

Kutner; Gary Hirstius. Reviewed at the Sherwood Oaks Experimental College, Hollywood, Feb. 1, 1981. (No MPAA Rating.) Running time: 100 MINS.

With: Alice Bag Band, Black Flag, Catholic Discipline, Circle Jerks, Fear, Germs, X.

Perhaps the best rock music docu over the years have always managed to complement the presentation of live performances with an acute sense of the sociological moment, and so it is with "The Decline Of Western Civilization." A bracing, stimulating and technically superb close-up look at the L.A. punk scene, pic is pitched at a perfect distance to allow for simultaneous engagement in the music and spectacle, and for rueful contemplation of what it all might mean. Film's quality and unusual content indicates a bright b.o. future in specialized bookings.

Artistic strategy here is to combine provocative performance footage with "at home" interviews with punk group members and talks with club owners, managers, critics and hardcore fans. While not aspiring to the comprehensive, film nevertheless constitutes a 100-minute total immersion in the indigenous California punk world and will probably prove satisfying to those involved in it as well as the curious onlookers who have thus far resisted first-hand exposure.

While a few of the rockers come off as artificial poseurs, many more surprise through revealing articulation of whys and wherefores of their lifestyle, and what comes through most strongly is purity of their dedication to their music. As most local bands are without major label affiliation and several on view here are considered too disruptive to book by most clubs, musicians exist on a subsistence basis and speak of how they make no money from their gigs.

Perhaps of special interest to insiders will be a kitchen-table interview with Darby Crash, late lead singer for the Germs, who was obviously, living on, if not over, the edge as he takes his pet tarantula out for a walk on his arm. Also illuminating is a visit to the office of punkzine *Slash*, where toppers Claude Bessy, Philomena and Robert Biggs expound upon their views of the phenomenon.

Lensing of the club dates leaves nothing to be desired, as essentials of the acts themselves are well captured and incessant slam-dancing of the spectators provides a frenzied background. Film's soundtrack album has already made a strong impression on the charts, and while recording quality is excellent, pic also has the wit to provide written subtitles of certain songs of which delivery allows for no comprehension.

Given top-notch craftsmanship, it's hard to believe effort was made

independently for \$100,000, and well-nigh impossible to detect that 35m print is a 16m blowup.

Producer-director Penelope Spheeris made several shorts for "Saturday Night Live" and produced "Real Life" for Par and Albert Brooks before embarking on his project in 1979. Pic manages to bring insight and unity to an anarchic, not-easily-explained scene and delivers the musical goods at the same time. —Cart.

Das Boot Ist Voll (The Boat Is Full) (SWISS-W. GERMAN- AUSTRIAN-COLOR)

Zurich, Jan. 24.

Cactus Film AG Zurich release of a Limbo Film AG (George Reinhart) production, in collaboration with Swiss TV, ZDF (2nd German TV) and ORF (Austrian TV). Written and directed by Markus Imhoof. Features entire cast. Camera (Eastman-color), Hans Liechti; sound, Vladimir Vizner; editors, Helena Gerber, Fee Liechti; art direction, Max Stubenrauch; costumes, Sylvia de Stoutz; lighting, Benjamin Lehmann, Arnold Fischer, Felix Meyer. Reviewed at the Movie 2, Zurich, Jan. 24, '81. Running time: 100 MINS.

Judith Krueger	.....	Tina Engel
Hannes Krueger	.....	Hans Diehl
Olaf Landau	.....	Martin Walz
Lazar Ostrowskij	.....	Curt Bois
Frau Ostrowskij	.....	Ilse Bahrs
Karl Schneider	.....	Gerd David
Gitty	.....	Simone Maurige
.....	.....	Laurent
Anna Flueckiger	.....	Renate Steiger
Franz Flueckiger	.....	Mathias Gnaedinger
Peter Bigler	.....	Michael Gempart
Rev. Hochdorfer	.....	Klaus Steiger
Frau Hochdorfer	.....	Alice Bruegger
Otti	.....	Otto Dornbierer
Rosmarie	.....	Monika Koch
Dr. Baertschi	.....	Ernst Stiefel
Truck Driver	.....	Johannes Peyer
Peasant Woman	.....	Gertrud Demenga

Switzerland's refugee policy during World War II has repeatedly been criticized as having been too restricted, bureaucratic and small-minded, notably in regard to Jewish refugees from Hitler Germany who were refused Swiss shelter and sent back to a sure death in the gas chambers. It was declared by the then-Swiss government that "The Boat Is Full," meaning there's no room for any more refugees beyond those already admitted.

