henry Purcell, Marc Antoine Charpentier and Jean Philippe Rameau for inspiration, not some dreary old pop group. Punk rock is utterly irrelevant to me – it always has been and probably always will be. Anyway, this mention of my passion for classical music provides me with more than merely an excuse to place a social signifier on the world wobbly web. *Passaggio* by Luciano Berio (1925 – 2003) composed in 1962 assaults the social conventions that govern opera. The text (by Umberto Eco) upset, irritated and annoyed many people involved in the realms of classical music, especially opera – how dare one of their own composers attack such a sacred cow? This is what I consider a genuinely subversive act. There are plenty of others – turn to Luigi Nono, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, Hans Werner Henze or even Iannis Xenakis if you feel particularly adventurous. These are all 20th century composers who utilised their privileged position in society to attack elements of it they considered profoundly offensive even though it generated hostility and suspicion with a concomitant absence of recordings and performances of their works, at least for a while.

The great American free jazz pianist Sun Ra provides another superb example of a man able to commit subversive acts even in the absence of blatantly obvious texts. At a time in America when (in certain States) racially mixed music groups and theatre troupes were not allowed – or at least publically vilified – Sun Ra took his group (The Arkestra) which included black, Hispanic and white musicians into regions where the police and the senators were either members of the ku klux klan or supporters of it. This has no equivalent in punk rock, of course – they'd never have the courage!

I am not convinced by your assertion that these days everything / nothing is subversive. Perhaps it is different in Germany but in Britain it is now considered subversive to criticise (for example) multi-culturalism and multi-racialism. Anyone who calls for an end to immigration is castigated as a Nazi sympathiser. There are even people who used to write to me who have since severed all communication with me as a consequence of their interpretation of what they perceive to be my right wing political views. Well, I find this incredible. I have never made any attempt to disguise or deny my political beliefs. In 1991 we released *Europe Awake*, an audio cassette, which includes statements of these beliefs. I am not obliged to defend a single one of them. If other people are allowed to be communists,

socialists, anarchists, liberals or fascists then I, too, am allowed to be...whatever it is I am. In fact I find it impossible to describe my beliefs by any label because there does not appear to be a verbal category in existence yet which accurately describes them. To be honest, I think the difficulty (for other people, not for me) arises because I really don't consider politics at all important. There are far more interesting reasons to indulge in arguments and debates!

**Tierautonomie:** Do crowd and group dynamics (i.e. facebook popularity / "likes") hinder individual expression because other people (and the more people the better) have to approve of someone's message? If someone doesn't get 'likes' she/he either self-censors or stays out/shuts up in that network. Does 'the crowd' define 'the individual' as the individual is immediately measured by group dynamics, still like we had it in the past within actual physical groups in which tendencies for social hierarchies existed?

**Andy Martin:** Ah yes, here we go! I sent a series of emails to various people on our mail list earlier this year to celebrate a dubious achievement: our You Tube site gained its 100th subscriber. Well, let me modify that: the achievement itself is not dubious – it was my desire to celebrate the event which is dubious. You see how pernicious this can be – even I began to be sucked into the swirling vortex of yapping morons on the mutter line. Now we have 103 subscribers, by the way...but so what? Does that make me superior in some manner to you or to some other group or individual with only, say 30 subscribers? Of course not!

I think it is advisable to enter into a difficult discussion here because I mentioned various classical composers earlier with reference to their assaults on bourgeois culture and I am aware critics could complain I have no right to be so abusive to punk bands on the one hand yet appear to defend the purveyors of bourgeois culture on the other. I accept this is a legitimate criticism. In fact, the German composer Hans Werner Henze addressed this issue in his work *Der Langwierige Weg In Die Wohnung Der Natascha Ungeheuer* (1971) in which he set to challenging but infinitely rewarding music a magnificent prose poem by the Chilean born German political poet Gaston Salvatore. This text (which really has to be read in the original German as even a good quality English translation simply fails to do it justice) has formed the basis for numerous musical settings by me since 1992 onwards.

What does a middle class person do if he / she originates from a wealthy family whose parents occupy a position of privilege in society yet the person concerned genuinely cares (or appears to care) about the plight of poverty stricken people in their nation? How do they express their concern without appearing to be patronising and condescending? I notice how often Marxists shout loudly about the injustices done to poor people in third world countries yet ignore the same concerns that afflict working class people in their own countries. If you are poor and homeless in Germany, what possible relevance to you is the misfortune of a man or woman in, say, Colombia or Ethiopia who happens to endure even worse deprivations? Their woeful plight is not your business and you are not to blame for it – knowledge of their

struggle is scarcely liable to assist your own problem. Mein Gott, I despise Marxists so vehemently I wouldn't even piss on them to put them out if they were on fire.

Consider this: traditional Jews observe the Sabbath – Saturday – in which, for 25 hours, they do no work. This proscribes the use of mobile phones, i-pads, televisions and even the cooker. Driving cars is prohibited. To me this sounds severe and yet consider what could happen to a family who elected to observe the Sabbath seriously: with no work and, more crucially, no distractions, they will have to spend time together and communicate, perhaps on a more meaningful level than at any other time of the week. I am not a Jew (heaven forbid) but I suggest this simple if strict religious practise has something useful to teach us in an age where the majority of people wander around in a dopey daze as they gaze at little electronic screens, stupefied by the mutter line.

Face Book is a big, fat nothing. It merely provides multinational corporations with an opportunity to advertise their garbage on a global scale. I never use Face Book. Why should I? We have a website and an email site so we have absolutely no use for twitter, Face Book or any of these other 'social media' contrivances which I assert are designed to maintain us in a state of alienation. We sit at home and stare at computer screens rather go out on the streets to express our dissent in demonstrations – stuff that! It is a fact of physics that the Sun is a slightly variable star. It endures a cycle of maxima and minima every 22 years. During a time of extreme excitement (in a maxima) it may emit many millions of tons of excited electrons in a solar storm. If a particularly vociferous wave of charged (ionised) particles hit us, it would disable 90% of the artificial satellites that orbit the Earth and annihilate our digital communications networks in a matter of seconds. Mobile phones and the entire internet would crumble into obsolescence. Imagine that! How would most people in industrial nations survive bereft of mobile phones, i-pads and the internet? Well, I say: bring it on!

Meanwhile, before that happens, I urge people, in all seriousness, to ignore and forget The Apostles and concentrate on what we do NOW. We have to think ahead! All 664 of the works recorded by UNIT (so far) are now available free of charge on our You Tube site. Type 'UNIT Andy Martin' into Google and it will take you to our site. I recommend Eagle, 1985, Who, Ming Hai, Orders of The General, Grange Hill, Osaka Boy, Hup Soon Heng and New Order as decent starting points. Almost every track recorded (ineptly) by The Apostles was recorded again (properly) by UNIT so if you wish to hear the proper, definitive renditions of these works then listen to those by UNIT rather than the vastly inferior attempts by The Apostles.

