"The Future is Unwritten":
The Clash, Punk
and America, 1977-1982

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"There's no future," the Sex Pistols' Johnny Rotten sang in early 1976. Many who called themselves "punk" saw no hope in the future as they reacted against the perceived failures of their elders and pessimistically viewed the future. The Pistols sparked the punk movement, but their quick demise enabled another English band, the Clash, to become a leader of the fragmented movement and move punk ideology beyond the Pistols' anarchic rage and despair to one that hoped "the future is unwritten." The story of the Clash from 1977 to 1982 illustrates the conflicting ideology of the punks, who believed on the one hand that state and corporate control had created a new dark age, while on the other that human beings could prevail and create a more open and egalitarian society. Yet, although the punk style persisted into the 1980s, the American audience proved unreceptive to the Clash's vision of an egalitarian future and it vanished beneath the market pressures they had themselves denounced.[1]

Punk arose in England during 1976 in the midst of a terrible recession that appeared to many English youth as the failure of the British socio-economic system. More than one million persons were out of work and the inflation rate soared above 18 percent; The *New Statesman* estimated that 35 percent of those under twenty-five years of age were unemployed. After graduation at sixteen, thousands of young people immediately went on the dole, which quickly symbolized the problems in Britain.[2] Bernard Rhodes, who worked with Sex Pistols creator Malcolm McLaren and who later managed the Clash, described the times:

... I was listening to the radio in '75 and there was some expert blabbing about how if things go on as they are there'll be 800,000 people unemployed by 1979, while another guy was saying that if that happened there'd be chaos, there'd be actual—anarchy in the streets. That was the root of punk.[3]

Economic failure provided the fuel for punk, because many came from the "working class ... [and were] scornful of the scant material rewards of welfare-capitalism."[4]

In May 1976 Paul Simonon, Mick Jones and Terry Chimes invited Joe Strummer to join them in a new band called the Clash. The four members, who had various degrees of musical experience, all came from lower middle-class families in the restrictive British class structure: Jones and Simonon from broken homes; 'Topper' Headon, who replaced Chimes, from a relatively stable environment in Dover. Strummer was born John Mellon to a low-ranking English foreign minister in Turkey, and at the age of nine he was sent at government expense to Epsom, a boarding school outside of London. He did not mix with the other, wealthier students, and quit in his early teens to work in a rubber factory. In 1971, his brother, who was a member of the neo-fascist National Front, took his own life. Shaken, Strummer quit his job, squatted in one of the many abandoned buildings in London and became a street minstrel playing for commuters in the London subway, later joining a pub-rock group.[5]

A major factor behind the appeal of the Sex Pistols, The Clash and punk music was that rock on both sides of the Atlantic had lost its edge among youth. Once seen as the vanguard of rebellion, its emphasis changed in the 1970s, according to music analyst Milton Okun, "away from protest to an affirmation of the goodness of life, the joy of responsible love, the happiness the individual can find in naturalness." By the early 1970s, the major recording labels—CBS, Warner Electra Atlantic (WEA) and RCA—were increasingly trying to minimize risk by utilizing established performers at the expense of new performers, who meant more of a commercial gamble. This preference for the tried and familiar seemed to homogenize and standardize the rock "industry" at the expense of innovation within the genre.[6]

By the mid-1970s the lack of innovation and the stagnant economy had depressed record sales. Established acts like the Rolling Stones, Rod Stewart and Barry Manilow, while able to sell millions of records, could not offset the overall malaise in the industry. One producer acknowledged in 1976 that the "music business needs a shot in the arm." While the disco craze temporarily offset the slump, it further divided and alienated rock fans.[7]

The Clash and punks generally condemned the rockers' adoption of capitalist business attitudes. Many "countercultural" musicians had abandoned their ostensible convictions in favor of private jets, lavish parties and millionaire trappings of extravagant consumption and display. Mainstream rock musicians, and their fans by association, as symbols of a bygone counterculture, were

Album cover for The Clash, *Clash on Broadway*, Sony 1991. Courtesy Sony Music.

sarcastically called "hippies" by the punks. Groups like the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, the Eagles and Led Zeppelin came to represent, to the punks, the empty excess of the rock industry.[8] In the words of Joe Strummer, "the hippies around now just represent complete apathy." Drugs, money and pretentiousness made them "responsible for taking that life force [rock music] and turning it into a death force. [The people have] been led into the death force by a bunch of rock stylists, and left to die with their style."[9]

Other punks echoed this anti-hippie sentiment. Generation X's "Your Generation" told the sixties generation that they did not mean anything to the children of the seventies, while the Jam told the former flower children to "listen now, you said your bit." An American group, the Dead Boys, went further by threatening to "beat up the next hippie" they saw. This confrontational approach was encouraged by Strummer, who said he "jeer[ed] at hippies because it's helpful." "Hate and War," an early Clash song, was the perfect counter to the failed hippie slogan, "Peace and Love."[10]

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Punk, and the Clash, the movement's most thoughtful and articulate spokespersons, arose out of this artistic and economic stagnation as a challenge. The 1960s rock rebellion had run counter to the homogenized corporate "schlock" of the late 50s and early 60s, and in a similar fashion, punk arose to challenge what it decried as a degenerated profit-centered corporate rock in the seventies. Yet punk had a different image to draw on and to rebel against, than did the 60s rebels. The 60s "counterculture" rock emerged over several years and had diverse roots in the folk scene, the beat culture, the rising psychedelic drug culture, the anti-war movement, as well as pop music itself, especially the reinterpretation of American folk idioms, notably the blues, by British pop musicians. Perhaps most importantly, countercultural thought emerged in a period of unprecedented wealth and economic expansion. The result was an extremely diverse movement, with correspondingly diverse ideologies, beliefs and values that seemed to peak in the late 1960s in a vague overarching vision of change in opposition to corporate, middle class capitalist values. But this countercultural bohemian movement quickly collapsed under its own contradictory weight into a do-your-own-thing vision that was easily commodified and incorporated into mainstream capitalism and bourgeois individualist values. Yet this stance or vision of opposition lingered on into the seventies, when it became repugnant to punks for its falseness—false not only in general, but to its own premises. While vehemently opposed to "hippies," and even self-defining in contrast to a "hippie" other, punks were yet ideologically allied, in important respects, to this vision of opposition to bourgeois values. There is thus in punk ideology, especially as articulated by the Clash, a tension between a continuation of a bohemian vision born in an optimistic economic time (however much it opposed the nature of that economic system), and a violent rupture with that vision, underpinned in the economic contraction and emerging long-term crisis in western industrial capitalism that became apparent in the stagnant late 70s. The punks saw in the 1960s a failure that they could not escape, although they tried to do so. It was this dialectical tension between the common cause with the "hippie" movement against bourgeois culture and the opposition to the bohemian precepts of the ""hippies" that the Clash sought to mediate in order to develop a coherent ideology.

This does not mean that punk ignored its musical elders, for they did rely on what had already occurred in rock. The Clash and other punks used the simple 1950s rock rhythms of groups like the Kingsmen or the Count Five, and the nihilistic imagery of the late 1960s avant-garde heroes Velvet Underground, and Iggy Pop and the Stooges. Yet, their sense of immediacy, their need to address the problems of their alienation, and perhaps their fear that it all was going to end soon, made the punks and their music appear much more desperate and angry than anything that had come before.

