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Alex Robbins

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Time Will Crawl: Representation of 1980s Cold War Culture and Politics in Popular Music in
the West

By
Alex Robbins

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The Cold War represented more than a power struggle between East and West and the fear of mutually assured destruction. Not only did people fear the loss of life and limb but the very nature of their existence came into question. While deemed the “cold” war due to the lack of a direct military conflict, battle is not all that constitutes a war. A war of ideas took place. Despite the attempt to eliminate outside influence, both East and West felt the impact of each other’s cultural movements. By the 1980s, the Cold War conflict appeared to be winding down, and by the end of the decade the war would reach its end. Even so, the response to a changing political climate in the West was not entirely positive. Extreme fears regarding death and destruction along with the dissatisfaction with incompetent leadership remained.

During the 1980s, popular music, particularly that of the United States, England, and West Germany, focused on the deconstruction of Western culture’s immediate past. This directly conflicted with the neo-conservative regimes of President Ronald Reagan, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and (to a lesser extent) Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who attempted to manufacture a society based on the idea of regressive modernization. This new political leadership precipitated in the greatest fusion of both public and political spheres not yet seen, making these two spheres virtually inseparable. The response to these new administrations created a plethora of subversive genres of music and music culture by using these leaders’ own tactics against them. The musical styles that best represent this deconstruction of Western culture’s immediate past as well as demonstrate techniques that subverted political leadership are post-punk, industrial, new wave, and even mainstream pop.

This change in Western leadership in the 1980s did not spark the beginning of protest in popular music. In nineteenth century America, protest existed in African American songs and hymns. Much of this music, such as Richard Allen’s *Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns*

practiced in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, called out against the horrors of slavery and racial discrimination in a coded, subtle manner couched in religious rhetoric. In turn, the abolitionist movements in the United States utilized these songs as the rallying cry for their cause.¹ In recent memory, the most iconic displays of popular social protest took place in the 1960s and 1970s with musicians such as Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel. During the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War, artists penned songs on the horrors of war and corruption. In the article, “Bob Dylan: An American Tragedian,” Kile Jones remarks that politics, “as the *exemplar* of social interactions,” is a microcosm for humanity.² Music allows artists to express not only their creativity but also their emotions and discontent with the world. Though the circumstances in which the music produced in the 1980s were vastly different, with the advent of new technology and societal conditions, the decade’s politically charged music is only a natural continuation of the expression of frustration and struggle.

At the beginning of the decade, myriad genres witnessed a decline in popularity. One of those genres was progressive rock, or “prog rock.” Prog rock, born out of the psychedelic rock scene, grew to prominence in the late 1960s. Prog rock abandoned convention in favor of experimentation and borrowed heavily from classical music in both style and format. Unlike earlier rock music, this music was not created for dancing but was nevertheless extremely popular, especially with the introduction of album-oriented rock (AOR) radio and free form radio stations which proliferated in the 1970s.³ Prog rock’s popularity also correlated with the increase of psychoactive drug use. For example, the use of marijuana doubled between the years 1973 and

¹ Burton W. Peretti, “Protest in Nineteenth-Century African American Music,” in *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, ed. Johnathan C. Friedman (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3-4.

² Kile Jones, “Bob Dylan: An American Tragedian,” in *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, 88.

³ “A Brief History of Freeform Radio,” *Lowest Common Denominator*, last modified 1998, <http://www.wfmu.org/LCD/21/freeform.html/>.

1977.⁴ Bands performing at London's UFO Club such as Pink Floyd and Soft Machine became associated with the psychedelic drug LSD and arguably their experimental, long-form songs reflected this trend. Many of these musicians received classical training in their youth and hailed from upper-middle class backgrounds.⁵ With this classical training in tow, artists experimented with long-format songs (some of which passed the thirty-minute mark). Elaborate solos and numerous key and time signature changes would come to characterize the progressive rock genre.

While groups such as Yes and Pink Floyd became some of the most successful prog rock bands of the 1970s, reaching the top of the charts in England and the United States, progressive rock saw a decline in popularity by the end of the decade. As early as 1976, a newcomer began to surpass progressive rock in popularity: punk rock. Young consumers and rock critics alike began to view progressive rock as ostentatious and pretentious. The genre ceased to be "progressive" and betrayed its original purpose of musical innovation by rehashing the same style of playing ad infinitum.⁶ Moreover, critics deemed prog rock the music of the "dinosaurs," lacking awareness of the present.⁷ Although many groups continue to release albums and tour to this very day, the critical response to prog rock turned negative. A need for immediacy and impact in music led to the conception of punk rock music.

Punk rock's popularity skyrocketed during the latter half of the 1970s. In 1977, the Sex Pistols' "Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols" broke the US *Billboard* 200 at #106

⁴ Jennifer Robinson, "Decades of Drug Use: Data From the '60s and '70s," *Gallup News*, last modified July 2, 2002, <http://news.gallup.com/poll/6331/decades-drug-use-data-from-60s-70s.aspx/>.

⁵ "Rick Wakeman – 'No Earthly Connection'" Program notes for *Rick Wakeman in Concert*, April 1976.

⁶ Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 206.