**Tierautonomie:** Can we change something 'from beneath' meaning without being popular, without catering to standards and status quo, finally also without the help of the cultural industrial complex (i.e. Kulturindustrie) and its consumers-of-content, or should we just 'go with the flow' if it happens to run under the right flag and label, and let others who have some

‘public support’ speak for us; can the individual otherwise have a valid, distinct voice? Sound, No Sound, breaking and creating codices.

**Andy Martin:** The most depressing answer, briefly, is: no. Sorry – and I mean I am genuinely sorry – but I do not believe independent groups (drama troupes, artists, musicians) are able to effect change in society. Writers (possibly) may be more successful but only in the age of the internet where it is now easier (and cheaper) to disseminate subversive literature. You see, with (to take the most familiar example) music, it is generally limited in its appeal by whatever idiomatic language it adopts. Folk music will usually appeal only to people who like folk music, jazz to jazz hats, punk rock to punks (or morons) and so on. Literature is able to proliferate its contents across a wider range of people – William Burroughs and Anthony Burgess are read by hippies, punks (those who can actually read), students and intellectuals. The only people not affected by this literature are skinheads, obviously, because their only purpose on the planet is to provide animated punch-bags for niggers [2] who wish to advance their training as boxers. Do skinheads serve any other useful functions? I suppose you might use them as door-stops and draught excluders.

Digression: in Britain, skinheads are as extinct as the Dodo. In the mid 1980s, a group of Asians in Bradford decided they would no longer tolerate racially motivated assaults by gangs of skinheads in their area: they fought back – hard! The effect of this upon the rest of the nation was utterly incredible. Within 2 years, skinheads simply vanished from our streets. Skinheads never attacked niggers (unless the odds were 5 to 1 in their favour) because niggers are usually big, burly and able to fight back. Wogs and Pakis were considered safe targets...until Bradford 1985. After this initial fracas, groups of Asian youths (including mixtures of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, itself a highly unusual occurrence) patrolled Bradford, Leeds and other areas of the country where they simply hunted down skinheads and battered them – splendid! Suddenly Pakis were no longer fun to punch. The words ‘coward’ and ‘skinhead’ are mutually interchangeable.

Actually, black people seem to be more adept at the creation of subversive acts within the arts than any other racial group. This observation may be a consequence of living in Britain – perhaps if I lived in South America or Africa I might be obliged to alter or modify my assertion. I think primarily of the Black Panthers (naturally – all power to them and peace be upon their name) but also Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, Gil Scott Heron, The Last Poets and, in more recent times, Ice T, NWA and The Bad Brains, all of whom were genuinely subversive. Can white people be subversive then? Well, yes, of course they can...but it has to be what I call genuine subversion and not merely a desire to emulate some miserable Marxist clique or socially acceptable form of dissent like the campaign for nuclear disarmament, for example. The State is remarkably proficient at taking subversives and recuperating them into its paradigm. Animal rights campaigners in the 1980s were initially subversive but by the end of the decade we had Boy George and other media celebrities claiming to support animal rights...although I wonder how many of Boy George’s cosmetics were tested on animals?



No, I don't believe it is advisable to allow media spokespeople to represent us. It was tried in the early 1980s in Britain when a pop group called The Jam appeared to win a major battle: suddenly the national pop charts contained songs which included political sentiments critical of the government und kulturindustrie...or did they? How revolutionary was that pop group? I argue: not at all. This is not a criticism of Paul Weller (the man who wrote 90% of the group's works) rather an observation on the ability of their record company (Polydor) to market rebellion successfully, just as another major record company (CBS) marketed rebellion when they released records by The Clash, a band whom I absolutely despise, by the way. Ugh! Give me The Jam any day – at least their songs were decent. Polydor tried to capitalise on this again when they signed The Wall to their label but they found The Wall too much to handle. They could not recuperate The Wall and turn them into pop idols, despite the obvious strength of their lyrics and music. This is why Polydor decided not to promote the group but use them as a means by which to obviate their tax returns.

Note: a national socialist (Nazi) party in Germany recently managed to acquire 13% of the national vote in a general election. The Freedom Party of Austria is still immensely popular. Does this mean lots of Germans and Austrians are secret Nazis? Honestly, no, I don't believe it does. Fair enough, a tiny minority of those voters will be morons and cretins who still worship Herr Hitler but I am convinced the majority vote for these parties not so much because they support their policies but because the more conventional parties have failed to represent their concerns – mass immigration being the most pertinent. To be opposed to immigration (as I am) does not mean you are automatically a Nazi. Anyway, the only people able to represent us is ourselves.

**Tierautonomie:** I want to ask you about the inspiring quality of some of your tunes.

**Andy Martin:** Ah, the secret of my success – well, this is not going to please the punk punters out there but my ability to write unusual works with interesting harmonies and memorable melodies is a direct consequence of my musical environment. Until late 1979 the only music to which I listened was classical – baroque and 20th century mainly. I raised myself on Bach, Purcell, Charpentier, Rameau and their peers. To me, contemporary music meant Berio, Nono, Henze, Xenakis, Penderecki and Messiaen, not the pop pish peddled in the pop charts everyone at school enjoyed. 2 school pals (Eric Cooper and his girlfriend Susan Wilkins, peace be upon their names) managed to introduce me to the group Wire (the album 154 and its free EP). Until then, I literally took no notice of pop music. It was irrelevant to me. Thus in 1982 when I began to write music for The Apostles, I had no idea how one was supposed to construct pop songs. I applied my lessons (self taught) in harmony and counterpoint to pop songs which is presumably why they sounded so odd. In fact, they were wrong! I really didn't understand improvisation, repeated riffs and pop song structures.

Other bands were influenced by which ever pop groups they listened to during their formative years...which is perhaps why so many pop groups sound so similar (to my ears anyway). My influences were Bach or Xenakis...which meant my pop music was inevitably destined to sound rather weird. It may also explain why The Apostles sold records by the tens while other groups sold records by the thousands. Most people did not like my music – I can appreciate now why this should be but at the time it perplexed me. Why did so many people detest my music? What was wrong with it? After a while I learned simply to accept I was not going to rival The Jam or Wham for popularity and continued to sit in my room and contrive increasingly strange pieces destined to appeal to only the most adventurous listeners or those with unusual musical tastes. C'est la vie.

You see, I was not able to emulate other pop groups because I simply had no idea what they sounded like...with the corollary that my own works sounded highly individual. It allowed me to cultivate a distinctive style (albeit a most unpopular style) that did not sound like anyone else...well...usually. However, there are 2 embarrassing exceptions: Wire and Joy Division. I can't remember now who introduced me to the work of Joy Division but for a mercifully brief period, their music had an effect on me and I am ashamed to admit this becomes apparent in some of the pieces I wrote during the mid 1980s. (The primary offenders are The Victim, The Sword, New Face In EH4 and, of course, Walking Away which – as someone revealed to me a couple of years ago – is basically Day Of The Lords with slightly different chords.) Paradigm and The Shadow Out Of Space both sound like cover versions of obscure songs by Wire although I do not find this a source of shame or embarrassment.