By the early 1970s, numerous underground bands labeled "punk" by the music press emerged in the New York City area, including the New York Dolls, the Dead Boys, the Ramones, and Television. But, it was not until a British entrepreneur named Malcolm McLaren organized the Sex Pistols in late 1975 that punk arrived, so to speak, under the aegis of the shockingly hostile Johnny Rotten.[11]

Shortly thereafter the Clash formed and recorded their first album for CBS-Epic, *The Clash*. Epic hoped to market the Clash on both sides of the Atlantic in order to cash in on the Sex Pistols frenzy. New groups, even those who criticized the record companies, could mean new sales. The album quickly earned the band the reputation as being the most politically oriented of the new punks and struck a responsive chord among some rock critics. Paul Nelson of *Rolling Stone* called them the "greatest rock and roll band in the world." *The Clash* was, as Chris Brazier labeled it in *Melody Maker*, "the Punk Album."[12] Tom Carson of *Rolling Stone* said the Clash sang "music . . . worth fighting for," and were "a crackling live wire that can't be silenced." *Stereo Review's* Steve Simels said that the album convinced him that rock "can still matter," while the *Village Voice* thought *The Clash* might be "the greatest rock and roll record ever recorded," because of its "proletarian" emphasis. When *Melody Maker* chose the ten best albums of the 1970s, *The Clash* came in second to David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust* and ahead of albums by the Sex Pistols, Bruce Springsteen and Led Zeppelin. Noted music historian Simon Frith called the album a "sustained burst of anger aimed at young lives being wasted by capitalism." And in 1987 when *Rolling Stone* picked the top albums of all time, *The Clash* finished twenty-seventh, despite its meager U.S. sales of 371,000. Bruce Springsteen's eleven-million seller *Born in the USA* finished twenty-eighth.[13]

From this auspicious beginning the Clash went on to release four more albums and one Extended Play (EP) disc displaying the same passion that had captured many critics attention in 1977. For example, when the Clash released *Sandinista* in 1980, *Rolling Stone's* John Picarella gave it a rare five out of five stars and compared it to the Beatles' *White Album*. *Rolling Stone's* top-100 records of all-time placed the Clash's 1979 release, *London Calling*, at number fourteen, ahead of the Rolling Stones' *Let It Bleed* and *Beggars Banquet*, Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA*, The Beatles' *Abbey Road*, and The Who's *Who's Next*. Of *Billboard's* seven record reviewers, five rated *London Calling* and *Black Market Clash* in their top-ten for 1980. "No one," Robert Christgau reported in 1979, "has ever made rock and roll as intense as the Clash is making [it] right now." The performers he compared them to are the Hall of Fame of rock: Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, James Brown, The Who, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, and others.[14]

These critics seemed to share the punks' frustration over the failed promises of the 1960s. Steve Simels said that the Clash affirmed "that there's more to life" than what most mainstream rock provided, while John Piccarella said the Clash's *Sandinista* gave him "hope" to escape the ten-year musical depression which
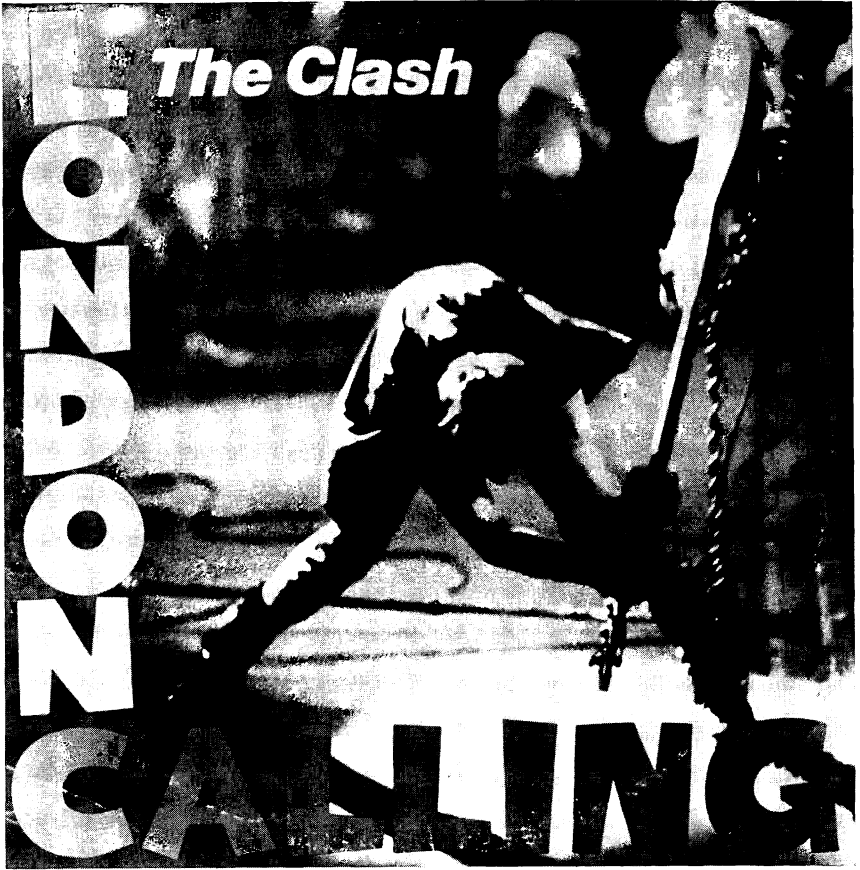
Album cover for The Clash, *London Calling*, Epic 1979. Courtesy Sony Music.

came as a result of the "death of the sixties." Perhaps Robert Christgau put the critics' admiration of the Clash best in his 1978 *Village Voice* article on the punk counterculture. In comparing the Clash to the Sex Pistols, Christgau envisaged memories of another era:

> . . . in 1965 we loved the Beatles' ebullience but found that we wanted (and needed) the cautionary, hard-edged, rather dangerous irony of the Stones, while in 1977 we get off on the Pistols' promise to tear it all down but find that the Clash help us imagine what it might be like to build it back up again. Of course, what makes my first person plural more satisfying is that one can imagine both participant observers and committed punks sharing in building.[15]

To many, the Clash remained "the last hope, the only group that still seems to promise that rock and roll can make a difference."[16]

The Clash and their punk comrades saw their society as a materialist trap where the individual had little control over his/her destiny. Many punks adopted band names that expressed their sense of powerlessness: the Damned, the Stranglers, or Richard Hell and the Voidoids. Their lyrics gave voice to despair and apathy. The Dead Boys sang, "I don't need anyone...don't need no human race"; the Dead Kennedys chastised an impotent society in "Too Drunk to Fuck." The Adverts identified with a man dying in the electric chair in "Gary Gilmore's Eyes."[17] The Clash felt this futility, outlining in "The Kingston Advice:"

> In these days with no love to give
> the world will turn with no-one left to live
> In these days I don't know what to do
> the more I see the more I'm destitute.[18]