⁷ Robert Fripp, quoted in Irwin Stambler, *Encyclopedia of Rock, Pop, and Soul*, rev. Ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 374.

and topped the UK Albums Chart at #1.⁸ Unlike progressive rock, punk rock not only accepted those with little classical training, it *discouraged* classical training altogether. Unlike prog rock's lengthy tracks filled with meandering solos and elaborate artistic flourish, most punk records were short and to the point. To be sure, although punk rock originated earlier in the decade, the first full length album (as opposed to an extended play) released by a British punk act was the Damned's *Damned Damned Damned* in 1977 by Stiff Records. The album featured songs no longer than four minutes in length and were harsh and loud, standing in stark contrast to tracks such as progressive rock band Genesis' "Supper's Ready," clocking in at nearly 22 minutes.⁹

Punk found a place in the United States as well. New York club CBGB became the birthplace for many American punk acts such as the Ramones, Patti Smith Group, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Misfits, and Television. With the birth of punk, Sex Pistols lead singer John Lydon remarked "rock 'n' roll [was] finished." The *Village Voice* praised CBGB and the New York punk scene for its sense of local community which, like punk rockers in the United Kingdom, opposed what rock culture had become and maintained a sense of authenticity that rock lost long ago.¹⁰ Rock 'n' roll, which originally set out to be countercultural, became the mainstream culture and was now following the rules it originally set out to break.¹¹

The rise of punk coincided with the rise of do-it-yourself culture in fashion as an attack against consumerism and suburban culture.¹² If you had anything you could play on or sing into,

⁸ "Official Albums Chart Top 60," Official Charts Company, accessed December 10, 2017, <http://www.officialcharts.com/charts/albums-chart/19771106/7502/>.

⁹ Ned Raggett, "Damned Damned Damned – The Damned," *All Music*, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.allmusic.com/album/r5045/review>.

¹⁰ Reynolds, 139-140.

¹¹ "Plague Disco," in *In the Fascist Bathroom: Punk in Pop Music 1977-1992*, ed. Greil Marcus (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 100.

¹² Helen Molesworth, *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 23.

you could break into the Top 40. The music was cheaper to make, accessible to a wider market, and contained a type of raw energy many young people connected to.¹³ Since many punk rockers hailed from non-elite, working class backgrounds, they could not afford to make such elaborate music like progressive rock musicians, nor did they want to.¹⁴ Punk's ethos was to clash against anything and everything regarding mainstream rock culture and to tear down the façade of peace and love maintained by the hippie generation. At least in theory, to be punk meant to be authentic.

While many punk rock acts broke into the American music market and even originated in the United States, punk "fashion" quickly became co-opted by department stores across the nation. As early as October 1977, *Trouser Press* reporter Ira Robbins deemed that punk was dead. The genre itself sold out and that was only natural. As Robbins puts, "It's just one of those incontrovertible facts of life; when you become famous, your life changes."¹⁵ Since punk culture revolved so heavily around authenticity and anti-commodification, the irony was especially apparent as stores such as Macy's sold pre-torn shirts proclaiming, "punk rock rules."¹⁶ Robbins declared "new wave has ended"¹⁷ and from that moment forward, everything claiming to be punk would simply be an imitation.¹⁸ Punk burnt out as quickly as it arrived, and the moment punk rockers gained notoriety was the moment they sold out to the masses. This is not to argue that no punk band that made the "big time" ever produced music with the purest of artistic intentions;

¹³ Theo Cateforis, *Are We Not New Wave?: Modern Pop at the Turn of the 1980s* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 22.

¹⁴ Travis A. Jackson, "Punk, Protest, and Politics" in *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, ed. Jonathan C. Friedman (New York: Routledge, 2013), 158.

¹⁵ Ira Robbins, "The New Wave washes out!" *Trouser Press*, October 1977, 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Note that the term "new wave" covers a wide variety of musical genres; however, the new wave genre this research focuses on only includes music of the early-mid 1980s that branched off from the post-punk genre.

¹⁸ Robbins, 32.

however, it would be disingenuous to say most placed money as the highest priority. Alongside punk's hypocritical but perhaps inevitable selling out, the movement destroyed itself from within.

The punk movement faced the threats of commercialization and inauthenticity, as well as the threat of division from the very beginning. Although it is not uncommon for subgenres to emerge out of a type of music, the ideological divide within the punk community must be acknowledged in a critical light. While the Third Reich fell after the end of World War II, fascism and Nazism did not disappear. Not only in Germany did punk rockers adopt Nazi imagery but so too did punks in the United States and the United Kingdom. While punk was commonly associated with leftist anarchic rage; an equally strong far-right rebellion brewed in the punk community too. Historian James J. Ward writes on rock's "problematic, if not paradoxical relationship" with fascism and Nazism. On stage, musicians and audience alike donned Swastikas and SS Death's Heads.¹⁹ Filmed in 1979 and 1980 in Los Angeles, Penelope Spheeris' documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization* featured footage of fans of the Germs drawing swastikas all over leader singer Darby Crash's body along with other bands such as Fear shouting homophobic expletives at the audience and wearing Nazi symbols.²⁰

Ward further argues that punk's politics were "primitivist" and although raw in energy, perhaps shallow in meaning. Punks wanted to display shocking acts and donning Nazi brown shirts and swastikas provided such a reaction. The exploitation of the taboo and its anti-culture stance allowed punk to become a breeding ground for fascism, proving that the pendulum did indeed swing both ways.²¹ Though the focus of this research pertains primarily to left-leaning response in

¹⁹ James J. Ward, "'This is Germany! It's 1933!' Appropriations and Constructions of 'Fascism' in New York Punk/Hardcore in the 1980s" *Journal of Popular Culture* 30, no. 3 (1996): 159.

²⁰ *The Decline of Western Civilization*, directed by Penelope Spheeris (1981; Los Angeles: Media Home Entertainment, 2016), DVD.

²¹ Ward, 160-161.

music, it remains valuable to acknowledge that the response from the left was not the only cultural response.

Like progressive rock, punk rock collapsed in on itself. Issues of racism and sexism isolated many from entering the community. This exclusionist nature resulted in the genre's stagnation and slow decline in popularity. Punk rock violently responded to prog rock's ostentation and pretense with a reaction representative of the anger and frustration felt by many of the under- and working-class. By the end of the decade, artists saw these issues with punk and in turn helped to create the post-punk and new wave genres. Although their popularity declined, progressive rock and punk rock represented the largest musical influences on song-writing of the 1980s.

