

*Punk in London, Punk in England, Reggae In a Babylon* DVDs (MVD) I'm surprised I never heard of these movies, made, perhaps, for German TV. *London* is the outstanding one here, featuring interviews with relatively well-known bands (Chelsea, X-Ray Spex, Adverts) some less known (Killjoys, Jolt), and two breakthrough bands (Clash, Boomtown Rats, who are at one point showed on *Top of the Pops* on a background TV while being denigrated as sellouts in the foreground). Interestingly, though these interviews are mostly done in 1977 or maybe early 1978, most of the people are already lamenting sellouts, trendiness, and the death of punk, and some are inadvertently demonstrating it (the slick professionalism of Chelsea during their interview is as un-punk as you can get). A Strangler refuses to talk to German TV ("We don't want to sell records in Germany, we want German bands to sell records there"), though he appears on camera looking cool while giving a lengthy, self-serving explanation about refusing to appear on camera. I suspect the German subtitles were removed (there's very little German voiceover, also un-subtitled) which unfortunately did away with any captions telling you who people are, which is a shame, because in addition to musicians, this doc also interviews promoters, record shop owners, sine makers (*Search and Destroy* is trying to learn distro from *Sniffin' Glue*), and Teddy Boys questioning the manhood of punks. The absolute highlight is X-Ray Spex playing a live set in their practice space, knocking out a raw, but not perfect, "Oh Bandage," followed by Poly's profanity laced interview that makes her bandmate blush. *England*, shot in 1979, makes me think that *London* was popular, as this is a slicker production, opening with super-pro interviews with the now established Clash and Rats, plus the already huge Jam. Fortunately in their attempt to capture the lucrative transition to New Wave, they also shoot some obscure bands that are fun to watch. The DVD also has footage of Siouxi, Ian Dury, the Specials, the Slits, and Madness. *Reggae* is a beautifully shot piece where the filmmaker (Wolfgang Pichler, by the way, sorry I forgot to mention that) actually shoots reggae being performed mostly to all black audiences in England, in part by following a mobile sound system rather than just shooting live music in clubs. The interviews are all good, and performances and interviews with reggae deejays, promoters and performers (including Steel Pulse) make this a pretty compelling piece.