Society's control over the individual helped fuel the punk's sense of futility. In the song "Career Opportunities," the Clash criticize the lack of creative, independent opportunities work and unemployment provided. The jobs and lifestyles available—office boy, soldier, policeman, gopher, delivery man, dole—led nowhere and inhibited human diversity. True opportunities challenge the hegemony of the dominant culture, and therefore "never knock."[19] In language similar to that of Louis Althusser in his theory of the Ideological State Apparatuses, they see the workplace as where the young lose their individuality and are made subjects of the dominant ideology. It becomes impossible to attack the system, because no one is sure exactly who or what it is. Moreover, conformity stifles worker dissent. In "The Clampdown," the Clash depict a neofascist society, where the interests of business and the state are identical, and the economic exploitation of workers trap them in a cycle of debt that dulls their commitment to change. The "Clampdown" describes the cycle in which workers go into debt, then work to pay off the debt, accumulate more debt, work more, and so forth. To believe that one could work to change the power structure is futile:

> voices in your head are calling,
> stop wasting your time, there's nothing coming
> only a fool could think someone can save you.[20]

The control (whether planned or not) works, the Clash argue, because mass society does "just what they're told to do." Even though the people knew they were "all being conned," fear kept them from challenging the status quo. 1977's "White Riot" (falsely linked to racist groups) outlined a repressed society where everyone knew that

all the power's in the hands of the people rich enough to buy it.
While we walk the streets too chicken to even try it.[21]

According to the Clash, repression can become a form of liberation, because it can free people from the worries of daily life. If the wealthy control the state and are still able to employ the people, why bother to challenge it? The Clash and the punks saw this in simplified Gramscian terms—a hegemonic society imposes control over the social life of its people and subordinates are manipulated into applauding or protesting the state's actions, depending on which activity is condoned or condemned.[22] This led many of the punks to feel they had little control over who they were or could be, or, as the Clash sing:

What the hell is wrong with me
I'm not who I want to be....
What's my name?[23]

Punk bands chose names like Generation X, the Pretenders, X, or Devo. Individual punks changed their names to Billy Idol, Sid Vicious, Rat Scabies, Johnny Rotten, or Jello Biafra to detail the lack of identity they felt. Among American punks, there was a strong tendency to dress alike, as did the Ramones. This detailed their vision of society's conformist tendencies. Devo's (from devolution) members all wore futuristic worksuits—like clones—and mimicked jerky, unnatural movement that seemed to suggest the music was machine, not human, created. The group's underground hit song asked, "Are we not Men?" and answered, "We Are Devo."[24]

Audiences and fans echoed the ideas, dress and behavior exhibited on stage. To dance, one pogoed (jumping up and down, not necessarily to the music nor with a partner) or later slammed (running/diving into other dancers). Fans showed their appreciation for a good song by "gobbing" (spitting) on the performers, who usually countered by telling them all to "fuck off" and calling them stupid or mindless. Men dressed as women and women as men, breaking sexual clothing/makeup barriers. Clothing was ripped purposely and reconnected with safety pins or staples. The Punks rejected contemporary formal wear; they wore skinny ties, skinny lapels, straight-legged pants, tennis shoes, leather jackets, army fatigues, biker boots and ripped tee shirts.

They also wore plastic and lingerie, and many adorned their clothes or bodies with the symbol of fascist Germany, the swastika. The use of this emblem was not a sign of allegiance to neo-fascism, but rather an allegation, as Greil Marcus points out, that "fascism had won the Second World War: that contemporary Britain was a welfare-state parody of fascism, where people had no freedom to make their own lives—where, worse, no one had the desire." The Clash echoed this sentiment in the song "White Man in Hammersmith Palais," portraying an England where the atrocities of Nazism would be accepted if it helped retain the status quo:

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all over people are changin' their vote,
along with their overcoat;
if Adolph Hitler were here today,
they'd send a limousine anyway.[25]

The music, performance, audience reaction, and fashion came to symbolize their rejection to what they perceived as 1960s rock sensibilities—make it all so repulsive it could never be marketed at the local J.C. Penney or exploited by Dick Clark. Their hair fashions followed this logic, as the punks chose unstyled, chopped short hair, or the mohawk, colored, glued, spiked, or simply skinhead style, all of which could be done by oneself or by an untrained friend. Makeup was worn by both sexes and was smeared on to accessorize their dog chains, razor blades, dog tags, and of course, the punk icon, the safety pin.

The sixties had its love beads and peace sign, the punks had the safety pin. To the punks, the peace sign had become a symbol of hypocrisy, a sign easily flashed, but rarely supported. It had little meaning other than to signify one's acceptance into the group and forced no commitment from the user (Peace and Love to Hate and War). The safety pin, for this reason, became more an anti-symbol. Its adoption required commitment, as they pierced it through the mouth, ears, nose, nipples, and even genitalia. The punk drug preference also forced individual commitment, preferring the intensity of angel dust or Quaaludes over the escapist LSD or grass.[26]

The punks' fashion sensibilities reflected their belief that modern society had evolved to the point where "no one gives a shit about you." When the Clash's Mick Jones said this, he represented punks who felt that the material promises of the age would never be realized.[27] Young people are "Lost in the Supermarket" of life, which alienates them from one another as they each fight for their artificial personality. The desire for this supermarket lifestyle dehumanizes to the point where many feel "I wasn't born, so much as I fell out, nobody seemed to notice me." While the daily bustle of life continues, "the silence makes me lonely."[28]

While much is promised, little is given. In order to better control the people, the dominant society dangles riches and the promise of a better life in front of them. In the "The Equalizer" the Clash tell the punks to

see the car see the house see the fabulous jewels;
see the world you have built it with shoulders of iron.
See the world but it is not yours. . . .[29]

The Clash asked the punks not to become "The Prisoner" in this trap, and advised them of the methods the dominant culture used to control the young. The easiest and most successful tool used by the state was the competition of foreign labor, who became the scapegoats for the inability to achieve wealth. "They say the immigrants" ruined the economy, sings Joe Strummer in "Something About

England," and that it would be "wine and roses if England were for Englishmen again." But, a social cast-off, an old derelict, sets the record straight, telling those that will listen that the economic decline came as a result of the drive for profits derived from war.[30]

Few people listen, however, and as a result the blame is placed on any person different from themselves. This racism is international in scope. In "Charlie Don't Surf" the Clash sing:

> We been told to keep strangers out
> We don't like 'em starting to hang about
> We don't like 'em over the town
> Across the world we're gonna blow 'em down.