The shift in styles in music coincided with the paradigm shift in Western politics. The elections of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and President Ronald Reagan in 1980 signified a departure from previously liberal and left-of-center administrations toward those with more neoconservative values. This change in ideology can largely be attributed to the dissatisfaction felt by those affected by the recessions of the mid-1970s in England and of 1980 in the United States. Much of Reagan and Thatcher's policies echoed a common theme: the attempt to revert their countries back to the "good old days." This included rolling back policy changes pushed by 1960s counterculture. Cultural historian Helen Molesworth called this method "regressive modernization," arguing that Reagan and Thatcher's brand of conservatism aimed to restore a "lost order that has fallen into decline."²² The greatest of the regressive modernists was President Reagan, a former actor and ex-California governor who knew very well the impact visual imagery could have on people.

²² Molesworth, 137.

At Kansas State University in 1982, President Reagan outlined his vision for the United States, stating, “We must mobilize every asset we have—spiritual, moral, education and military—in a crusade for national renewal. We must restore to their place of honor the bedrock values handed down by families to serve as society’s compass.”²³ To fulfill the promises of returning to the nostalgic (therefore, almost entirely romanticized) glory of yesteryear, Reagan had many unique tools at his disposal. President Reagan promised a return to American grandeur while slashing taxes for the wealthy, pouring more funding in national defense, and attempting to roll back discretion given to Washington’s bureaucracy. In comparison to President Carter’s “blue jeans” presidency, Reagan brought back a sense of imperial opulence to the White House. His inauguration itself cost a then record-breaking \$16 million, symbolizing the ushering-in of what presidential historian Gil Troy describes as a “new era of greed and ostentation.”²⁴ Using his celebrity status to his advantage, Reagan knew that images were just as important as words and in some cases, even *more* important. In an age where every household owned a television, the way he would be perceived by Americans would vastly differ from how they viewed the presidents of the past.

Dubbed the “great communicator,” Ronald Reagan became the United States’ first televisual president. Though the television began to make its mark on politics in the early 1950s, Reagan revolutionized its usage to blur the lines between popular and political culture.²⁵ Reagan displayed real photographs and video to bolster his speeches and verbally described moving scenes

²³ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at Kansas State University at the Alfred M. Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues" (speech, Manhattan, KS, September 9, 1982), The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=42945>.

²⁴ Gil Troy, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 51-58.

²⁵ N. D. Batra, *A Self-Renewing Society: The Role of Television and Communications Technology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 92.

to evoke great emotion from his spectators in radio addresses.²⁶ Ultimately, Reagan successfully played on the emotions of Americans who cried for change. His promise to a return to the glory of the 1950s and his utilization of modern technology and visual imagery in his speechmaking won him the presidency in 1980 and secured it in 1984. Not all were taken by the Teflon President; therefore, the countercultural movements of the 1980s faced the task of cultivating an image equally as pervasive as Reagan's to vent their frustrations and raise political awareness.

Like President Reagan, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher keyed into the concerns of the everyday British conservative. After the economic collapse of the 1970s, England needed leadership distinct from the failings of the previously-incumbent Labour Party. Thus, Thatcher effectively dismantled the Labour Party and the trade unionism it supported, sold previously nationalized industries, and promoted a more consumerist culture, all of which directly and negatively affected workers. Such a massive shift in ideology and leadership shocked even conservatives of the time.²⁷ Like Reagan, Thatcher knew very well that appearances mattered in this televisual age. In interviews and speeches, she propped herself up as the working-class "grocer's daughter" while maintaining the Victorian values of her mother. Moreover, the creation of this persona aided her in the manipulation of public desire, promising that she would put the "great" back in Great Britain.²⁸

The similarities between Reagan and Thatcher's rhetoric are not to be understated nor thought of as coincidental. The two leaders shared a very special relationship and remarked that

²⁶ Kathleen H. Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 127.

²⁷ Louisa Hadley and Elizabeth Ho, "'The Lady's Not for Turning': New Cultural Perspectives on Thatcher and Thatcherism" in *Thatcher & Thatcherism* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2-6.

²⁸ Margaret Thatcher, "Speech to Conservative Rally at Cheltenham" (speech, Cheltenham, UK, July 3, 1982), Margaret Thatcher Foundation, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104989>.

they were “soulmates for liberty” in their pursuit of free market capitalism and defense of democracy.²⁹ As Reagan called for the reinstatement of core American values, Thatcher called for a return to a refined sense of Englishness. She pushed for the creation of an England unaffected by its empire, but nevertheless imperial all the same. Thatcher’s cultivated image of grandiosity tempered by patriotism and a relatable working-class background, inflicted both trauma on her people and deflected the blame of such trauma. An immense backlash in the form of political protest but also art and music almost immediately formed in response to the Iron Lady.

Another region that produced influential music during the 1980s is West Germany and more specifically, the city of West Berlin. The end of World War II signified a drastic change in German culture: the splitting of the country in two halves, one ruled by capitalist liberal democracy and the other by Soviet-style communism. Almost immediately, the differences became apparent between the two regions. The divided city of Berlin represented the very thin thread holding the balance between these two competing ideologies. Western culture, particularly that of England and the United States, swiftly took over as associations with the horrors of Nazi Germany tarnished the German people’s reputation. With the election of Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1982, an ardent Reagan supporter and a key figure in German reunification, Western culture’s influence became only stronger. Anglophone music became an integral part of German identity, more so than actual German-language music itself. Singing in German became “anti-cool” and beginning in the 1960s, popular musicians in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands tended to sing in English.³⁰ Even in liberated Western Germany, however, issues continued to plague German citizens.

²⁹ Hadley & Ho, 14.

³⁰ Jennifer Shryane, *Blixa Bargeld and Einstürzende Neubauten: German Experimental Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 14.