However, later in the decade when I became acquainted (although not through choice) with other pop music (even, occasionally, the odd punk band) when various band members of The Apostles tried (with a spectacular lack of success) to interest me in their music or, at any rate, forms of music other than those genres I favoured, I realised how lamentably limited and conservative it all sounded. I made no distinction between The Exploited, Metallica, Crass, Spandau Ballet or Soft Cell – it was all rigid, fixed, old fashioned and tediously predictable. It made me more determined than ever to write music that was nothing remotely similar to their dreary old tat. My harmonic language is derived from a study of scores by J S Bach (Der Kunste Der Fuge) and the Austrian 19th century composer Anton Bruckner (Symphony No.9) although I never actually quote from these works.

I have included actual quotes from classical works in my pieces: The Land Of The Mountain & The Flood by Scottish composer Hamish McCunn (The Loch & The Glen), the Nocturne In Eb by Frederick Chopin (the bass guitar melody in Pale Blue Eyes) and the Symphony No.6 by Franz Schubert (Danny Wentworth) are the most celebrated examples. Look, take a track by a pop group, any pop group. You hear them play a riff. Can you predict what will happen next? I can do so without even hearing it – they'll repeat the riff another 3 times then – if you're lucky – they'll change into a different key and play another riff 4 times. When I hear a piece of pop music, I usually predict what the next chord will be, too. People in pop groups

are generally bereft of imagination as well as talent and skill. Mind you, presumably they know what they're doing since most pop groups sell more CDs than we do!

The Apostles – The Cripple: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_the\\_cripple.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_the_cripple.mp3)

Unit version of The Cripple: Video link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQoAokPrsOY>

**Tierautonomie:** Our interpretation: In this song you were discussing social isolation within a questionable society, the rules of how someone is supposed to look to count as lovable by society, physical abled-ness as the standard, the subtle ways of sorting someone with a 'disability' out, and even if you don't want to belong to this majority group (or the defining majority) you are being humiliated, devalued on the basis that you would stand outside of that majority group. This is how I understand the message of the song. What were / are the main ideas behind this song? Do you think anything has changed about the perception of disability in society?

**Andy Martin:** My initial motivation behind this ballad is selfish. I was born with severe dyspraxia (although I did not know its name until many years later) which meant, in theory, I would never be able to participate in any sports that involved hand to eye co-ordination nor play any musical instrument. I knew I was different to almost everyone else in school but I didn't comprehend why. Everyone else could play football, tennis, cricket and rugby so why couldn't I? Nobody else was anywhere near as clumsy as was I. It soon became apparent to me that I was also abnormally ugly; the other boys and girls subjected me to ridicule without mercy, day after day, week after week, month after month, for being a spastic and for being a troll. During my final year in school I also realised what I felt toward 3 particular boys (Wayne Johnson, Danny Wentworth and, most of all, Paul Novak) was what other boys felt toward girls. This detestable aspect of my character proved more than I could tolerate and it is the reason I tried to commit suicide in late 1980 which resulted in my incarceration in Springfield Psychiatric Hospital. I could accept being ugly and partially disabled; I could not accept being queer. Anyway, with reference to the first two problems, I describe this attitude of pupils and teachers in my 3rd book, Faded Fragments Of Distant Dreams, the 1st of my 3 autobiographies. The book is important because it is one of the rare examples of a narrative that describes, in detail, how children (pupils) were actually treated by adults (teachers) in secondary schools in Britain during the 1970s. That I am involved in the accounts is not a reason for its importance, of course.

What concerned me (which found its expression in this ballad) was a factor with regard to disability which nobody wished to mention or discuss: sexuality, almost as if spastics and

cripples are not supposed to possess sexual passions. Stuff that! Why should a boy with motor neurone disease not be allowed to have sex with a girl he finds physically attractive? There is (or was) in Britain an organisation of prostitutes who specialised in the provision of sexual services for disabled people. Various newspapers and media commentators heaped odium on this group, citing moral outrage as justification for their consternation...so do they really believe disabled people should be denied sexual encounters? I do have a slight problem with this ballad: my disability is minor and certainly does not merit much sympathy compared to someone with cystic fibrosis, motor neurone disease or polio, to provide just 3 examples. The text could give the impression (erroneously) I ask for sympathy or pity – this is absolutely not the case.

Actually, a far superior piece (at least in terms of the technical aspects of both the text and the music) is Thalidomide because it successfully addresses a topic that is not motivated from purely selfish concerns.

### The Apostles – Anarchy, Peace & Freedom: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_anarchy\\_peace.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_anarchy_peace.mp3)

**Tierautonomie:** In this song you formulate a critique of the anarchist pacifist counterculture on the 80ies, you pick up intersecting power-and-oppression-cornerpoints, like the oppressive structures of the state, racism, animal torture (speciesism), how nazis have pacifists on their death lists and communists wish to enslave them, that it's inadequate to react to oppression with a pattern of being stoned (escapism maybe), being into Crass (some 'cool band with a cool message'), how everything is drowned in the idea of being a pacifist while criticising any form of defensive violence. Is this rightly understood more or less? Does the ideal of pacifism mute controversy and tend to overlook the quality of conflicts which can't be easily solved?

**Andy Martin:** All 3 members of the original version of The Apostles (Pete Bynghall, Julian Portinari and Dan MacKintyre) tried to convince me Crass had a viable message for British youth and for dispossessed working class people. The more they described what Crass believed, the more horrified and disgusted I became. The proliferation of totalitarian regimes in the 20th century is not a single phenomenon with a general character. Distinction must be made between (for example) Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Nazism is a tumour generated by monopoly capitalism, a form of barbarism produced by capitalism at the end of its tether. Soviet rule is a species of tyranny, the domination of populations by unassailable elites, a natural consequence of Marxism partly exacerbated by a global struggle with capitalist powers. Both represent a perversion of traditional socialist aspirations for revolutionary change through the agency of a politicised working class.

British colonialism found its expression in the late 20th century through its treatment of Irish prisoners. I am old enough to remember the hunger strikes in which Irish member of

parliament Bobby Sands literally starved himself to death while held in detention in the establishment at Long Kesh (the infamous H Blocks) along with dozens of other Irish prisoners. Did we emerge victorious against the Nazi regime through pacifism, group hugs and tofu burgers? My utter fury expressed in this anthem is a consequence of my disgust for the sentiments expressed by typically middle class spoiled brats terrified of genuine revolutionary change, the kind of scum I mentioned earlier. These were teenagers from safe, often privileged families who sought to dictate to me how I should express my dissent against the British government of the time. What monumental arrogance! Who the hell did these buggers think they were? To whom did they think they were speaking and writing? I can answer that: they thought they had a right to adopt an officious attitude toward me because, being accustomed to giving orders (just like their parents) and being obeyed by their inferiors, they assumed I (a working class rat bag) ought to shut up and behave.