Maybe Swiss scripter-director Markus Imhoof's decision to take up this theme was triggered by the worldwide impact of "Holocaust." Whatever the reason, it's a worthwhile theme made into a clean-cut, honest and subtle picture whose occasional script deficiencies do not weigh too heavily against its obvious sincerity and credibility. It was made on a shoestring production budget of \$790,000, in collaboration with the Swiss, 2d German and Austrian television.

A group of refugees, in 1942, has crossed the Swiss border, hoping to find shelter in this neutral, no-war country. They are mostly Jewish, including an old man, a young woman separated from her non-

Jewish husband, her brother and two children, but also a deserted German soldier. Finding temporary refuge in a Swiss village, they soon clash with the rigorous Swiss immigration laws which, at that time, refused to recognize Jews fleeing from the Hitler holocaust as political refugees. With the exception of a small boy, they are taken back to the German border, a virtual death sentence.

Imhoof does not condemn his countrymen of those days. He rather shows them, quite realistically, as rather narrow-minded, too law-abiding and, most of all, lacking civil courage to earnestly question or defy existing laws even when they threaten to become inhuman.

Performances are all very good to excellent. In the latter category, special credit is due to Tina Engel as the young Jewish woman, Curt Bois as the old man, Renate Steiger and Mathias Gnaedinger as the Swiss innkeepers who reluctantly take up the refugees, but slowly start to realize the human tragedies they are faced with.

Hans Liechti's fine Eastman-color lensing is a definite asset, while editing is occasionally on the choppy side. —Mezo.

My Bloody Valentine (CANADIAN-COLOR)

Coal miners' daughters meet the boogey man for okay b.o.

Hollywood, Feb. 10.

A Paramount Pictures release of a Secret Film Co. production. Produced by John Dunning, Andre Link, Stephen Miller. Directed by George Mihalka. Features entire cast. Screenplay, John Beaird, from a story concept by Stephen Miller; camera (Moviela color), Rodney Gibbons; supervising editor, Jean Lafleur; editors, Rit Walls, Gerald Vansier; music, Paul Zaza; art direction, Penny Hadfield; costume design, Susan Hall; sound, Bo Harwood; associate producer, Lawrence Nesis; assistant directors, Ray Sager, Julian Marks; second unit director, Ray Sager. Reviewed at the Paramount Studios, Hollywood, Feb. 10, 1981. (MPAA Rating: R.) Running time: 91 MINS.

T.J.	.....	Paul Kelman
Sarah	.....	Lori Hallier
Axel	.....	Neil Affleck
Hollis	.....	Keith Knight
Howard	.....	Alf Humphreys
Patty	.....	Cynthia Dale
Sylvia	.....	Helene Udy
John	.....	Rob Stein
Mike	.....	Tom Kovacs
Harriet	.....	Terry Waterland
Dave	.....	Carl Marotte
Tommy	.....	Jim Murchison
Gretchen	.....	Gina Dick
The Miner &	.....
Harry Warden	.....	Peter Cowper
Chief Newby	.....	Don Francks
Mabel	.....	Patricia Hamilton

Despite fact that it is wildly implausible, totally derivative and thoroughly lacking in characterizations, "My Bloody Valentine" is a not-bad holiday horror entry which delivers sufficient jolts for the blood and gore trade. Opening

the Canadian pickup in L.A. on its lucky day, Friday the 13th. Paramount should reap solid financial rewards with its customary shrewd campaign. (Pic bowed two days early) (11) in N.Y. to slow start — Ed.)

With an unusually large cast for the genre, pic presents plenty of potential victims, few of whom avoid the deadly pick ax of the crazed coal miner wreaking havoc on the working class town of Valentine Bluffs. Before crime spree winds down at fadeout, audience has witnessed an even dozen gruesome killings, which averages out to one every seven-and-a-half minutes, or often enough even for the most blood-thirsty of patrons.

Given relatively mediocre quality of most horror pix, big question is why some hit so big with audiences and others never catch on. Answer can generally be focused upon a few key artistic decisions involving the nature of the killer and the victims, and in this area "Valentine" would seem to have been well judged.

First, killer is frighteningly without a personality, being dressed in a coal miner's costume with face mask that makes him seem almost like a spaceman. His helmet bears the traditional miner's lamp, which effectively shines on victims' faces moments before their deaths. Third, his weapon is a thoroughly intimidating ax, from which there can be little hope of escape.

Film is aware that attractive young kids make the best victims for this sort of fare, and additionally features the off-beat milieu of a blue collar community to lend a better than routine backdrop to the grisly proceedings.

Actual gore quotient is lower than in some of film's forebears, but the killings come fast and furious, which is about all that matters. George Mihalka's direction is attentive to shock value and catches some incidental atmosphere, even as it ignores character. Lensing and editing is sharp, and Paul Zaza's largely electronic score builds ominous mood without proving overbearing. —Cart.