West Berlin was unique in its complete isolation from the rest of Western Germany due to being geographically situated in East Germany although the Allies of the West occupied the region. West Berlin received no federal voting representation and although universities boasted high enrollment, actual attendance was virtually non-existent. Modern buildings could not distract the eye from the bombed ruins lining the streets. Historian S. Alexander Reed puts it succinctly: “Control was thus everywhere and nowhere at once.” By the 1980s, the people of Germany – East and West alike – felt great disillusionment with the political regimes at the time due to rampant poverty combined with very few economic opportunities. Drug abuse, especially of amphetamines, skyrocketed and many German youth found themselves living as squatters in their dilapidated city.³¹ Such conditions precipitated in the creation of a wild countercultural scene; one to rival and perhaps pale that of Britain’s punk scene of the mid-to-late 1970s.

A whirlwind of change swept the political and cultural climates at the end decade as staunch neoconservative “regressive modernists” replaced left-leaning leaders. This was a turning point. While many cite the introduction of punk rock as the ultimate symbol of the new era, post-punk and industrial music produced from 1978 to the early 1980s truly cemented the hopes and fears felt by the public at the time. Like punk, post-punk musicians wanted to destroy the elitism of the popular art rock and progressive rock genres of the early-mid 1970s and make music and their message more accessible. Music historian Simon Reynolds argues post-punk radicalized the “content of the musical equation.” While punk rock seemed too blunt, post-punk applied just the right dose of “black rhythm and European electronics.”³² Post-punk musicians were true experimentalists who sought to create a platform for political discourse through both their song

³¹ S. Alexander Reed, *Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 87-92.

³² Reynolds, 6.

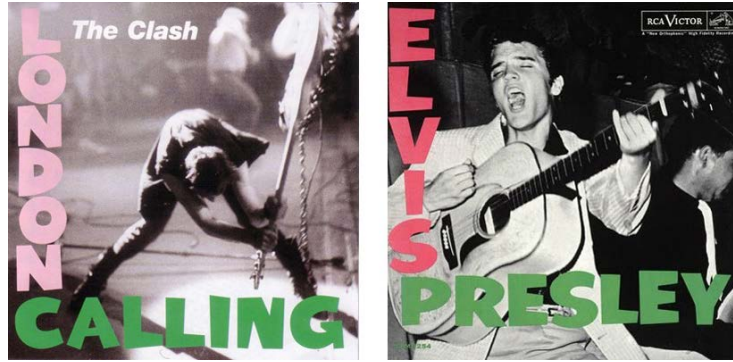
lyrics and aesthetic. While punk's anarchy and rage grabbed the attention of many, post-punk rockers believed their new brand of music was more cohesive and nuanced than their predecessors.

As punk rock's mainstream appeal waned by the late 1970s, more and more frequently white musicians began integrating African-styled beats into their music and often hired musicians of African descent to play on their albums. The incorporation of this "world music" became one of the most defining traits of post-punk. Post-punk musicians who incorporated world music include the Clash, Gang of Four, Talking Heads, the Police, and Adam and the Ants. In an increasingly globalized world, the fusion of two wildly distinctive styles of music (punk and world music) naturally followed. Instead of appealing only to people of a similar background, worldbeat allowed musicians to create a larger fanbase on an international scale.³³ For instance, the Clash can be categorized as simultaneously punk and post-punk because they freed themselves from the conventions of traditional punk rock.

No band better encapsulated this transitional period than the Clash with their December 1979 album *London Calling* and 1980's *Sandinista!*. Only seven months after the election of Margaret Thatcher, the group released an explosive new album. *London Calling*. The album incorporated genres such as reggae, ska, and R&B and focused primarily on events taking place in London as well as in the United States. Influenced by the Three Mile Island nuclear incident in the United States in 1979, the title track speaks of a "nuclear error" and that the "ice age is coming." Even though London is "drowning," people are complacent in the face of this disaster and destruction.³⁴ The cover of the album itself is a reference to Elvis Presley's first LP with a

³³ "Worldbeat Music Genre Overview," *AllMusic*, accessed September 29, 2017, <http://www.allmusic.com/subgenre/worldbeat-ma0000011922>.

³⁴ The Clash, "London Calling."



similar black and white photo and pink and green lettering displaying the band's name. While Elvis is portrayed on his cover playing the guitar,³⁵ Clash bassist Paul Simonon is seen smashing his bass to the ground.³⁶ *London Calling* heavily references the past without being nostalgic unlike Britain's Margaret Thatcher, who aimed to restore the Britain of the past.

As Thatcher focused on the cultivation of her own visual image for political benefit, the Clash also acknowledged the importance of visual statements. The album cover speaks just as loudly as music itself. The Clash pointed to the future and call out the social injustices suffered by the English that must be remedied. *New West* magazine's article, "Hi, this is America," notes that "the politics in each number are inescapable but natural – they're the politics of ordinary life heightened by that sense of dread, that sense of history."³⁷ Although *London Calling* is filled to the brim with political messages, side four of the LP features "Revolution Rock" which, contrary to its name, makes a joke out of the revolution that punk rock attempted to foment. The lyrics imply that though punk puts up the façade of toughness, it has "no time to do battle." Imitating the punk rockers of the past, vocalist Joe Strummer repeats how this revolution rock is "so bad" that

³⁵ William Robertson, photographer. "Elvis Presley," photograph (New York: RCA Victor, 1955), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f5/Elvis_Presley_LPM-1254_Album_Cover.jpg.

³⁶ Pennie Smith, photographer. "London Calling," photograph (New York City: CBS, 1979), <http://www.theclash.com/media/article-images/mid/a8349984dc91812f5fcc93bc05952418.jpg>.

³⁷ "Hi, this is America. We're not home right now, but if you leave a message after the beep we'll get back to you as soon as we can," *New West*, February 1980, quoted in *In the Fascist Bathroom: Punk in Pop Music 1977-1992* (New York: Double Day, 1993), 89.

he is “in a state of shock” but nevertheless “everything’s gonna be all right.”³⁸ Ultimately, there are no doubts that music has always been a voice of rebellion; however, it in and of itself cannot spark revolution.