Every bleating pacifist platitude is an insult to the slaughtered masses of the holocaust, the Jewish victims at Katyn in Poland (murdered by Russian troops in 1943) and every Irish prisoner tortured and murdered by occupation forces in Ireland. What increased my rage was the audacity of these punks who dared to try to dictate to me what my response should be to the gross injustices committed by regimes around the world when a) I was not a punk, b) I was not directly involved in the punk scene, c) The Apostles was not a punk band and d) these people (I'll call them 'people' in a token attempt to be polite) so obsessively worshipped their pop heroes (Crass in this case but the name of the band is immaterial) they insisted everyone else in the world ought to be the same as them...which is an attitude typical of socialists and one shared by religious zealots such as Jehova Witnesses.

## Ethical praxis

The Apostles – The Sword: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_the\\_sword.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_the_sword.mp3)

**Tierautonomie:** This is a very unique song to me, because you refer directly to the 'moral' proverb of 'he who lives by the sword will die by the sword' and contextualize this with the situation of being bullied. This song seems 'empowering' because it gives a sort of motivating idea by making use of an 'experiential wisdom' type of phrase. This is something that would have probably not occurred in pop / charts / commercial music which prefers to represent a current Zeitgeist and fashion most of all and not old sayings. The solution to the problem described in this song is kind of brought about by something described in a 'moral' phrase, and morals and wisdom had a difficult position in the 1980ies already too? Is this song in itself a moral song in some way, as it does not leave the problem with the affected person or victim alone but postulates an entire structure of 'moral fallacy' concerning the oppressive agent / the bully?

**Andy Martin:** In 1986 I met a young man who called himself Animal. He was (I think) 2 or 3 years younger than I. He attended Amery Hill School which is where I spent my teenage years. It was the first (and remains so far the only) occasion on which I met anyone else who attended that wretched establishment. When he realised I also used to go there, he spoke about the teachers and the prefects with particular emphasis on their behaviour. The vile practises I witnessed there during the 1970s evidently continued after I returned to London and it so disgusted me I felt motivated to write a ballad about it...but the trauma I experienced in that place formed part of the reason I was incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital and the emotional turmoil proved beyond my ability to endure so I had to express my reaction to the school in an oblique manner...which is how *The Sword* came to be written.

This number is indirectly (or perhaps directly) related to *Anarchy, Peace & Freedom* because it defends the right of the victims of bullies to use violence – brutal, glorious violence – against bullies. Here’s a lesson for weak, liberal pacifists who, being from pampered middle class families, speak and write from a position of ignorance: during my 1st, 2nd and 3rd years in Amery Hill School, I was consistently bullied, mainly by other pupils but also by prefects and teachers; during my 4th and 5th years in Amery Hill School, nobody ever tried to bully me again. Why? What changed? I changed! My pal Eric Cooper and his magnificent older sister Karen (who taught unarmed combat in a local airforce base) gave me regular self defence lessons every Saturday morning. They taught me how to fight and how to inflict maximum damage against assailants who were bigger and stronger than I. These lessons were extremely effective...as the bullies discovered to their cost. It is an unfortunate fact there are occasions when the only effective means with which to combat and beat fascism is by the use of fascist methods.

I am aware there may be readers who think it wrong to physically fight bullies – people who believe ‘violence only leads to more violence’. Christ but I’m so sick and tired of this dreary old debate...but let’s do it anyway. The New Testament teaches us to ‘turn the other cheek’ and forgive our enemies. Right then, so this brainless 4th year thug at school batters 1st year girls and swipes their dinner money. He tells them to give him 50 pence each Monday morning if they want to avoid a bashing. This behaviour will continue until someone physically stops it. A girl tells him she understands his emotional turmoil and she forgives him. ‘Great,’ the bully thinks, ‘an easy conquest’. Then this other girl – let’s call her Sandra – she’s from the 4th year and decides she really doesn’t want to tolerate this abusive behaviour. She grabs the boy during break-time, knees him in the crotch, head butts his nose and punches him on the jaw. He collapses to the ground so she delivers three hefty kicks to his body. ‘Every girl you bash from now on results in a bashing from me in return – it’s your choice’ she says. Suddenly his former activity is no longer fun – no fun at all. Who benefits from this new reality? Every girl in the 1st year who would otherwise have to give their dinner money to this odious 4th year boy. This is not a fantasy concocted to support my argument – it is a description of an event that actually happened in my school. I witnessed it.

Now take the argument onto the streets of Colombia in the 1990s where death squads hunted down homeless children for fun and shot them dead. Does this vile practise still continue today? I sincerely hope not. However, suppose a group of homeless children encounter one of these gun toting gangs. One of the boys – perhaps he’s a Christian – tell the gang he forgives them and pleads for his life and the lives of his pals. What is liable to be the reaction of that gang? Well, obviously, they’re going to shoot every one of those children, saving that boy until last probably...but only after they’ve stopped laughing. If you forgive a transgressor, what you actually do is allow their antisocial behaviour to continue. Worse – you imply that behaviour is acceptable. No, this simply cannot continue. Let’s adopt my method now. The death squad enter a cul-de-sac and there are those homeless children. Instead of some weak, wimpy Christian boy, there’s a sneering feral child armed with a spray can and a Stanley knife. The children erupt into action, tearing at the faces of those gang members. Yes, some of them are quick enough to fire their guns and yes, some of the children die...but those who survive pick up the guns of the fallen gang members and blast to fragments the faces of every remaining death squad member. This begins to happen in other cul-de-sacs, on other streets. See what I mean?

The history of the human race is one of wars, battles, riots, putsches, pogroms and internecine squabbles. Thugs and bullies don’t understand kindness, decency and intelligence. You might just as effectively communicate with them in ancient Greek. However, such people do understand violence – the only language in which they are fluent – so that is how to address the issue. Any other solution is mere madness or, at best, fatuous fol-de-rol.

### The Apostles – Proletarian Autonomy: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_proletarian\\_autonomy.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_proletarian_autonomy.mp3)

**Tierautonomie:** This song covers a basic political approach in a very concentrated form, phrased in political punk terms: how self-organisation within a community can be brought about by the individual/s; implying that political concepts and utopias seem to overlook this factor (i.e. individuality) in its potentiality. Is the individual maybe the one who is continuously silenced and deconstructed in cultures and societies, and only the person of the crowd taken as the entitled ‘citizen’? (The term individualism though has been of course hijacked by neoliberalism pretty much, as a denominator of social-darwinist egotism, but this is referring to the actual real individual in the ‘strict’ sense of basically being one living entity.)

**Andy Martin:** No! Absolutely not. With respect to you, this anthem is not phrased in ‘political punk terms’. It has absolutely no relation to punk rock at all. There is nothing ‘punk’ in the text of this number. I noticed many pop and punk numbers that addressed political topics only ever moaned, whined and complained about this or that aspect of society. Nobody

ever sat down and thought about writing a song, ballad or anthem which featured a possible solution...so I did!