"Charlie" is different and therefore the powers are justified in making him "a napalm star."[31] The racism and ethnocentrism are effective because guilt, which might prevent the destruction of a country and its people, does not come into play because the other is viewed as an inferior race. The Clash examine the post-Vietnam American refugee situation with this in mind. Blue-eyed Vietnamese children search for their "papa-san," yet the society that was supposed to save them now ignores them. "It could be anywhere, most likely any frontier," Strummer yells, but "there ain't no asylum here, go straight to hell boys."[32]

For too long, the Clash believed, the young have been used to fight these racist wars. Therefore, it was up to them, the Clash sing, "not to hear the call up I don't want to die...I don't want to kill." The task was not as simple as that, for to turn one's back on war, one had to not "act the way you were brought up." A complete change of values and ideals was needed to end war; but all the soldier had to do was stop fighting.[33]

While many of the Clash's songs describe a society with little autonomy and seemingly in the process of self-destruction, the band also believed that people had the potential to create a more open and egalitarian society out of this chaos. Much of what they wanted—freedom, equality, opportunity, an end to imperialism, and recognition of cultural pluralism—was very similar to the counter cultural ideologies of the 1960s, but they differed in approach. The Clash and the punks saw in the hippies' "tune in, turn on, and drop out" an escape, or in the lingo of the era, a "cop out." To the punks, the idea of changing the system by dropping out and forming a separate culture invited failure and co-optation. Further, protest rallies against the state were also useless, because the state had the power to transform any demonstration to its own ends. In "The Guns of Brixton," when black and white youths square off against the police, they invite defeat, for "when they kick at your front door, how you gonna come, with your hands on your head or on the trigger of a gun." Either way is futile, because the state has thousands of armed soldiers who will hunt you down.[34]

The Clash and punk approach was to destroy the system by working within it. As Johnny Rotten sings in "Anarchy in the U.K.," "there are many ways to get

what you want . . . I use the enemy." The dole, whose lists enrolled many punks, became one such way to milk the system dry, or as Rotten said, "fuck the system the best way."[35] When the Clash signed with CBS-Epic in 1977, they did so because they believed that they could "use" the power of the record company to capture a wider audience: "we want them to listen." The Clash understood that the contract was a means of record company control, but they felt that they could record on their own terms. And, as John Street in his *Rebel Rock* points out, the Clash successfully kept their political messages paramount and the CBS deal was "just a way of conveying the band's message."[36] When asked if this was simply a justification for selling out like the hippies, an optimistic Joe Strummer explained that the realization of the punk aim is "not an overnight thing, you can't expect everything to change quickly. I figure it's an organic process."[37]

Many of the Clash's recordings reflect this type of patient optimism. In the song "Armagideon Time," the band outlines the polarization between the rich and poor in contemporary society, pointing out that "a lot of people won't get no supper [or justice] tonight." But in the end the have nots will win, as "Armagideon Time" will bring equality and, in Biblical fashion, the last will be first.[38] Even in the Brixton case, the state's victory is only temporary. "You can crush us, you can bruise us," the Clash sing, "but you'll have to answer to us." Victory will be theirs in the long run.

The Clash believed that equality would eventually occur: "It's the will of the people that must be followed," Strummer said. The key is to teach people that the things that divide them—money, jobs, class, race—are artificially placed there to control them. As punk musicians, the Clash used their songs to educate people. Strummer believed he had been "elected to say the truth and stamp out all the bull," not only because of the band's commitment, but also because they were the only ones left.[39]

As early as 1978, the Clash came to believe they were "the last well-known punk group still true to the original aims of punk." Many of their former punk mates, like the Damned, Generation X, and even the Boomtown Rats, had sold out to the "new wave" and larger markets. Shortly after the Clash's own recognition, many critics also saw the band as "the only [punks] left."[40] This sense of mission was reflected in their records. In the song "Death or Glory" the band told its listeners that no obstacle—mountains, seas, money—would stop them. And, keeping with the idea that the process is organic, Strummer sang "We're Gonna fight—a long time." This battle, like "Armagideon Time," will be between the haves and have nots, and will lead to equality.

While Joe Strummer believed the Clash was on some type of messianic mission to aid the process, the real heroes of the struggle would have to be the people themselves. In "The Equalizer" the Clash tell a story of generations toiling for little pay or self-esteem. These days would soon end, as "the fight is on" to bring social equality: "we don't need no gangboss, we need to equalize."[41] When accused of being naive for expressing this type of utopianism, Strummer would

counter, "just because it's been going on for a long time doesn't mean that it shouldn't be stopped."[42]

All the talk of fighting, change, or destruction of the status quo led some critics, especially in Britain, to label the band's philosophy "radical chic." In response, Strummer argued that the band never associated themselves with revolutionary violence. While admitting he had once tried violence as a weapon for change, he, like others, put his faith in the non-violent teachings of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as punk models for change.[43]

Yet many associated the band with violence, especially after the album *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. The album cover featured a large Asian army on horseback watching buzzards devour a dead cowboy. Robert Pielke in *The Triumph of Vulgarity* believes this symbolizes the West's death by greed and the patient success of Marxism. Whether or not anyone else derived that from the image is debatable, but the album's contents does show a band verging on revolutionary activity. Songs like "Stay Free" and "All the Young Punks" detail the group's disillusionment with many of their punk comrades. Other songs, like "English Civil War," which tells its listener that "it happened once it can happen again—hurrah," and "Guns on the Roof," which justifies terrorist activities because of the unfair legal system, seemed to say that the time for patience had ended; revolution through violence was now needed. With criticism of the album becoming intense in early 1978, Strummer responded by telling *Melody Maker* that

> People have this picture of us marching down the street with
> machine guns. We're not interested in that because we haven't
> got any. All we've got are a few guitars, amps, and drums,
> that's our weaponry...All we want to achieve is an atmosphere
> where things can happen.

The Clash believed that relying on violence or advocating it as a means of change further empowered the dominant society and alienated the people.[44]

An example of what the Clash believed to be the power of the people is covered in the most eloquent of the Clash's anti-imperialistic songs, "Washington Bullets." In 1980, the band released its third album and dedicated it to the populist rebels who had taken power in Nicaragua. *Sandinista* attacks imperialism, especially the United States' intervention in Central and South America. Whenever a people's revolution occurs, the song outlines, the United States labels it "Red" and crushes it:

> As every cell in Chile will tell
> the cry of the tortured men.
> Remember Allende and the days before,
> before the army came . . .

But, when the Sandinistas ousted the Samoza dictatorship in 1979, the people were vindicated:

> For the very first time ever
> when they had a revolution in Nicaragua.
> There was no interference from America
> human rights from Amerika . . .
> Well the people fought the leader and up he flew
> with no Washington Bullets what else could he do . . .
> Sandinista.[45]

Musically, the song uses the Caribbean beat that the Clash had used reggae in songs like "Washington Bullets" because, as Simon Frith points out, the music "did for black kids what [the Clash] were trying to do for whites." For Black Jamaicans, reggae is a transcending experience in which both maker and listener share a common ground. Through the presentation of unity, the repetition of rhythm, and the commonality of lyrics, it unifies the people. As Linton Kwesi Johnson argues, Jamaican music sets "out to transform the consciousness of the sufferer, to politicize him culturally through music, song, and poetry, the lyricist contributes to the continuing struggle of the oppressed."[46]

