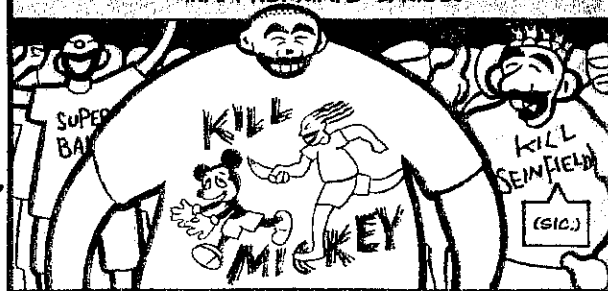


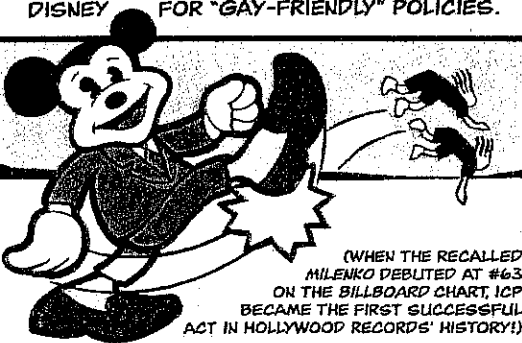
WHILE IT'S CERTAINLY A CIRCUS-LIKE ATMOSPHERE OUT IN FRONT OF THE STATE THEATER, IT ISN'T THE RINGLING BROS. THAT HAVE BROUGHT 3,000 SUBURBANITES—MOST OF THEM SPORTING FACES DAUBED WITH GREASE-PAINT—BACK TO THE DOWNTOWN THEIR PARENTS ABANDONED. NO, IT'S THE TRIUMPHANT HOME-COMING OF ANOTHER WOSOME, THE MOST INFAMOUS MADMEN TO BURST OUT OF THE MOTOR CITY SINCE TED NUGENT: THE INSANE CLOWN POSSE, A WHITE RAP DUO THAT SPINGS SALES OF CARTOONISH KILLINGS AND WEARS CLOWN MAKEUP.



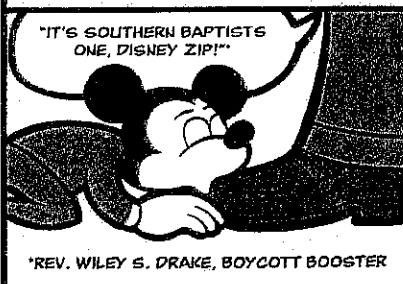
TONIGHT MARKS ICP'S FIRST HOMETOWN CONCERT SINCE THE WELL-PUBLICIZED JUNE FLAP THAT BROUGHT THE GROUP NATIONAL NOTORIETY. DISNEY-OWNED HOLLYWOOD RECORDS RECALLED 100,000 COPIES OF THE GROUP'S NEW ALBUM, THE GREAT MILENKO, A MERE SIX HOURS AFTER IT WAS SHIPPED TO STORES, CITING "INAPPROPRIATE" LYRICS.



THOUGH MILENKO HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMPANY BACK IN MARCH, DISNEY EXECS DIDN'T ANTICIPATE THE VIRTUALLY UNPRECEDENTED RECALL UNTIL JUST A WEEK AFTER THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION HAD VOTED TO BOYCOTT DISNEY FOR "GAY-FRIENDLY" POLICIES.



WHILE IT'S HARD TO FATHOM WHAT ELLEN OR HEALTH INSURANCE FOR HOMOSEXUALS HAS TO DO WITH A COUPLE OF POTTY-MOULTHED CLOWNS, DISNEY'S CAPITULATION HAS PROSPECTIVE CENSORS WHISTLING "ZIP A DEE DOO DAH."