In fact the lyric was inspired by a lecture I heard on BBC Radio 3 on two 20th century philosophers, Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt, 2 Germans who emigrated to America to escape from the 3rd Reich. Modern society is not simply aggressive, exploitative and dominated by an overwhelmingly powerful ruling class; it has also acquired the capacity to absorb into itself the forces which might seek to oppose it. This is true not only of the industrial working class which entered into a collusive relationship with elements of capitalism that claimed to administer to its needs. This also applies to aspects of ideas, science and the arts. The bland mediocrity of modern existence informed by a detergent uniformity imposed by the corporate media is a consequence of this absorption. Modern reality is oppressive because it denies the power of dissent. Only given 'facts' possess reality and ideas, claims or fantasies which cannot be accommodated by (and assimilated into) the pragmatic requirements of the ruling elite are either dismissed or given a positive (but sanitised) function within the prevailing paradigm.

However, I must admit this anthem is not completely honest as an expression of my beliefs. Aware my right wing political beliefs might cause trouble for my fellow band members, I attempted to concoct a mechanism by which a pseudo-anarchist form of self government might conceivably function – thus was the text to Proletarian Autonomy created. I genuinely wanted to believe this could be utilised as a blueprint for society but I had to admit (secretly, to myself) most people simply could not be trusted to behave themselves if such an attempt was made...which is why I believe a strong form of government essential, primarily to keep the rabble under control.

## The popularity of radical protest culture

The Apostles – Mob Violence cover by Burnt Cross: Video link

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWbu9\\_xrbXw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWbu9_xrbXw)

**Tierautonomie:** This rather dynamic song is one of these hardcore anthems that you created. It seems to me that Burnt Cross have taken up this song giving an idea into today's somewhat different punk-related social manifestations of resistance. The original sounds harsher, rougher.

**Andy Martin:** In 1984 I joined Class War, inspired by the noble presence of Ian Bone, a man for whom I have infinite respect, patience and admiration. It is most unfortunate this anthem is associated with punks because in fact the text (of which I am justifiably proud) is my first genuine attempt to engage with a form of radical politics not informed by my right wing past. The music is trite nonsense and frankly the text deserves a much better musical setting but I



was under pressure to complete the piece in time for the record on which it is featured (Smash The Spectacle, our 5th EP) so I contrived this rather mediocre series of riffs which I consider a poor response to such a clever lyric. By the way, I really don't care how conceited that sounds – it is a clever lyric! After a further attempt (on the album Kämpfbereit) we finally managed to record the definitive account of this anthem on our album Rock In Opposition: Phase 5 in 2014. The 'original' sounds harsher, rougher, because none of us could play it properly (apart from Chris Low whose drumming was always decent). I am pleased (and, let's be honest, rather flattered) to find another group have recorded an account of one of my numbers.

**Tierautonomie:** You give some info about how this song came into existence in the description of the Unit 1996 version. What did you feel was missing in this song when you wrote it and you noticed it's getting more popular than you maybe thought it ought to be?

**Andy Martin:** I realise I have already answered most of this in my response to your previous question. Actions speak louder than words: I invite readers to type 'You Tube UNIT Mob Violence Andy Martin' into Google and listen to the 2014 recording. They will realise (if they are familiar with the earlier versions from 1984 and 1996) why I was personally not satisfied with it. The lyric certainly deserves the popularity it acquired; the music – especially the poor performance by The Apostles – does not.

There is another, more important, problem with this number. It is a problem that afflicts any group who sings a number concerned with direct political action. If we were so concerned about taking direct political action against the State, we would not have time to march into a recording studio and sing songs about direct political action – we would instead march onto the streets and do it rather than sing about it. Without going into detail (for obvious reasons) it is true some of us (including myself) were involved in direct political action during the 1980s but does that make my anthem legitimate? Do I have the right to encourage other people to engage in direct political action when all I'm doing is standing in front of a microphone in a recording studio and bawling out a lot of words that could be conceived as merely an expression of the rhetoric of crisis? I admit I have no satisfactory answer to this.

The Apostles – Punk Squatters: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_punk\\_squatters.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_punk_squatters.mp3)

**Andy Martin:** This allows me to provide a rare example of a brief, simple answer to one of your questions. I find nothing about the song to criticise in terms of its text, music or arrangement. My complaint is the extremely daft (and obviously fake) London accent I adopted in our works at this time which is especially prevalent on this number. In fact it could be longer – it is an expression of alienation (but humorous) since it describes my brief period living in 281 Victoria Park Road. I lived in the attic in splendid isolation while everyone else

in the place belonged to what other people referred to as the Hackney Hell Crew. We had almost nothing in common. They never washed, they listened to heavy metal records and they were all unemployed. I dressed smartly, kept myself scrupulously clean, worked as a landscape gardener and listened to BBC Radio 3.

**Tierautonomie:** Shows that punk has not been a monolith, but rather a diverse mix of social backgrounds, denominators and positions and that it was only a peer group, fragmented, insofar as “others just would not care”, that society was ignorant of a lot of things. Can you give us more about the background of what made you write this track?

**Andy Martin:** I think I have already answered this in my response to your previous question. The track was a humorous (and unusually good natured) satire on the typical daily lives of punk squatters. I enjoyed being able to write a number about punks that, for once, did not have to insult and vilify them! That said, in my experience, ‘punk’ means ‘white white white as far as the eye can see’ (Ernest Hemmingway). There was never a diverse mix of social backgrounds – punks were always spoiled middle class brats. Perhaps it was different in Germany. I am given to understand it was certainly different in America...could that be why it is mainly Americans who visit our You Tube site and who purchase our CDs?

## **Animal Rights in the early 1980s punk movement: as for the Apostles**

In The Name of Science, original Apostles version: Audio link (mp3)

[http://simorgh.de/martin/the\\_apostles\\_science.mp3](http://simorgh.de/martin/the_apostles_science.mp3)

Unit version of In The Name of Science: Video link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LPwhihNLx4>

**Tierautonomie:** This song is a classic in hardcore animal rights history. It’s radical, metaphoric, dares to express that the emotional response to speciesism is a fundamental one. Hardcore punk brought Animal Rights into the protest culture of the second half of the 20th century [1] and an ongoing vivid trail of following lyricists and musicians in the related music scenes have knitted on this tradition. You were basically intersectional with the inclusion of Animal Rights into the discussion of social relevance.

**Andy Martin:** Most become vegetarians as a result of their disgust at the manner in which animals are maltreated in our societies. I became a vegetarian in 1982 for a daft reason: I met a 15 year old lad called Matthew Pond, the son of newspaper columnist Sheila Macleod and pop singer Paul Jones (real name Paul Pond). He was a) a spoiled middle class brat who thought everyone else in the world existed purely to serve his own requirements, b) a punk

rocker, c) a Crass worshipping pacifist and d) one of the most odiously conceited, arrogant and profoundly selfish people it has ever been my misfortunate to encounter...4 reasons to absolutely despise him! He informed me he had become a vegetarian and thus was superior to me. Purely to spite him I, too, decided to become a vegetarian, determined to beat him. I was convinced he'd revert to carnivorous behaviour before I did...so imagine my delight when he did! To be fair – it was a chicken and mushroom pastie that did the damage so it could be argued he suffered intolerable provocation since how many other people in his situation would be able to resist such a repast?

