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Vivien Goldman, Revenge of the She-Punks: A Feminist Music History from Poly Styrene to Pussy Riot

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Sylvia's mentor and romantic attachment, ILP leader Keir Hardie.

What is especially significant about Connelly's collection is the way in which it traces Sylvia's changing politics along with her travel. During and after her US visit, she was moving away from her mother and sister, who rejected all earlier labour ties as they built a top-down, authoritarian organization. As Connelly shows, Sylvia's trip brought her into close contact with class issues as she interviewed working-class women and prisoners. Her research, and indeed her geographical distance from Emmeline and Christobel, allowed her to cement her own left-wing suffrage ideals. When she returned to London with American suffragist Zelig Emerson, who was versed in settlement house work, she began to build the East London Federation of Suffragettes. Sylvia's desire to hear the voice of working women, Connelly argues, along with her belief that they must mobilize in their own interest, led her to advocate for working-class suffrage mobilizations in the East End, a tactic that, along with her anti-war stance, led to her banishment from the WSPU by her more elitist and pro-war mother and sister.

Like all the suffragettes, Sylvia later wrote histories that justified her own politics, but this collection of her early writing is a revealing window into her views on class, politics, and gender at a key moment in the WSPU's evolution. Connelly's edited collection is a welcome addition to the literature on travel, internationalism, and the divergent ideas that underwrote suffrage struggles.

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Vivien Goldman, *Revenge of the She-Punks: A Feminist Music History from Poly Styrene to Pussy Riot* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press 2019)

VIVIEN GOLDMAN takes the reader on a whirlwind tour of feminist punk music that spans time and geography. The book is broken down into four primary themes: girly identity, money, love, and protest. The structure of *Revenge of the She-Punks* is further organized around carefully curated playlists. These playlists represent the specific themes that each chapter of the book explores, and each song corresponds to a sub-section of the text. One can find the majority of these songs on contemporary streaming platforms, such as Spotify and YouTube. The ideal way to experience this book is to listen to each individual song followed by its accompanying written text. One may feel initially dismayed by the lack of visual imagery throughout the book, particularly because punk culture is so synonymous with punk fashion. However, *Revenge of the She-Punks* is just as much a piece of auditory media as it is a written work. With these songs, Goldman enables each artist to interject their voice, to speak for themselves; Goldman is there to provide context and make connections.

Goldman's themed playlist chapter structure also communicates to the reader that the history of feminist punk is not a linear or progressive story. There is no neat progression from ridiculed social minority to mainstream feminism. Each artist that Goldman highlights provides a unique snapshot into the experience of a specific time and place that stands alone in its details and particular challenges, but also links to the broader feminist punk history. As the "primal wowl of a rebellious underclass," (11) Goldman demonstrates that punk is still relevant, and the fight continues.

What brings these disparate individuals and groups together in *Revenge of the She-Punks* is not just a genre of music, but also the empathy of the author. Goldman treats each subject with care. There are very few, if any, instances where Goldman's analysis is tarnished by extreme judgment or biases, even in instances where the artists do not live up to the progressive, rebellious expectations of punk subculture. Further, as a punk artist and music journalist with deep personal ties to the community that she is writing about, it would have been easy for Goldman to succumb to the pitfalls of writing about something so close to one's heart. For the most part, Goldman avoids annoying the reader with too many vignettes about her personal connections to the artists about which she is writing.

One of the primary strengths of *Revenge of the She-Punks* is Goldman's effort to ensure that the artists featured represented a diverse cross-section of punk's rich history. Goldman includes many women and people of colour. Further, Goldman makes sure to break out of a UK and US-centric mindset and accentuate the truly global nature of punk culture, including punk artists and acts from around the world, including India, China, and Indonesia. All of these acts are tied together by a similar agenda: to fight for one's independence against the backdrop of oppressive systems. The work of dismantling the status quo is the shared labour that crosses generations, culture, and geographical distances.

Goldman's treatment of gender and queerness is compassionate and thoughtful for the most part. Nevertheless, her tone is often quite clearly one that represents the viewpoint of a member of an older generation who is attempting to fully understand the changes that have occurred in the realm of gender and sexuality during her lifetime. For instance, she repeatedly refers to the way in which

womanhood is defined by childbearing and clumsily attempts to tie transgender individuals to this detail of womanhood by referring to a transgender woman breastfeeding for the first time. It is in these clumsy moments that one braces oneself for the worst, but Goldman never fully crosses the line into offensiveness. Still, the book could have benefitted from a few more queer and transgender eyes in the editing stages.

The main problem with *Revenge of the She-Punks* is that it is an insular history. It is in many ways written by and for punk insiders. Goldman presupposes a general knowledge of the history of punk music. This book does not provide a comprehensive history of the genre (which Goldman fully acknowledged in the first chapter); but more importantly it rarely provides in-depth details of the broader context in which these artists are creating or the impact that they are having on the world around them. The process of societal give and take is not fully fleshed out in these short artist vignettes.

This lack of context is not necessarily the book's downfall, however. In many ways this absence makes it a more accessible and entertaining read that would delight the general reader interested in music, feminism, or history. If used in a scholarly context, *Revenge of the She-Punks* would be best used paired with other works that will help situate the artists and their primary material within the political, social, and economic contexts in which they are acting. *Revenge of the She-Punks* is ultimately a loving text written by someone who clearly cares about the topic, the art form, and the individuals involved. As such, it is likely to enchant those already interested in feminist punk music and even draw new devotees to the genre.

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