For all of its commitment, acclaim, and patience, the Clash began to fall apart by 1982. The problems that destroyed the band fit into David Harker's model for the co-optation of radical ideas into the mainstream marketplace. He argues in *One for the Money* that when a songwriter or band attempts to use the major record companies, (and the overall power structure of commercial music) to disseminate radical ideas, the drive to create a "consumable article" tends to erode the commitment in many performers. As the songwriter or band continues to market radicalism, the record companies and the industry itself increase their pressure to create sales. In a larger cultural perspective, Thomas Crow, Fredric Jameson, and others have observed that avant-garde tendencies, whether in art, literature, or music, may begin as part of a subgroup and at times be highly critical of the dominant society, but all eventually become diluted and institutionalized. Even the most shocking art or music becomes familiar and loses its ability to shock. In punk a similar transformation occurred between 1978-1982, as punk became acceptable to many musicians and artists, but was transformed into a diluted "new wave."[47]

The Clash's 1977 contract with CBS-Epic brought its own problems. In "Remote Control," released shortly after their discovery of the CBS deal's limitations, the Clash detailed their frustration:

> Big business it don't like you
> It don't like the things that you do

You got no money so you got no power
They think you're useless and so you are PUNK.[48]

In 1980 the Clash discovered that their first manager, Bernie Rhodes, had signed them to a ten album deal, not five as they thought, and their problems with CBS intensified. They also found out that the $100,000 they accepted in 1977 from the label was only an advance against future royalties; and, when these dollars failed to materialize, the label wanted the money repaid.[49]

In the late 1970s the record industry was in a slump. The industry growth over the previous twenty-five years had waned. Fewer firms produced fewer releases as the number of competing record companies declined through buyouts and takeovers. By 1979 the number of new albums and singles declined by 14 and 8 percent respectively. To make matters worse, in 1980 the majors, led by CBS and WEA, raised the prices on most of their new releases. Profits for the industry began to fall.[50]

The slump continued into the early 1980s, and the industry further tightened its belt. Record companies instituted several reforms, all of which resulted in a more cautious approach to its business. The presidents of the major labels told the National Association of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) that the 1980s would be a new "ballgame." In line with this philosophy, the companies changed their return policy with NARM, making it far riskier for merchandisers to experiment with newer or less popular forms of music. Of the companies with the new return policy—which limited the percentage of return by the merchandiser on unsold albums—the most restrictive was CBS-Epic.[51] The economic squeeze also affected live concert tours, which are the traditional foundation upon which records are sold, along with radio, advertising, and today, MTV. Many booking agents passed on new wave or punk acts like the Clash because "acts such as Jethro Tull or Pink Floyd will always do well."[52]

By 1982 the pressures of not having a popular record began to take its toll on the Clash. The band dismissed drummer Topper Headon, because of a "difference of opinion over the political direction the group" wanted to take. Joe Strummer wanted to keep the Clash musically simple and lyrically radical. Headon, like Jones, wanted to expand the band's appeal, or as Jones said, "people prefer to dance than fight wars." This difference in direction flared up shortly after the release of *Combat Rock*, when Strummer and Simonon kicked Jones out of the group because he had "drifted apart from the original idea of the Clash." Strummer told *Billboard* that the group had become self indulgent on *Combat Rock*. Jones "thought that selling a million records was a big deal," Strummer said, but "I know it's a feeble deal." According to Strummer, the band had replaced its radical ideals with the pretention of their former self.[53]

The desire to achieve sales, so evident on *Combat Rock*, also diluted the Clash's political commitment. The record is much more pessimistic than *Sandinista* or *London Calling*, especially side one, which leads with "Know Your Rights" and tells the listener that freedom of speech and thought are illegal and

that anyone caught trying to utilize them,—"smush." Side two held the best-selling singles—which became heavily rotated MTV videos—"Should I Stay or Should I Go," and "Rock The Casbah." The critics loved the other albums for their dedication, but *Combat* became the group's first million-seller. It was also their last group project.[54]

By 1982, Strummer had internalized the failure of the Clash. He told *Rolling Stone* in August of 1982 that he was "a failure" and that he saw "only disappointments" in the Clash. His personal despair was a far cry from his earlier patient optimism. On *Combat Rock*, one can sense the failure:

> I waited for a horseman
> and his ever faithful Indian friend
> I'm not the only one of the caped crusader's fan club
> watching the sky for mankind's friend.

But Superman never came, and instead the people catch "an even Atom tan."[55] The mission was vanquished, and punk and Strummer's band were now just part of the system.

What remained, then of the Clash or punk's influence in America? Much of punk's external manifestations, fashion, for instance, became popular when the "new wave" look became the fashion guide of the 1980s, spawning the likes of Madonna and Sting. By the early part of the decade punk fashion was readily adopted, sold even in J.C. Penney stores, and many former punk bands, now called new wave, begged for a spot on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. The tendencies that helped create the Clash and punk in the U.K. were also at work in the United States. Economically the 1970s ushered in an age of diminished opportunities, as the energy crunch and oil embargo of 1973 and early 1974 depressed industrial production and cut the real income of the American workforce. The consumer price index rose by 11 percent in 1974, unemployment increased, and production dropped dramatically, all giving momentum to the Recession of 1975-76. While the economy improved slightly after 1977, inflation continued to rise and the federal deficit increased. By 1979 the cost-of-living index had risen by 11.3 percent over the previous year, and by 1980 it was clear that another recession was underway.[56]

While economic conditions contributed to the development of punk, American punks identified less consciously with the Clash's working-class ideology, and focused more on their music. While the Clash presented the punk look, its calls for political and social activism fell on deaf ears. In an American Gallup Youth survey in 1977, the top twenty musical groups or individuals included such diverse and opposing musical styles as those of KISS, Barry Manilow, John Denver, K.C. and the Sunshine Band, as well as holdovers from the sixties like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. When David Laing compared the Top 50 rock albums sold in England in 1976-77 to the five most popular punk albums of the year, he found *The Clash* to be the most political of the punk albums, contributing

to 10 of 16 total political/social lyrics.[57] In comparing the Clash's songs to those which appeared on American record charts during this time, a far different tendency emerges. An analysis of the 122 top-selling records in America yearly from 1977 to 1985 reveals that topically, 87 percent of the songs concentrated on love, sex, and courtship problems. Conversely, less than three percent dealt with either social or racial concerns.[58]

By the latter 1970s, many record companies and producers were advising that the new music showed the punks trying to better fit into the preferences of the American consumer. *Variety* advised songwriters in early 1981 to "tone down their offerings."[59] Enter the "new wave," which produced music to fit more into the dominant sales model — it had a danceable beat and offered escapist, romantic lyrics. The Clash did not follow this advice and were confused by their American fans' political conservatism. Their listeners all dressed like punks, the band reasoned, but few embraced the Clash's ideals. The audiences seemed, to them, apolitical.[60]

It might have surprised the Clash that their audiences adopted the punk look and not the ideals, but some had already observed that American punks were not receptive to the class conflict or anti-imperialistic ideals of the band. Philip Lamy and Jack Levin found that the average punk rocker in the U.S. came from a middle-class background. Because of this, the punk rejection of the work ethic resulted more in a Dionysian pursuit of pleasure than in political activity. When James Lull polled his students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1980 concerning their attitude toward punk, most of the 375 students identified it as a cultural movement whose music dealt with social or political commentary, but few preferred listening to it. Instead they enjoyed the more traditional music of the Beatles, James Taylor, Neil Young, and the Rolling Stones. When asked to identify new wave or punk artists, only 13 percent of the students mentioned the Clash and listed American bands like the Talking Heads well above any English punk band. This led Lull to conclude that

> U.S. audiences are not united behind the emerging musical
> form as a medium for the expression of unified, class-based
> social protest.