The Clash’s fourth album, *Sandinista!*, turns its gaze toward a broader subject: the world. Released in 1980, a year into the Thatcher administration, the Clash refused to buy into the rampant consumerist culture the prime minister pushed. The ambitious three-record long album, featuring six sides instead of the typical two, was sold at single-album price. The Clash wanted their latest release to be available to everyone, subsequently losing money in the process.³⁹ Additionally, the band defied the standards of punk by experimenting in genres that the punk rock movement tried desperately to avoid and counter, including disco and funk. The opening track, “The Magnificent Seven,” clocks in at 5 minutes and 33 seconds (twice the length of many punk standards) and borrows heavily from old school New York City hip-hop acts such as the Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and the Sugarhill Gang. Unsurprisingly, the Clash were also unique in that they allowed early rap, hip-hop, and funk groups like ESG, the Bloods, and the Treacherous Three to open for their concerts. In a time of a growing racial divide in Thatcher’s England, this was crucial. Less than half a decade prior, prominent punk groups (which were primarily white) would not dare to leave the comfort zone of their “four chords” and “simple catchy melodies.”⁴⁰

As eclectic as it was, post-punk began to show it contained greater substance than its predecessor. Perhaps the most important track of the album, “Washington Bullets” chronicles the history of modern imperialism, referencing the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the Nicaraguan

³⁸ The Clash, “Revolution Rock.”

³⁹ Brian Cogan, *Encyclopedia of Punk Music and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 40.

⁴⁰ Antonio D’Ambrosio, “‘Let Fury Have the Hour’: The Passionate Politics of Joe Strummer,” *Monthly Review*, New York: Monthly Review Foundation 55, no. 2 (2003), accessed September 29, 2017, <https://monthlyreview.org/2003/06/01/let-fury-have-the-hour-the-passionate-politics-of-joe-strummer>.

Sandinistas. The song serves as a criticism of United States interventionist policy but also of Communist leadership in the East, attacking Charmain Mao's leadership of China in the 1950s through the 1970s. A particularly striking verse from the song details the United States' backing of the 1973 coup in Chile and the murder of another musician and political activist, Víctor Jara:

As every cell in Chile will tell
The cries of the tortured men
Remember Allende and the days before
Before the army came
Please remember Víctor Jara, in the Santiago stadium
Es verdad, those Washington bullets again⁴¹

The Clash's commitment to politics in such a heated time made sense. Their anti-imperialist stance starkly contrasts Reagan and Thatcher's neo-imperialist policies. As late as 1980, England finally let go of its colony of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and transferred sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Another critical example is the Falklands War, a ten-week war between Argentina and the United Kingdom over two British territories, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The war ended in an Argentinian surrender, which declared to the world that even in the twentieth century the United Kingdom was still to be feared as an imperial power. The event also became the subject of an abundance of mainstream music released after 1982.⁴² Moreover, the British victory aided in the landslide re-election of the Conservative government the year after.⁴³ These events demonstrate why many artists expressed anti-imperialist sentiment during the decade.

While the Clash became one of the most successful post-punk acts of the late 1970s and early 1980s, other post-punk groups of great significance arose as well. Though transitioning to

⁴¹ The Clash, "Washington Bullets."

⁴² A few examples include: Pink Floyd's *The Final Cut* (1983), Captain Sensible's "Glad its all over," (1984), Crass' *Yes Sir, I Will* (1983) and the hoax, "Thatchergate" (1983).

⁴³ "1983: Thatcher triumphs again" *BBC News*, April 5, 2005, accessed October 2, 2017, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/vote_2005/basics/4393313.stm.

new wave soon thereafter, Adam and the Ants' first album *Dirk Wears White Sox* explored themes of alienation and disillusionment felt by the younger generation at the beginning of the decade. Manchester-based band Joy Division continued with this theme of isolation and alienation. Their debut album *Unknown Pleasures* received critical acclaim; *Melody Maker* heralded the album as an "opaque manifesto" that "set a course in the present with contrails for the future" instead of looking back at the past for inspiration.⁴⁴ As post-punk itself was more of a movement than a single genre itself, post-punk artists can easily be placed in different genres. The gothic Bauhaus and the Cure were positioned in the same movement alongside glam rock-inspired Japan and funky "dance-punk" group Gang of Four. These groups, which all derived inspiration from punk rock and cultivated entirely new types of music all belong within the post-punk movement. The mere existence of post-punk, along with industrial and industrial rock, was subversive due to its underground nature and inherent political imagery and message.

Unlike post-punk, industrial music did not have an immediate musical predecessor. The term "industrial music" applied to music played in the early twentieth century for factory workers to boost morale and keep productivity high. While music is often classified as an outlet for self-expression and creativity, this music was purely functional and used for capitalistic purposes. Music historian S. Alexander Reed contends that its sole purpose was to "make humans as machinelike as possible: no mistakes, no dissent, no slowing down."⁴⁵ The irony lies in what industrial music would become by the early 1980s. Industrial became a weapon in vocalizing the struggle the working-class and the poor faced every single day.

⁴⁴ Jon Savage, "Unknown Pleasures review," *Melody Maker*, July 1979.

⁴⁵ Reed, *Assimilate*, 19.

Disillusioned by the unfulfilled promises of the West, Germany became one of the birthplaces of modern industrial music. With rampant substance abuse and poverty, the poor sought to find something to take their minds off the crumbling infrastructure and political oppression they faced. Out of this struggle arose music rich in themes of physical exertion, struggle, and war. Like punk, one did not need formal training to be a part of this movement; all you needed was authentic, raw energy and power. The most prominent of West Berlin industrial groups was Einstürzende Neubauten, fronted by lead singer Blixa Bargeld.