Brief digression: I met Paul Jones (who used to sing for a group called Manfred Mann) when he visited my attic in 109 Foulden Road. He called to collect Matthew to take him to the west end or the zoo. I found Mr Jones to be pleasant, affable, honest and a genuinely decent person – even though he was a devout Christian. How could this splendid man generate such a foul and loathsome specimen for a son?

Now I faced a problem: how could I tell people the reason I was a vegetarian was purely because I sought to spite a middle class brat? It would sound silly – well, I suppose it was silly, just a bit. The issue intrigued me – why did people become vegetarians? I thought vegetarians were hippies and eccentric health food fanatics. Therefore I began to investigate the matter of animal rights. It took me about 3 days to digest (forgive the pun) the information I discovered courtesy of Little @ Printers where, a year later, I would be employed as a dark room assistant. Anyway, I have absolutely no memory of the sources of this information but I suspect they were pamphlets rather than books, perhaps those issued by the Hunt Saboteurs Association and the Animal Liberation Front. I could scarcely believe what I read – the texts included actual photographs for verisimilitude.

Let's not trivialise the issue here: I loved to eat meat! I scoffed liver, bacon, sausages, kidneys, steak, chicken, duck and pork. The only meat I did not like (indeed have never liked) is beef and hearts. I loved chicken and mushroom pasties, Cornish pasties and pork pies. How the hell was a carnivore of my status ever going to remain a vegetarian? Well, the power of those ALF pamphlets proved sufficiently strong even when set in opposition to my carnivorous nature. I managed to remain a vegetarian and I even tried to be a vegan for a brief period. I managed it for barely 2 years. The problem here was tea. I am addicted to tea...yet it has to have milk in it (but not sugar – anyone who puts sugar in tea is a barbarian). I managed to survive on tea with soya milk but after nearly 2 years I could no longer tolerate it. Anyway, I have remained a strict vegetarian to this very day. I do have months where I refuse (almost) all dairy products except for milk in my tea.

However, I do not know many vegetarians. There is a reason for this: most people who claim to support animal rights (especially those below a certain age) adopt an attitude of insufferable superiority over others. I observe a similar attitude among Marxists and fundamental Christians. What these people seek to prove is this: 'we are better than you; we

are superior – only when you adopt our belief system and act like us will we accept you just might be acceptable to our social circle’. Well, I most definitely have no wish to be accepted into such a social circle...because if these kind of people did accept me then imagine what a tedious wretch that would make me! It is right for me to be an atheist, to espouse right wing libertarian politics, support animal rights and be a strict vegetarian – it may not be right for someone else. Who the hell am I to tell other people how to live their lives? I can tell them why I am not a Christian, why I despise Marxism and why I am a vegetarian – but it is not my business to try to change their lives unless (and only unless) their behaviour impinges upon my freedom and diminishes the quality of my own life. This is the problem with Marxists, Christians and a certain type of animal rights activist – they are crusaders who believe it is their duty to evangelise and convert everyone else in the world to adopt their own belief system.

**Tierautonomie:** I wonder about the problems faced momentarily and over the long run in terms of land possession and political entanglements with the inherited structures of the monarchy and aristocracy in the UK regarding hunting, the badger cull and other wildlife management, that are marked as a patriotic act almost, seen in front of this historical background. One notices that the hunt sab movement in the UK seem to stand for a form of fundamental resistance against traditional speciesism in ‘British hunting’ that is much associated with the aristocracy and those loyal to them.

When I joined the Hunt Saboteurs Association in the 1980s, the initial impetus was my hatred of the aristocracy rather than a love of animals. I was never impressed by those sickening little posters of cute and cuddly baby seals on ice floes that commanded us to take action against seal hunters. I thought instantly of eskimos who, if they turned vegetarian, would starve to death. Anyway, the landed gentry have always hunted victims – in the dark ages they took our land by brute force and created feudal societies where people like me were obliged to work for our lords and masters or starve...or face summary execution. When civilisation began to develop (during the 17th century) the aristocrats decided to find other methods to pass the time and relieve the tedious boredom experienced by excessively wealthy people...such as hunting and killing harmless animals.

Why do we have a royal family in Britain? Because King William The 1st of Normandy invaded England and quite literally stole land from our people. The British monarchy has consisted of foreigners from 1066 onwards – quite literally. King Harold was the last British monarch who was genuinely indigenous to this nation; all the others since are invaders. In the early 18th century we even imported parasites from Holland and Hanover (William Of Orange followed by George The 1st) in order to continue the tradition. How stupid is that? In 1914, the royal family changed their name from Sax-Coburg to Windsor as it didn’t seem politic for our monarch to have a German name when our young men were being slaughtered on the fields of France by German troops. What a shameful embarrassment that in 2017 there

is still a royal family in Britain and, even worse, we still have aristocrats who live in castles and mansions built on land that once belonged to ordinary working people!

Acts of cruelty and brutality (be they against animals or human beings) are often legitimised by their perpetrators when those people are too cowardly to stand up like men and simply admit they perform such acts for enjoyment. When a gang of thugs roams the countryside to kill badgers, they never have the courage to admit they enjoy hunting and killing living beings – they concoct the most absurd and fantastic reasons to justify their abominations against nature – it's our patriotic duty – it's for the benefit of all the other animals – it's to protect farmland – it's part of our national heritage. If an aristocrat sat on his horse and, with a sneer of utter petulance common to such people, announced his intention to hunt stags and foxes because he enjoys the infliction of cruelty, I would have more respect – or perhaps less contempt – for him than for his peers who contrive all manner of bizarre reasons to account for their despicable behaviour.

**Tierautonomie:** Is this a right impression that the hunt sabs stand for a political ground against traditional land politics and classist forms of animal oppression? It seems like the UK has the strongest or at least most noticed hunt sab movement worldwide.

**Andy Martin:** Yes, I agree with you. Unless I am in error (which is quite possible) I believe Britain, more than any other European nation, specialises in the infliction of cruelty upon animals with zealous pride...which is ironic when you consider Britain is known as 'a nation of animal lovers'. I wonder who invented that phrase...someone high on industrial amounts of LSD 25 probably. In China and other nations in south east Asia, cruelty to animals forms an integral facet of their national character. I expect Japs to hunt whales and eat dogs because they're savages who don't know any better. However, in their defence, the Chinese sincerely believe it is perfectly acceptable to maltreat cats and dogs – they never try to hide their vicious cruelty behind those absurd excuses contrived by English aristocrats. We are given to expect Europeans to be more civilised...but apparently we are not.

It is hardly a surprise Britain has such a strong tradition of hunt saboteurs given the demographic nature of what is essentially a class war. Working class people generally do not form gangs and hunt down stags, foxes and mink apart from those hired thugs who work for the gentry because they possess insufficient intelligence to perform more useful tasks for the nation. Wolverhampton football hooligans famously joined an association of northern hunt saboteurs in the late 1980s, not because they cared about the plight of the animals but because they simply wanted an excuse to batter the hell out of a few aristocrats...which is fine by me!

**Tierautonomie:** In context of this song, which is also my personal favourite, I would like to point out that your vocals are unique in hardcore punk by being somewhat melodic, really almost as in some type of folklore, however in a sense 'aggressively melodic'. This is a vocal

style somehow, or let's say if we take it as that, what do you think of different singing styles, do vocal styles express something important in a sense, in whatever possible ways?

