

SUBHUMANS

CRISIS POINT

(Pirates Press)

Take heed.

9/10

Close to four decades in from their coruscating emergence with the release of 1981's 'Demolition War' EP, and some twelve years since their last studio album 'Internal Riot', the Subhumans' ability to deliver prescient bursts of energised dissent remains undimmed. Musically, the band may have honed their individual and collective chops and Dick Lucas' evocative vocal delivery may have matured and dropped an octave, but 'Crisis Point' is an unmistakable extension of the lineage that stretches back to the early years of Margaret Thatcher's systematic assaults on the working classes, the manipulative jingoism of the cold war and the unnecessary waste of over a thousand young lives in the South Atlantic.

However, 'Crisis Point' is no mere evocation of former glories, despite being disadvantaged by the logistical difficulties of recording an album with a drummer who is based in Germany, the album – thanks largely to Lucas' rapier sharp insight and lyrical wit – is as good a evocation of the grand social circus (2019 version) as you are likely to get. Over the course of ten songs, the band delineate the ways in which methods of oppression and exploitation have become ever more insidious and all encompassing, doing so in a manner that shines the inescapable light of uncomfortable truth on its subject matter without undue didacticism and uninhibited by any fixed ideological straitjacket.

Opening cut, 'Terrorist In Waiting' sets the tone of chillingly engaging resistance that is maintained throughout, providing a contemporary perspective on today's hobbled society by exploring the ways in which avenues of dissent have been closed off through blizzards of misinformation, social media manipulation and the exploitation of carefully nurtured fears and prejudices. Subsequent tracks examine the traps set by the system for those it wishes to control, reinforces the value of questioning all information and casts doubt upon the allure of possessions.

'Follow The Leader' sees the album hit a high water mark that is sustained for the rest of the disc, exposing the real Swindle – the way in which politics is designed to be divisive, compelling the unwary to squabble over irrelevances while the ruling elites continue with their ongoing mission of maintaining the status quo. The following four tracks hit their targets with consummate marksmanship; exposing everything from the ways that nationalism, racism and politics lock together seamlessly to exploit those who buy into such worthless and damaging concepts to the manner in which rebellion is still being turned into money.

Finally, 'Thought Is Free' takes the album toward its climactic vanishing point; serving as a timely, timeless reminder that freedom begins from within – your mind is your own, you have dominion over your choices, and reinforcing the need to question, defy, refuse and resist. Now, more than ever, these are important ideas. 'Crisis Point' is an important album – listen to it, and think about it.

Dick Porter