Musical groups like the Clash did not satisfy the basic need of the American musical consumer, to "make them feel relaxed or happy."[61]

When British punk arrived in the United States with the Sex Pistols' 1978 debut in Atlanta, Richard Dixon surveyed the audience to discover what brought them to the concert. Dixon's results indicated that the audience was not that different from standard rock audiences, namely middle-class, white, and in attendance more out of curiosity than commitment. As a result, Dixon concluded that British punk rock, with its overtly political viewpoint and working-class mentality, would not develop as a sub-culture in the United States, and "if the punk rock musical form persists in the U.S., it will probably develop more as a

result of skillful promotion and entertainment appeal rather than a response to the need of a particular group of youth." The record industry agreed, telling its marketing people to package punk/new wave just like mainstream rock; or, as Charles Dimont, vice president of Virgin Records said in 1979, "the idea is to have strong graphics, and then the format doesn't matter that much."[62]

Culturally, the vision of the Clash was simply out of step with the attitudes of its audience. Although the Clash was enthusiastically received by critics, popular American attitudes were more closely attuned to the new patriotism of television's Alex P. Keaton from *Family Ties*, or Sylvester Stallone's multi *Rocky/Rambo* images, than to Joe Strummer and the Clash's working-class, anti-imperialist rhetoric. Musically, disco continued to be popular with America's youth in the late 1970s, offering escape, fun, and clearly defined sexual roles. For disaffected American youth, the angst of Bruce Springsteen, or later, John Cougar Mellencamp, better captured the working-class hostility by making it a middle-class soap opera about a man who has lost his job, and by extension, all he's worked for. But, in distinctively American terms, as Bruce Springsteen sang in "Darkness on the Edge of Town," he has not given up:

> Some folks are born into a good life,
> other folks get it anyway, anyhow,
> I lost my money and I lost my wife,
> those things don't seem to matter much to me now...
> lives on the line where dreams are found and lost,
> I'll be there on time and I'll pay the cost,
> for wanting things that can only be found
> In the Darkness on the Edge of Town.

As the 1970s ended, many middle-class youths turned their affection toward heavy metal music. An overtly macho music, it seemed to say that "sure, life sucked . . . [but] the bands and the fans were all in it together." As for the political orientation of popular music in the 1980s, as Jon Brian Peterson and Peter Christenson point out, it was "stripped of its innards and turned into fashion." Simply put, the political, working-class fear of the hegemonic state, so much a part of the Clash ideology, did not fit into the mind set of its American audience.[63]

The Clash wrestled with the issue that embattled much of their generation, namely control versus autonomy. Within a society they believed to be rapidly declining, the Clash were convinced that hope could only be restored through the direct intervention of humans. As musicians, they felt empowered to facilitate this transition, but found that much of their American audience either missed the point or did not want to think about it. The Clash and punk were not alone; their searching for answers was mirrored in many facets of society during the late 1970s and 1980s, as words, ideas, and images were deconstructed and then redefined, rethought, or reproduced in order to understand the modern or post-modern condition. In the end, the Clash and punk challenged social conventions,

but their experiences also exemplify the ability of the dominant society to dilute and incorporate countercultural attitudes while ignoring the ideals; or, as the Clash sing in "Complete Control":

> They said we'd be artistically free
> when we signed that bit of paper
> they meant let's make a lot of moneeee
> and worry about it later.[64]

Notes

1. The Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen," *Never Mind the Bollocks*, Warner/Virgin, 1977. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1990). "The Future is Unwritten," The Clash, *Combat Rock* jacket sleeve, Epic 1982. While Marcus focuses on the connection of the early punks, especially the Sex Pistols, to the ideas of earlier French avant garde movements—namely Lettrist International and the Situationist International—he also admits that "the Clash's pop project was always to make sense of the Pistols' riddles" even if sometimes it was impossible, 10-12. Egalitarian is used here to indicate an acceptance of diversity with an understanding of equality.
2. For an excellent discussion of the rise of punk as an English subculture, see Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, 1979); Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, SexPistols, PunkRockandBeyond* (New York, 1992); David Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and the Meaning in Punk Rock* (Philadelphia, 1985), 5; Mary Harrow, "Punk is Just Another Word for Nothin' Left to Lose," *Village Voice* 23 (May 6, 1978), 54.
3. Bernard Rhodes as quoted in Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 13.
4. Robert Christgau, "We Have to Deal With It: Punk England Report," *Village Voice* 23 (January 9, 1978), 27-31.
5. Nicholas Schaffner, *The British Invasion: From First Wave to New Wave* (New York, 1983), 204-05; Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny: An Obituary of Rock and Roll* (London, 1978), 53-56; Mikal Gilmore, "Clash: Anger on the Left," *Rolling Stone* (March 8, 1979), 22; Peter Hall, "The Year of the Clash," *Rolling Stone* (August 19, 1982), 25.
6. Dave Dexter, "Few Protest Songs in the 70s," book review of Milton Okun's *Great Songs of the 70s, Billboard* (January 27, 1979), 19, 112; Steve Chapple and Reebee Garofalo, *Rock and Roll is Here To Pay* (Chicago, 1977), 301-315; Bruce Anderson, Peter Hesbacher, K. Peter Etzkorn, R. Serge Denisoff, "Hit Record Trends, 1940-1977," *Journal of Communication* 30 (Spring 1980).
7. Wayne Bickerton, quoted in Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, 5.
8. Steve Pond, "The Seventies," and Anthony DeCurtis, "The Eagles," both *Rolling Stone* (September 20, 1990), 51-60, 89-94; Mick Fleetwood with Steve Davis, *Fleetwood: My Life and Adventures in Fleetwood Mac* (New York, 1990).
9. Caroline Coon, *1988: The New Wave Punk Rock Explosion* (London, 1977), 63; Mikal Gilmore, *Musician* 47 (September 1982); Burchill and Parsons' book *The Boy Looked at Johnny* is an excellent example of the Punks' contempt for what they felt was a plastic and fake counter-culture in the 1960s.
10. Generation X, "Your Generation," *Generation X*, Chrysalis 1978; The Jam, "In the City," *In the City*, Polydor, 1977; The Dead Boys, "Ain't Nothin' to Do," *Young, Loud, and Snotty*, Sire, 1977; Coon, *1988*, 63; "Hate and War," *The Clash*, Epic, 1977/79.

11. Steve Simels, "Punk Rock," *Stereo Review* 41 (October 19, 1978), 94-96; Schaffner, *The British Invasion*, 184-86; Greil Marcus provides an excellent history and analysis of the rise and fall of the Sex Pistols in his *Lipstick Traces*.

12. Paul Nelson, review of *The Clash, Rolling Stone* (October 18, 1979), 115; Steve Simels, review of *The Clash, Stereo Review* 43 (October 1979), 92; Chris Brazier, "Second Bite at the Apple," *Melody Maker* 54 (September 1, 1979), 13.