**Andy Martin:** I have no doubt my vocal style is 'unique in hardcore punk' but then is my vocal style actually unique? I doubt it. The vocal styles of Dolly Parton, Tom Waits and David Hasselhof would also be unique in hardcore punk...but then since none of those singers are hardcore (or any other variant) of punk, the question is scarcely relevant! As I am not (and have never been) a 'punk' nor a member of a punk band, my vocal style (or the style of instrumental playing of myself or of any other band member) is irrelevant to hardcore punk. Indeed it is related more to avant garde jazz or traditional Scottish folk music, if it is related to any genre at all (and it may not be, of course). Unfortunately one of the reasons my singing sounds unique is because most of the time I have the voice of a homosexual crow with influenza. I can sing in time and in tune but I have a crap voice and it frustrates me. When I sing double and treble tracked vocal harmonies, it doesn't sound too abominable (as on Workers Autonomy, Blue Life and Hup Soon Heng) but really, I am not much of a singer...I wish I was but (sigh) I have to admit I am not.

Although I am not a fan of pop music, if I had to pick a favourite pop singer of recent times then it would be Liam Gallagher. Oasis are one of the few pop groups whose music I consider sufficiently impressive for me to include 3 discs of their selected tracks in my CD collection. By contrast, one of the worst singers I have ever heard is that git who whines interminably for Radiohead. Look, if you have lyrics you want people to hear and comprehend then you have a duty to sing them clearly and with precision.

**Tierautonomie:** Since we are mainly a blog dedicated to the concept of nonhuman autonomy I post these excellent lyrics of your song In The Name of Science here. Although I wished I had all mentioned songs' lyrics in a written form. I hope they will be available sometime, is there any chance they'll be accessible online some time?

## In The Name of Science

They call it vivisection.....I use another name;  
compulsory infections.....is it some brutal game?  
and lethal dose injections.....Are animals to blame?

Ever since the fall they've practised bloody genocide  
so hear the call – let's pay them back with homicide.  
We'll have them all, no matter where they try to hide.  
We won't fake it anymore; we shall even up the score.  
Pacifism is a bore, so let's wage a bloody war.

We shall revenge every animal who has bled;

we'll drag experimenters from their beds  
and gouge the eyes from their heads  
then mutilate their bodies till they're dead.  
Experiment on scientists instead.

In the name of science.....you justify your cause.  
In a metal appliance.....you clamp a creatures' claws.  
You display defiance.....to mother natures' laws.

So we shall fight to free each creature tied and bound.  
We have the right to burn laboratories to the ground.  
Behold the sight of rescued animals safe and sound!  
It's often occurred to me mother nature had a plan  
and it's plain enough to see she made a mistake creating man,

for when I witness mankind's cruelty  
I realise how repulsive he must be.  
I despise the arrogance of humanity  
and I'm ashamed to think that it's a part of me,  
when profit and murder join in an alliance in the name of science.

Text & Music – Andy Martin.

**Andy Martin:** I include (almost) all the lyrics for our works in my book *Dare To Be Different* which is available from Lulu.com. More recent lyrics are included in a short section of my book *Fast – Clean – Cheap* which is finished and should be available before the end of the year, also from Lulu.com. It is my intention to include all our lyrics in an entry on our website but Zhang Yao Min (UJ) is the young man in charge of that and he only has limited time at his disposal (he has a full time job teaching film students) so I am not certain when this will be completed.

**Tierautonomie:** which further reading that gets the reader into your work would you recommend? There are great texts on the Unit site, I especially fancy your thoughts about language on there.

**Andy Martin:** I know of only 3 – our website, our You Tube site and the on-line publisher responsible for my books.

- <http://www.unit-united.co.uk/>
- You Tube Andy Martin:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIcEPCuyEuEgALNdMZrAl8w/feed>
- Lulu.com Andy Martin: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?contributorId=1183842>

There are currently 8 books available. I mention this because I realise our music – particularly those works composed by me – will not appeal to most people and it is not reasonable to expect such strange music to be popular. However, I am convinced most of my books are far more accessible (apart from *The Workshop* which is an exercise in avant garde literature that many readers will possibly find excessively tedious).

1. *Progressive Rock – The Music That Dare Not Speak Its Name*
2. *Chinese Cinema 1905 – 2005*
3. *Faded Fragments Of Distant Dreams* (autobiography)
4. *The Essays* (science, history, politics and the arts)
5. *The Workshop* (dream diaries and cut-ups)
6. *I Wish I Was Dead* (autobiography)
7. *Dare To Be Different* (interviews and articles)
8. *Not In Front Of The Children* (a study of Grange Hill 1978 – 1993) with photographs, episode synopses, cast lists and a contemporary debate on the programme with a group of teenagers from a local housing estate plus a historical survey of childrens' television drama 1960 – 1990).

4 further volumes are in preparation

9. *Fast – Clean – Cheap* (a collection of art, poetry, stories, essays and articles by various contributors including past and present members of UNIT)
10. *My Very Brief & Unsuccessful Career As A Human Being* (autobiography including a history of The Apostles, Academy 23 and UNIT)
11. *Civil Disobedience* (a collection of short stories for children)
12. *Behind The Bike Shed* (a novel for children)

I am not familiar with the more arcane aspects of the internet and I have severe problems with modern technology so I really am not the best person to ask about this. However, I appeal to people to avoid any You Tube site that claims to include uploads of Apostles tracks – these are taken from cassettes and records with no effort made to improve the quality and no information included in the notes. By contrast Luc Tran and I have made almost every track by The Apostles available on our own You Tube site and it is this resource people are advised to use if they are eccentric enough to want to insult their ears by listening to such feeble trash.

There are just 2 studio tracks not currently available – not due to personal censorship (far from it) but because I do not possess copies of them. The tracks – *Four Small Worlds* and *Imagine Think Dream* – are by Dave Fanning, performed by the definitive version of the group (myself, Dave, Malcolm 'Scruff' Lewty and Chris Wiltshire) and originally intended for the 3rd album but omitted from it for reasons I cannot remember. Certainly they are vastly



superior to many of the tracks that do appear on the original record. If anyone possesses a copy of these tracks, please contact me at [unitunited@yahoo.com](mailto:unitunited@yahoo.com).

Finally, I must add this addendum: the opinions, assertions and statements made in this interview are mine and mine alone. They are not intended to represent those of Fabian Fritze and Colin Murrell, the other members of UNIT. It is essential people appreciate this as I am convinced they would both disagree strongly with some of my statements.

**Tierautonomie:** Thank you indeed Andy for this insightful interview and for your excellent work!

## Addendum

**Andy Martin:** Volente nonfit injuria – in my enthusiasm to address a set of questions of an intelligence and perception unusual in interviews, I managed (shamefully) to omit a couple of important commentaries. I present them here purely for your edification. Both issues are in fact related. In my intense haste to complete the interview I forgot to mention a crucial anomaly within the punk movement although, to be fair, it affects virtually every other youth subculture: the role of girls and women which is either subservient or absent entirely. In fact it could be stated (with generosity, true, but also not without a degree of accuracy) the punk movement has treated its female contingent with slightly less contempt than, say, skinheads or mods.