Formed in 1980, Einstürzende Neubauten deviated from the usage of traditional musical instruments and abstained from making music with a simple, easy to follow structure. Instead, Neubauten used found objects to create jarring and intense soundscapes. These soundscapes were not necessarily intended for a mainstream audience but as a form of self-expression and release. Neubauten's song, "Der Tod ist ein Dandy (Death is a Dandy)" features the sound of a sledgehammer beating a hole through a wall and loud, banging rhythms achieved by hitting concrete blocks on a metal floor. In the 1985 track "Halber Mensch (Half Man)," vocalist Blixa Bargeld screams and chants the story of a person who is half man half machine. Repeated and overlaid phrases fill the listener with a sense of anxiety and terror as the narrator commands the *halber mensch*, reassuring them that everything is fine and to relinquish all control. The track, heavily influenced by Italian Futurism⁴⁶ of the 1900s to 1940s, touches on themes of complacency and fear. The band described the *Halber Mensch* album as political, countering what they called "government-regulated" and "media-enforced mass amnesia."⁴⁷ Their music is rhythmic, but it is

⁴⁶ Italian Futurism was an avant-garde movement launched by Italian intellectual Filippo Marinetti that viewed destruction as fruitful and called for the breaking of boundaries between "high" and "low" culture. For more information see: <http://exhibitions.guggenheim.org/futurism/>.

⁴⁷ Einstürzende Neubauten, "Halber Mensch," <https://neubauten.org/en/halber-mensch>.

not pop. Neubauten, as well as other industrial groups such as England's Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV, Slovenia's Leibach, and the United States' Ministry, turned pop music completely on its head.

At its very inception, modern industrial music served as a violent response to capitalist oppression and gave a voice to the everyday person in an industrialized society. These industrial objects and tools, originally used for labor and production, became tools of self-expression. With very little to lose, young poverty-stricken artists aimed to tear down everything old. Out of this anger and frustration was born an intense but fruitful experimental scene in West Berlin.⁴⁸ Blixa Bargeld stated that "people started to build barricades and they drummed for hours on [them]."⁴⁹ Early industrial music directly opposed local authorities and was thus inherently political.

While industrial musicians crafted experimental pieces seemingly without direction, their work contained a certain sense of intellectualism. For example, German groups knew singing in English had been the norm in German-speaking countries since the 1960s. In an act of rebellion, the majority of Einstürzende Neubauten's discography is sung entirely in German. In this way, Neubauten reclaimed their German identity and rejected Western influence. The harsh consonant sounds unique to the German language conveyed the gravity of the German condition; English could not compare to the native tongue. Additionally, Einstürzende Neubauten's name translates to "collapsing new buildings." These new buildings were the buildings created on top World War II's bombed ruins during the beginning of the Cold War. Like much of the architecture of the era,

⁴⁸ Reed, 87.

⁴⁹ Blixa Bargeld quoted in S. Alexander Reed, *Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 87.

these buildings were blocky, functional, and modern. Through the collapse of these new buildings, the band's name sends out a government-critical message before their music is even heard.

The final West German group that encapsulated resistance to the status quo was Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft. Meaning "German-American Partnership," the duo's name is ironic in juxtaposition to their music. D.A.F.'s Gabriel "Gabi" Delgado-López and Robert Görl lived in extreme poverty and even moved to London for a brief period in hopes of escaping their economic condition, hopping from one unoccupied apartment to another. In London, the two were inspired by the raw power of punk rock music. The band's second album, *Die Kleinen und die Bösen* (The Small and the Evil), is sardonic and biting. Its opening track with competing narratives that "der Osten ist am besten. Der Westen ist am besten. (The East is the best. The West is the best)"⁵⁰ mocks the Cold War conflict. This is further highlighted in the album's cover which juxtaposes the term "German-American Partnership" with an image of the Soviet flag and Russian Olympic athletes with medals. This imagery draws comparisons to the Miracle on Ice event in the 1980 Winter Olympics when the United States' ice hockey team won against the defending gold medalists, the Soviet Union.⁵¹ The Miracle on Ice became an iconic moment in Cold War cultural history. The event was viewed as both an embarrassing blow to the Soviet Union, defeated by a group of amateur players, and an inspiration to the United States that if they could beat the USSR here, they could take on any opponent and perhaps even win the Cold War.

Ultimately, D.A.F.'s third album *Alles ist gut* became not only their breakthrough album but also their most influential album overall, bridging the gap between experimental industrial and

⁵⁰ Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft, "Osten Währt am Längsten."

⁵¹ "Top Story of the Century," *International Hockey Federation*, accessed October 2, 2017, <http://www.iihf.com/channels/iihf-world-championship/top-story-of-the-century.html/>.

the imminent new wave movement to come. Released in 1980, *Alles ist gut* (Everything is Fine) features the controversial hit “Der Mussolini,” which urged the listener to “tanz’ den Mussolini,”



D.A.F.'s second album, *Die Kleinen und die Bösen*



D.A.F.'s third album, *Alles ist Gut*

“tanz’ den Adolf Hitler,” “tanz’ den Jesus Christus,” and to “tanz’ den Kommunismus” – to dance the Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Jesus Christ, and Communism. Lead singer Gabi Delgado-López appears shirtless and dripping in sweat on the album cover, greatly appealing to the European gay market in a time when HIV/AIDS began to rear its ugly head. López himself is bisexual and to appear in such a way to his audience was extremely daring and a career risk for the time.⁵² In addition, many of the tracks on *Alles ist gut* are sexual and direct. Unlike the early work of Einstürzende Neubauten, D.A.F.'s third album contained much “pop potential,” according to music journalists, Steven Grant and Ira Robbins.⁵³ Thus, D.A.F. bridged the gap between the industrial and new wave music movements.

Out of German industrial music scene grew the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (German New Wave) genre soon thereafter. Two distinct divisions of the genre exist; the first encapsulating industrial

⁵² Nike Breyer, “Das ist alles wirklich Plastik, haha” *Die Tageszeitung* (2003): 1001-1003, accessed October 2, 2017, <http://www.taz.de/!683721/>.