13. An interesting contradiction thus develops: the critics who love the Clash are the same corrupt "hippies" that the punks abhor; yet, their approval is necessary and encouraged. From the very start then, one can argue, the Clash were compromised by becoming the media darlings. Robert Draper, *Rolling Stone Magazine: The Uncensored History* (New York, 1990), 17-18; Tom Carson, "The Clash:Street Fighting Men," *Rolling Stone* (October 18, 1979), 48-51; Simels, "The Clash," 92; review in *Village Voice* 24 (March 5, 1979), 36; "Ten Albums that Shaped a Decade," *Melody Maker* 54 (November 10, 1979), 6-7; "The Top 100," *Rolling Stone* (August 27, 1987), 89.

14. John Piccarella, "Red-Hot Rock and Roll: A Joyful Noise and Politics that Live," *Rolling Stone* (March 5, 1981), 57-8; "The Top 100," 74-5; "British Band Critic's Top Choice," *Billboard 92* (December 20, 1980), 20, 59-60.

15. Simels, "The Clash's New Album," 92; Piccarella, "Red-Hot Rock and Roll," 57; Christgau, "We Have To Deal With It," 29.

16. Tom Carson, "The Clash Conquer America," *Rolling Stone* (April 5, 1979), 84.

17. The Dead Boys, "Sonic Reducer," *Young, Loud and Snotty*; the Dead Kennedy's, "Too Drunk to Fuck", single, Alternative Tentacles, 1980/2; The Adverts, "Gary Gilmore's Eyes," *Crossing the Red Sea with the Adverts*, Bright, 1978. For a good Punk discography see B. George and Martha Defoe, *International New Wave Discography* (New York, 1982) or Ira A. Robbins, *Trouser Press Guide to New Wave Records* (New York, 1983).

18. The Clash, "The Kingston Advice," *Sandinista!*, Epic, 1980.

19. "Career Opportunities," *The Clash*, Epic, 1977/79.

20. The Clash, "the Clampdown," *London Calling*, Epic, 1979; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated Ben Brewster (New York, 1971), argues that through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) the dominant society coerces support, and within this, no social or cultural medium is free from control or coaptation.

21. Peter Hall, "Year of the Clash," *Rolling Stone* (August 19, 1982), 26; "White Riot," *The Clash*; "The Clampdown," *London Calling*.

22. T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review* 90 (June 1985), 567-593.

23. The Clash, What's My Name, *The Clash*.

24. Devo, "Are We Not Men," Devo, Warner Brothers, 1977.

25. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 118; The Clash, "White Man In Hammersmith Palais," *The Clash*.

26. Hebdige, *Subculture*, 100-117; Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*, 89, 118; Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (Berkeley, 1985); Burchill and Parsons, *The Boy Looked At Johnny* outlines the punk fashion; Coon, *1988*.

27. Coon, *1988*, 64.

28. The Clash, "Lost in the Supermarket," *London Calling*.

29. The Clash, "The Equalizer," *Sandinista!*. One cannot help but notice the Marxist language of this song, which probably followed Strummer and Simonon's socialist political beliefs.

30. The Clash, "The Prisoner," *Black Market Clash*, Epic, 1980; "Something About England," *Sandinista!*.

31. The Clash, "Charlie Don't Surf," *Sandinista!*.

32. The Clash, "Go Straight to Hell," *Combat Rock*.

33. The Clash, "The Call Up," *Sandinista!*. This type of solution is consistent to the anti-war songs of the 1960's, especially, Buffy St. Marie's "Universal Soldier." Other songs like Tommy James' "Sweet Cherry Wine," Bob Seger's "2+2," or Black Sabbath's "War Pigs" also presented the soldier as an innocent victim of the power structures. See Kenneth J. Bindas and Craig Houston, "'Takin' Care of Business': Rock Music and the Vietnam War," *The Historian* 52 (November 1989), 1-23.

34. The Clash, "The Guns of Brixton," *London Calling*.

35. The Sex Pistols, "Anarchy in the U.K.," *Never Mind the Bollocks*; Johnny Rotten, quoted in Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock and Roll* (New York, 1981), 266.

36. Mick Jones in Hall, "Year of the Clash," 26; John Street, *Rebel Rock: The Politics of Popular Music* (New York, 1986), 141-45; See also Bruce Dancis, "Safety Pins and Class Struggle: Punk Rock and the Left," *Socialist Review* 8 (May/June 1978), 58-73.

37. Vic Garbarini, *Musician* 33 (June 1981), 39.

38. The Clash, "Armagideon Time," *Black Market Clash*.

39. Michael Goldberg, "A Fired-up Joe Strummer Brings his New Clash to America," *Rolling Stone* (March 1, 1984), 47; Coon, *1988*, 64.

40. Tom Carson, "The Clash: Coming to Terms with Greatness," *Rolling Stone* (April 3, 1980), 84; Allan Jones, "We Never Came to Destroy," *Melody Maker* 53 (November 25, 1979), 33, 57; Patrick Humphries, "Rebel Chic," *Melody Maker* 55 (December 13, 1980), 19-24; Simon Kinnersly, "Strummer Speaks," *Melody Maker* 52 (March 11, 1978), 8; For a critique of punk's lack of political ideology, see Robert H. Tillman, "Punk Rock and the Construction of Pseudo-Political Movements," *Popular Music and Society* 7 (1980), 165-75. Interestingly enough, the Clash do not fit into Tillman's "pseudo" category.

41. Paulo Hewitt, "Joe Strummer Answers the Call Up," *Melody Maker* 55 (December 13, 1980), 33; The Clash, "Death or Glory," *London Calling*; "The Equalizer," *Sandinista!*.

42. Hall, "Year of the Clash," 26; Kinnersly, "Strummer Speaks," 9.

43. Jones, "We Never Came to Destroy," 57; Hewitt, "Joe Strummer Answers the Call Up," 33; Chris Bohn, "Working Class Heros Perfect Lover's Rock," *Creem* 11 (April 1980), 22.

44. Robert Pielke, *The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism* (New York, 1987), 141. *Melody Maker* 53 (March 11, 1978), 9. The Clash may have indeed tried to be more overtly revolutionary on the album, but for other reasons. When The Clash signed with CBS in 1977, they, on the record companies advice, hired veteran rock producer Sandy Pearlman to produce their next album—*Give Em Enough Rope*, Epic, 1978. Pearlman's job was to "bring their sound more in line with what's acceptable to American ears." What he would focus on was taking The Clash message—"violent and anarchic"—and making it slick, or produced. In doing so, he perhaps played a larger role in the band's supposed radical posturing, and the band members were simply misled. The fact that little or no violent/anarchistic songs appear after this album certainly lends support to this. See John Street, *Rebel Rock*, 110; and, Mikal Gilmore, *Rolling Stone* (March 8, 1979), 22.

45. The Clash, "Washington Bullets," *Sandinista!*.

46. Simon Frith, "The Clash Rule the New Wave," *Creem* 10 (July 1978), 49; Linton Kwesi Johnson, quoted in Simon Frith, "Why Do Songs Have Words," *Lost in Music: Culture, Style, and the Musical Event*, edited by Aaron Levine White, (New York, 1987), 88-9; Greil Marcus, "Garageland," *Village Voice* (January 31, 1984), 78; see also Hebdige, *Subculture*, 30-70, for an excellent discussion of Reggae, Rastafarianism, and its impact on British youth, especially the punks.