The pop groups offer proof of this. The Slits aside (for they are a supreme and notorious example who had the sense and decency to reject their association with punk fairly soon after their initial recordings) women can be found in plenty of other groups (or so it might seem) such as The Wall (Claire Bidwell, the bass guitarist), The Adverts (Gaye Advert, another bass guitarist), Girls At Our Best (2 men and 2 women), Liliput (4 women), The Banshees (Siouxsie Sue, the singer), X Ray Spex (the singer and the saxophonist), Pneumania (the singer), The Vice Squad (the singer) and so on. However, these form a distinct (and extremely small) minority within a subculture whose music was provided by otherwise male groups. Crass allowed their 2 women a few token rants of a pseudo-feminist nature but otherwise it was the men who did most of the work. What about their alleged enemies, the Oi bands? No, it's all boys and men as far as the eyes can see...boring!

There is one glorious exception: Hagar The Womb. Mind you, I prefer not to regard them as a punk group because their lyrics are intelligent and manage often to combine anger with humour – generally a highly effective coalition in the promotion of social and political ideas. Added to this is their music which has more in common with bright and breezy pop than the tedious and thoroughly miserable dirges associated with punk dross. They quickly became associated with the fanzine Kill Your Pet Puppy which should come as no surprise. Hagar The Womb commenced life as a group of 4 girls and a temporary male drummer. They were also racially mixed – an extreme rarity in those days. Indeed, in London I think The Apostles were the only other group with an Asian member (John Soares, our guitarist for a year). The KYPP

collective were also able to present a healthy mixture of men, women and racial groups. I believe they were probably unique in this respect...so they thus offered a far closer representation of the demographic constitution of London than any of their peers. Also, Kill Your Pet Puppy was not centred purely around punk bands or indeed bands at all. It featured a splendid mixture of political essays, social commentary, fashion, humour and colour. I mean this literally: theirs was the only publication which provided a splash of colour across the dreary monochrome mess of punk junk that otherwise infested our neighbourhoods with their turgid repetition of Crass quotes and tediously predictable slogans.

I am obliged to explain the name of their fanzine, of course, particularly since my responses to the questions appear in an internet forum called Tierautonomie! Britain is known as 'a nation of animal lovers'. It was the first nation anywhere in the world to pass a government act that prohibited (albeit in a limited fashion) direct cruelty to animals in 1872. However, this was extended in the Protection Of Animals Act of 1911. Indeed, Section 1 specifically states 'it is prohibited to wantonly or unnecessarily perform any act which causes unnecessary suffering to any animal'. I wonder what the landed gentry with their fox hunts and stag hunts thought of this piece of legislation...not very much, probably.

I urge people to go to the Kill Your Pet Puppy website (<http://killyourpetpuppy.co.uk/>) where their writers provide a detailed yet succinct explanation of their curious name but briefly I interpret it in this manner: concern for animals in Britain is often related to mawkish sentiment. We're back with those wretched seal cubs again: ah, look at the cute and cuddly puppy – how could anyone be cruel to such a lovely fluffy animal? However, dolphins, sharks, whales, elephants, rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses are not cute and cuddly so they can all be hunted down and served up on plates. How many parents are aware that certain dogs (especially after they have licked excrement as canines are prone to do) can, if they lick the faces of small children, cause an infection of the eyes that results in blindness? When William Burroughs expresses his disdain for dogs, dismissing them as 'ugly, fawning, shit eating beasts' he seeks to attack and insult their owners rather than the creatures themselves. He stated in one of his university lectures in 1976 that he does not hate dogs – he hates what human beings have made of them.

I harbour a similar opinion with regard to horses. I despise horses! They are stupid, clumsy beasts who allow people to enslave them. Look, I cannot, indeed will not, respect any animal that allows a person to sit on its back and steer it around a track like a racing car. That does not mean I would ever be cruel to a horse – but as far as I am concerned, nobody who possesses a horse in order to ride it can claim to love horses. What they actually love is their animal slave...and I am vehemently opposed to slavery. In fact, if I want to be really radical I suppose I could suggest men have adopted women as their personal slaves for the past 3,000 years but perhaps I'm simply being awkward for the hell of it. Mind you, consider the first genuinely civilised people anywhere in the world: the ancient Greeks. I am a student of ancient Greece and classical Rome (my 2 favourite cultures – indeed my favourite historical hero is Alexander The Great) but I am forced to concede their treatment of women was vile. Women could not participate in assemblies in the polis and possessed no political power. Even that notorious race of savages, Great Britain, managed to produce a superb warrior in Queen Boudicca!

## Notes

[1] **Tierautonomie:** No, it was not Peter Singer who phrased anything so radical at that times and obviously not on the level of grassroots and protest culture, although today's AR people like to act as if Peter Singer initiated the modern AR movement with his book *Animal Liberation*. But here we go again talking about the efficacy of subversiveness and I should add in contrast to academic ivory towers and academic elitism (i.e. cite, quote, refer, otherwise not a valid point and no valid reasoning within academic discourse).

[2] Andy uses the N-word in context with discussing the ridicule of the skinhead movement which he somehow describes. Nevertheless using the N-word is problematic, though given Andy's cultural background with seeing society overall critical and as highly oppressive, we assume that this is not to be categorized as racist, but probably a variation of white ignorance in some way – this would needed to be sorted out. We did not do that and we leave this question and problem open right now. We however are clearly and an anti-racist intersectionally oriented project and thus distance ourselves from the usage of discriminatory and historically painful and unjust vocabulary whoever would be affected by it – if it's not a self-description, like Andy uses the word cripple referring to his own experience of physical disability or impairment and being discriminated against. We see a lot of 'political correctness' these days (and this is not said to lessen the problem of discriminatory language) that still nevertheless purports subtle and even more obvious forms of oppressive content. Given the vast range of social dilemmas that we face today, we let this stand now as it is, hoping that the reader can understand our partly dumbfounded position. We would however also be thankful for input / critique on our decision on how to handle double and triple standards, our own, left, right, inbetween and beyond today in better and perhaps more appropriate ways. Finally, Andy also writes in the interview above about subversiveness: "...I think primarily of the Black Panthers (naturally – all power to them and peace be upon their name)" and so forth.

## Tierautonomie

Editor-in-chief: Gita Yegane Arani, [www.simorgh.de](http://www.simorgh.de) – ,*Open Access in der Tier-, Menschen- und Erdbefreiung*'. Revised 11/20147.

## Citation

Martin, Andy (2017). Interview by Tierautonomie: A listen-and-read-interview with Andy Martin. *TIERAUTONOMIE*, 1(4), URL: [http://simorgh.de/tierautonomie/JG4\\_2017\\_1.pdf](http://simorgh.de/tierautonomie/JG4_2017_1.pdf).

TIERAUTONOMIE (ISSN 2363-6513)



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