⁵³ Steven Grant & Ira Robbins, “Deutsche Amerikanische Freundschaft” *Trouser Press*, accessed October 2, 2017, http://www.trouserpress.com/entry.php?a=deutsche_amerikanische_freundschaft.

and experimental musicians such as D.A.F. and Einstürzende Neubauten but also more mainstream synth-oriented artists such as Peter Schilling, Hubert Kah, Falco, Nina Hagen (perhaps the most notable act out of East Germany in the 1980s), and Spliff.

As the Cold War reached its end with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, German industrial music waned in popularity. While the movement simultaneously became the voice of the majority while nevertheless remaining an underground movement, the reunification of East and West Germany alleviated many of the issues which arose from West Berlin's isolation. With the Communist threat at a minimum, the need for such retaliation waned; however, industrial music *did* exist outside of Germany and was not a unique phenomenon. Visual artists such as United States' Christian Marclay expressed interest in "found music" in a similar fashion to industrial musicians. Inspired by the crackles and pops of vinyl records, Marclay connected such sounds with what he believed to be the excess and waste of American culture.⁵⁴ In the United States, the Reagan administration aimed to bring an air of decadence back to the White House. The "big hair" aesthetic also coincided with this, reminiscent of the beehives of the 1950s and early 1960s – another neo-conservative anachronism which encouraged further consumerism. The proliferation of shopping malls, which reached their peak in the late 1980s, encouraged the everyday American to keep on buying more and more, especially after the recession of the early 1980s.⁵⁵

In a sense, found music and industrial music evoked a sense of "realism" that music listeners typically tried to ignore. Visual and performance artists proved they could work in tandem with musicians as a certain philosophy of struggle and need for self-expression and protest ran strong through each creative mind. In the 1980s, as the political and public spheres fully merged

⁵⁴ Molesworth, 28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

with the elections of the Televisual President and the Grocer's Daughter, musicians and participants of all things countercultural adjusted accordingly, knowing they would need something greater – a bigger sound, a more colorful image – to convey meaning and to effectively push back against those they deemed oppressive.

Coinciding with the rise of post-punk music came new wave and synthpop. The term “new wave” has been used by critics throughout music history to simply describe new waves of musical genres. In the 1980s, new wave possessed punk's dissatisfaction with the status quo – whether that be within the music scene itself or in the cultural and political realms – but with a more danceable beat.⁵⁶ New wave is commonly defined by what it was not, it was not consumerist although it was far more accessible than the harsh sound of genres such as industrial or the rage felt in punk rock. Tied to disco, new wave attempted to separate itself from the conventions of rock music.

Moreover, radio DJs aggressively programmed new wave as “modern music.” The implications of this programming were massive. Music historian Theo Cateforis argues that “modern” promised a better life and constantly looked toward the future.⁵⁷ Like other music movements such as punk rock which critiqued society, new wave appealed to the youth. For the sake of this research, “new wave” will hereafter refer to the synthesizer-oriented music that commonly embraced ironic and novel songwriting and was associated with the MTV generation. New wave reached both sides of the Atlantic; some new wave bands with politically conscious themes in their music included the ABC, Adam and the Ants, the Buggles, China Crisis, Depeche Mode, Heaven 17, Japan, Level 42, New Order, Pet Shop Boys, Ultravox, and many others.

⁵⁶ Cateforis, 20.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

Music Television, or MTV, is a television channel that launched on August 1, 1981. Appealing to teenagers and young adults, MTV aired music videos on programs hosted by VJs (video jockeys). The first image shown on the channel was a montage of the Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969, alluding that MTV, like the Apollo 11 mission, was one giant leap for mankind. The first music video to air on MTV was British duo the Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star."⁵⁸ While music videos previously existed, the launch of MTV truly galvanized the music video's place in music and popular culture. As televisions filled nearly every American home, musicians found another way to make an impact on their audience. Self-marketing became an art form. Almost prophetic, "Video Killed the Radio Star" showed the duo Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes in bright, space-age clothing hammering away on synthesizers, the instrument of the future. The song and music video both embodied the phrase "out with the old, in with the new." *The Age of Plastic*, the album from which "Video Killed the Radio Star" came, deals with themes of nostalgia and the possible negative aspects and concerns about modern technology. Geoff Downes described the album as "science fiction music. It's like modern psychedelic music. It's very futuristic."⁵⁹ MTV's impact was massive, spurring the Second British Invasion from 1982 to 1986 and reinventing the meaning of entertainment.

In England, many new wave musicians hailed from working class backgrounds. Many groups formed in Sheffield in the late 1970s to early 1980s (ABC, Heaven 17, and the Human League being the most notable). Sheffield is a heavily industrialized city in England and historically pro-Labour, thus there was anti-capitalist or at least capitalism-critical sentiment.⁶⁰ A

⁵⁸ "The 100 Greatest moments in Rock Music: The '80s," *Entertainment Weekly*, last modified May 28, 1999 <http://ew.com/article/1999/05/28/100-greatest-moments-rock-music-80s/>.

⁵⁹ Fred Deller, "Life with the Buggles," *Smash Hits*, February 1980, 32.

⁶⁰ Reynolds, 323.

similar movement occurred in Liverpool, England, another working-class industrial city from where artists such as China Crisis, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, and Frankie Goes to Hollywood emerged. With the election of Thatcher, the large-scale dismantling of worker unions and the slashing of state-provided benefits created an uproar.⁶¹ Ironically enough, it was glossy, image-oriented bands which heavily influenced musicians coming out of Sheffield. Martyn Ware of Heaven 17 recalled his first album by British glam rock band Roxy Music: “I remember [...] listening to it with the gatefold sleeve open, spread out on the floor. The entire atmosphere around the record was as important as the music. It all came together as a *piece of art*.”⁶² Also hailing from a working-class background, Roxy front man Bryan Ferry’s success inspired many others in Northern England to pursue music. Heaven 17’s *Penthouse and Pavement* and, to a lesser extent, *The Luxury Gap* albums were highly political and ironic albums with that glossy veneer characteristic of the new wave movement.