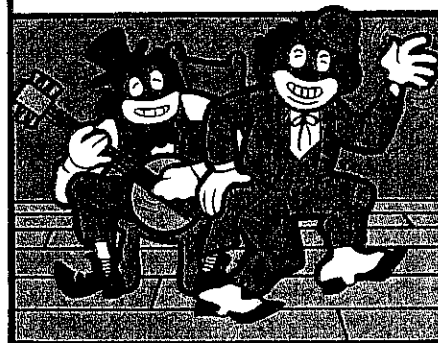
IF ANYTHING, ICP IS OFFENSIVE NOT FOR THEIR OBSCENITY, BUT FOR THEIR STUPIDITY, IN AN ERA THAT HAS SEEN NUMEROUS ROCK BANDS—INCLUDING RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE, 311, AND KORN—ATTEMPT TO SPICE THEIR BLAND MEAT BY DELIVERING VOCALS IN AN APPROXIMATION OF HIP-HOP "FLAVA," ICP MAY BE THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RAPPERS MOST IN DANGER OF HAVING THEIR LICENSE TO ILL REVOKED.



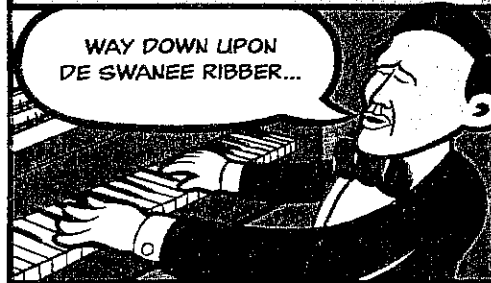
ALTHOUGH YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE BLACK TO RAP WELL, SURE HASN'T HELPED PUFF DADDY, ICP'S CLOWN SHITICK REMINDS US THAT THE SPECTACLE OF THE WHITE RAPPER HAS USUALLY BEEN RIDICULOUS.



ACTUALLY, THE TRADITION OF PAINTING ONE'S FACE AND MIMICKING BLACK MANNERISMS—BETTER KNOWN AS MINSTRELSY—IS OLD AND INFLUENTIAL.



AMERICAN POPULAR SONG IS ROOTED IN JUST SUCH MUSICAL MISCEGENATION. STEPHEN FOSTER, AMERICA'S FIRST GREAT SONGWRITER, WROTE MANY OF HIS COMPOSITIONS ABOUT PLANTATION LIFE IN BLACK DIALECT, DESPITE SPENDING VIRTUALLY ALL HIS LIFE IN PITTSBURGH, PA.



ONE OF THE GREAT IRONIES OF BLACKFACE, FROM MINSTREL SHOWS TO ROCK'N'ROLL," WRITES KEN EMERSON IN DOO-DAH!: STEPHEN FOSTER AND THE RISE OF AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE, IS THAT "IT REPRESENTS A CERTAIN FREEDOM TO WHITES—FREEDOM FROM BOURGEOIS CONVENTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS—EVEN THOUGH THAT ILLUSION OF FREEDOM IS LARGELY THE CONSEQUENCE OF WHITE OPPRESSION AND EXCLUSION."



THE ACT OF "APING A BLACK MAN" SUGGESTS EMERSON, REINFORCED A WHITE MAN'S SENSE OF RACIAL SUPERIORITY AND SOCIAL RESPECTABILITY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME IT RELIEVED HIM FOR AN EVENING FROM THE PRESSURES THAT SUPERIORITY AND RESPECTABILITY CREATED!



ICP'S SPECIAL TWIST ON THIS CULTURAL TRANSGESTISM IS ADORNING THEMSELVES IN A JESTER'S MAQUILLAGE. OF COURSE, IN THE '90S, IF YOU'RE A CLOWN YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A SINISTER AGENDA. THANKS TO FIGURES LIKE STEPHEN KING'S PENNYWISE AND JOHN WAYNE GACY'S ALTER EGO, POGO, THE EVIL CLOWN HAS BECOME AS FAMILIAR A CLICHÉ AS RED RUBBER NOSES AND BIG FLOPPY FEET.

