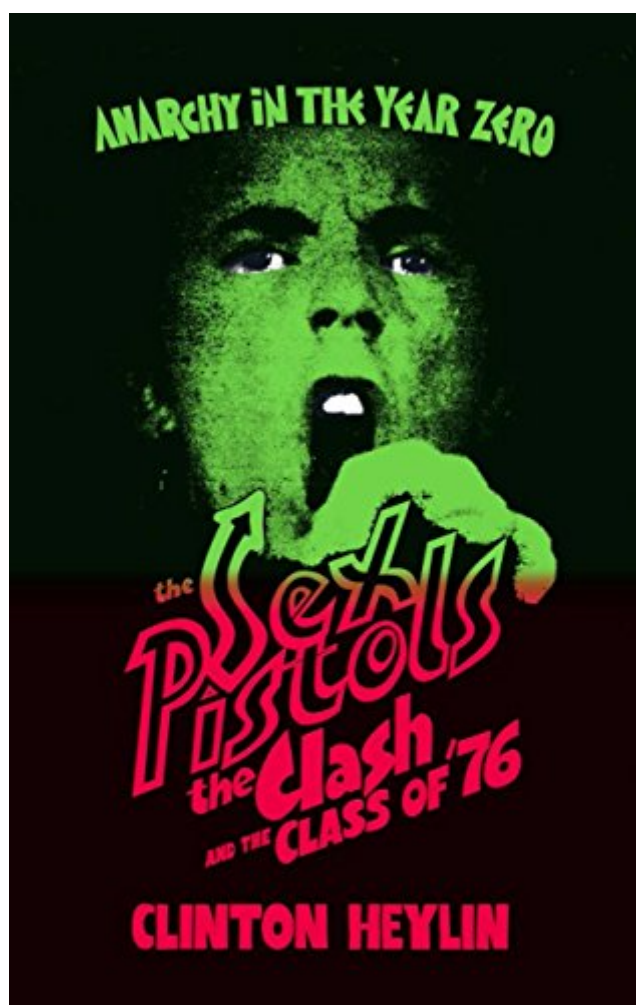


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Anarchy In The Year Zero: The Sex Pistols, The Clash And The Class Of '76



Synopsis

This is the story of the birth of Punk, with a capital P, in the only country where it was a mainstream movement: the UK; told entirely by eye-witnesses (Heylin included) whose words, then and now, have been held up to the light of history – and, of course, hindsight. This is also the story of the rebirth of Rock, by a bunch of bands who set out to deconstruct and destroy the form, on the island that largely invented it and reinvented it at least twice in the fifteen years before Punk. And it is the story of the ex-Catholic, semi-Irish, snot-nosed, working-class Cockney oik who dealt the final, fatal blow to England's dreams of empire when he became a Rotten revolutionary. But most of all it is the story of a handful of British youths who were inspired to raise their voice in song, and allow it to echo around the world. It is a story that, till now, has only been told piecemeal: of one band blazing a trail gig by gig, convert by convert, to the pre-set agenda – and not always adhered to – of a fetish shop owner until, within a single year, the whole island rocked to the sound of ANARCHEEE. How did this happen and why does it still matter? Read on.

For those who weren't there, but swear they were, now you are.

Richard Boon, former Buzzcocks manager – Heylin has done a masterful job of mapping the when, where and who – of the Pistols pied piper saga.

Thurston Moore, Sonic Youth

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Really enjoyed this 'I was there' account of the emergence and rise of the Sex Pistols and the British Punk movement. Heylin writes well and knowledgeably about the bands the music and the prime movers - and he rightly points out the vast difference between the UK and US scenes even if they weren't completely unrelated. Above all he captures the excitement as the scene developed in 1976. While different from Jon Savage's also brilliant 'England's Dreaming', it's excellent in its own way and a truly fine companion piece. I really enjoyed the way he laid into those music writers and critics whose views he disagreed with or who were just plain wrongheaded at the time. I was an NME reader at the time so knew which of its writers were for or against but I didn't realise, for example, that the now highly respected Allan Jones had been so negative about the Pistols at the time in Melody Maker. This was important as if you weren't living in London or another big city at the time the only way to keep up with what was happening was through the music press who you kind of relied on to guide you through the confusion and blistering rate of development as punk took off. Remember there was no internet or social media to access other views in those days and until John Peel got on board nowhere to hear the music either. Incidentally I read Uncut now where Jones usually does the book reviews these days and I don't recall a review of this book in that magazine but I could very well be wrong. In the same way he quite rightly calls out Jah Wobble on his thuggish past and points out Vivienne Westwood's later-day rewriting of history. In any case if you have any interest in the British punk movement at all this is a brilliant introduction and overview. This is the 2nd book of Heylin's I've read All The Madmen is the other and I really enjoy his writing, his insight and his take on things. I also really enjoy the fact that he's not shy about sharing his opinions even when I don't agree with him. It's much more fun that way.

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