47. David Harker, *One For the Money: Politics and Popular Song* (London, 1980), 211-18; Thomas Crow and Fredric Jameson, as quoted in Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive intent: Gender Politics and the Avant Garde* (Cambridge, 1990), 182-198; The punk fashion had close connection to the art world as they adopted many tactics used within the avant garde and influenced many artists. See Tricia Henry, "Punk and Avant-Garde Art," *Journal of Popular Culture* 17 (Spring 1984), 30-36; Michael Shore, "How Does It Look: Punk Rocks the Art World," *Art News* 79 (November 1980), 78-85.

48. The Clash, "Remote Control," *The Clash*.

49. Hewitt, "Joe Strummer Answers the Call Up," 24.

50. At the same time CBS and the rest of the industry were raising prices, several artists fought for lowering prices, including the Clash on both *London Calling* and *Sandinista!* where they sold the multi-record Lps for single or double album prices. Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business, Volume III* (New York, 1988), 333-654; Eric W. Rothenbuhler and John W. Dimmick, "Popular Music: Concentration and Diversity in the Industry, 1974-1980," *Journal of Communication* 32(Winter 1982), 132-142; "Record Released Drop 5%" *Billboard* 92 (April 19, 1980), 6; Mikal Gilmore, "Record Industry Profits Plummet," *Rolling Stone* (June 28, 1979), 30,34; "CBS and WEA Hike Prices on Most LP sets," *Rolling Stone* (June 12, 1980), 24.

51. James Henke, "1981: Another Bad Year for the Record Business," *Rolling Stone* (March 4, 1982), 51; "Disc Biz Must Hone, Tone Down its Act to Survive, NARM Told,"*Variety* 298 (April 2, 1980), 73; Irv Lichtman, "Returns Restrictions Scrutinized," *Billboard* 92 (March 29, 1980), 48.

52. Ed Harrison, "Agents Cautious in Booking New Wave," *Billboard* 92 (April 5, 1980), 3, 8, 94.

53. Headon's reported $200 a day heroin habit also clashed with the group's ideology. Brian Harrington, "Strummer Back but Topper Out," *Melody Maker* 57 (May 29, 1982), 4; Mick Jones, quoted in John Orman, *The Politics of Rock* (Chicago, 1984), 170; Hall, "Year of the Clash," 27; "Clash Sack Jones," *Melody Maker* 58 (September 10, 1983), 3; "Strummer says Clash Returning to Rebel Rock," *Billboard* 96 (February 4, 1984), 35-6; Goldberg, "A Fired Up Joe Strummer," 23, 47.

54. Total sales on the Clash's albums released from 1977 to 1987's *The Story of the Clash* total 3.2 million. Of that, *Combat Rock* sold 1.7 million, while *London Calling* and *The Clash* sold over 1/2 million. The remaining albums make up the difference. Sales figures from CBS records. A new Clash would record an album in 1984, and while its lineup included Strummer and Simonon, it cannot be considered a true Clash album. See *Cut The Crap*, Epic, 1984.

55. The Clash, "Atom Tan," *Combat Rock*.

56. Andrew Hacker, ed., *U.S.: A Statistical Portrait of the American People* (1983); John Edward Wilz, *Democracy Challenged: The United States Since World War II* (New York, 1990), 318-321; 355-380.

57. Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, 22-27.

58. Gallup Youth Poll, 1977 favorite musical group or individual, Top Twenty, cited in Orman, 164; Joel Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top Forty Hits* (New York, 1985), 567-571; B. Lee Cooper, *A Resource Guide to Themes in Contemporary Song Lyrics* (Westport, Connecticut, 1986). The analysis was done by taking Whitburn's top-selling records and cross referencing them with Cooper's classification. A total of 122 songs were checked this way: 71 concerned love, sex, etc.; 20 were dance/party; 8 dealt with personal concern; 7 with maturity and school; 5 for urban isolation/occupation; 2 each for hope and transportation, and social/racial concerns; and 1 each for generation gap and non-institutional learning. The same held true for the 1960s, as most songs in that era dealt with courtship and innocent love. See Gary Burns, "Trends in Popular Lyrics in Annual Top Twenty Songs in the U.S.," *Popular Music and Society* 9 (1983), 25-39; Anderson, et al, "Hit Record Trends, 1940-1977."

59. Richard M. Nusser "New Waves Look for a Radio Break," *Billboard* 92 (July 19, 1980), 14; "Conservative Mood of Country Could Restrict Songs, says Drew," *Variety* 301 (January 21, 1981), 93.

60. Hall "Year of the Clash," 27. This was nothing new, as Country Joe McDonald, whose "I'm Fixin' to Die Rag" became the cynical anthem of the anti-war movement, became disillusioned by his audiences. They did not care about the message in the song, but revelled in his and their public spelling of the word "fuck." They liked the look and attitude, but were apolitical. See David Felton and Tony Glover, "The *Rolling Stone* Interview with Country Joe McDonald," *Rolling Stone* (May 27, 1971), 37.

61. Phillip Lamy and Jack Levin, "Punk and Middle-Class Values: A Content Analysis," *Youth & Society* 17 (December, 1985), 158-60; James Lull, "Popular Music: Resistance to New Wave," *Journal of Communication* 32 (Winter 1982), 121-131.

62. Jon Lewis, "Punks in La: Its Kiss or Kill," *Journal of Popular Culture*; Richard Dixon, et al, "The Cultural Diffusion of Punk Rock in the United States," *Popular Music and Society* 6 (1979), 217; Roman Kozak, "New Wave's Marketing Like Rocks'," *Billboard* 92 (March 29, 1980), 48.

63. Alan Crawford, *Thunder On The Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment* (1980); Gilliam Peele, *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (1984); Randall Rothenberg, *The Neoliberals: Creating the New American Politics* (1984);Nicolaus Mills, "Culture in the Age of Money," *Dissent* (Winter 1990), 11-17; Bruce Springsteen, "Darkness on the Edge of Town," *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, CBS Records, 1978; Anthony DeCurtis, "The 80s," *Rolling Stone* (November 15, 1990), 62; J.P. Considine, "Metal Mania," *Rolling Stone* (November 15, 1990), 104; Jon Brian Peterson and Peter C. Christenson, "Political Orientation and Musical Preference in the 1980s," *Popular Music and Society* 11 (Winter 1987), 1-18.

64. The rise and influence of punk fit nicely into the modernist—post-modernist, structuralist—post-structuralist debate. The literature on this debate is vast, selected overviews include Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1986); Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender Politics and the Avant Garde* (Cambridge, 1990); Charles Jencks, *Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture* (New York, 1987); Henry S. Kariel, *The Desperate Politics of Postmodernism* (Boston, 1989); Hal Foster, editor, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Washington, 1983); "Psychlogy and Postmodernism," a special issue of *The Humanist Psychologist* 18 (Spring 1990). The Clash, "Complete Control," *The Clash.*