Most striking about the new wave movement in the 1980s, and what made it stand apart from its punk and post-punk predecessors, was the cohesion and “cleanliness” of the new wave aesthetic. Sheffield’s Heaven 17 was one of the B.E.F.’s (British Electric Foundation) projects. Martyn Ware created B.E.F. to serve as his own type of “production company.” Instead of the traditional band setup, B.E.F. became its own mini-corporation in which Ware held total creative and economic control over any projects created under the B.E.F. banner. Manager Bob Last remarked that this structure “was literally a partnership of shareholdings.”⁶³ Martyn Ware believed that the “pop artifice” achieved by allowing the records sound more heavily produced was more authentic than rock’s “pseudonaturalism,” which attempted to achieve a live sound in the studio.

⁶¹ Molesworth, 23.

⁶² Martyn Ware quoted in *Rip It Up and Start Again*, 87.

⁶³ Bob Last quoted in *Rip It Up and Start Again*, 322.

This pop artifice is evident in many other new wave records, many of which could be described as cold and empty due to this production method. Heaven 17 was B.E.F.'s first, and the most successful, major act, releasing their first album *Penthouse and Pavement* in 1981.

Heaven 17 wrote *Penthouse and Pavement*'s lead single, "(We Don't Need This) Fascist Groove Thang," on President Ronald Reagan. The song denounces Reagan as a fascist, drawing comparisons to Adolf Hitler and regarding him as the "fascist god in motion."⁶⁴ "Fascist Groove Thang" was heavily influenced by funk music, a trend popular among post-punk and new wave musicians at the time and would eventually reach mainstream popularity by the mid-1980s. BBC's Radio 1 banned the track and warned the band that their track libeled against the newly elected president.⁶⁵ Despite the ban, the song reached 45 on the UK singles chart and the album received a gold certification, peaking at 14 on the UK albums chart.⁶⁶

The rest of the album continues this straight-forward, extremely political theme. The title track satirizes and mocks the concept of upward mobility, "Geisha Boys and Temple Girls" deals with themes of imperialism and orientalism,⁶⁷ and "Let's All Make a Bomb" is about the creation and use of the atomic bomb.⁶⁷ An AllMusic Review states singer Glenn Gregory handled the "overtly leftwing political" lyrics without "seeming pretentious."⁶⁸ To a lesser extent, the group's second album *The Luxury Gap* deals with these themes, as well. Number One magazine describes their sophomore album's "stylish sound" as "pure nourishment for the feet, as well as for the head

⁶⁴ Heaven 17, "(We Don't Need That) Fascist Groove Thang."

⁶⁵ Martin Cloonan, *Banned!: Censorship of Popular music in Britain: 1967-1992*, (Farnam, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 1996), 117.

⁶⁶ "HEAVEN 17 | full Official Chart History," Official Charts Company, accessed October 21, 2017, <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/18889/heaven-17/>.

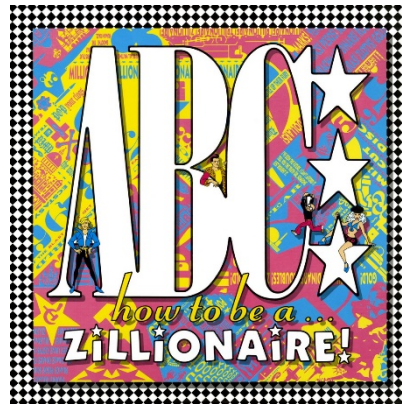
⁶⁷ Heaven 17, "Let's All Make a Bomb."

⁶⁸ Dan LeRoy, "Penthouse and Pavement | Heaven 17", *AllMusic*, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.allmusic.com/album/penthouse-and-pavement-mw0000194104/>.

and heart.”⁶⁹ The artificiality of a more produced sound and cultivated image was not unique just to Heaven 17 but represented an overall trend in new wave and synthpop in general as a response to and mockery of the accelerated consumer culture of the 1980s.



Penthouse and Pavement by Heaven 17



How to be a ... Zillionaire! by ABC



Wild Planet by the B-52's

When President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher began to use their methods of aggressive modernism, musicians and artists took notice of the reemergence of big hair and the pressure to spend. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher championed, as what the *New York Times* called, “austerity politics.” Facing a high deficit and soaring unemployment, Thatcher believed slashing government spending by more than ten percent while encouraging the British people to increase their own spending would put Great Britain back on track.⁷⁰ President Reagan in the United States encouraged a similar course of action and it appeared to work to some degree. For example, consumers not only spent more money on television but there were also more people owning televisions by the mid-1980s. While this is true, the allocation of funds toward more time-saving goods (such as takeout meals and telephone answering machines) as well as the increase of women in the workforce could indicate more of a problem than an improvement in the economy.⁷¹ To

⁶⁹ “Heaven 17 – Articles and reviews,” *Heaven 17 – The most complete archive*, last modified December 27, 2003, <http://www.heaven17.de/reviews/h17rev11.htm>.

⁷⁰ John Cassidy, “The Crumbling Case for Austerity Economics,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2013.

⁷¹ Maureen Boyle Gray, “Consumer spending on durables and services in the 1980’s,” *Monthly Labor Review* (May 1992), 23-25.

accommodate to the rapidly advancing, increasingly commercialized world, people needed to work more. Musicians felt the effect of this shift and responded to it through exaggeration and irony.

In his work *Are We Not New Wave?*, Theo Cateforis coins the term the “politics of irony.” The B-52’s provide a notable example of this with the women members’ “ridiculously oversized bouffant wigs” and style that clearly harks back to the 1950s and 1960s. Cateforis remarks that new wave’s ironic artificiality and references to the “ephemera” of pop culture cannot be taken literally or authentically but rather as “intentionally distanced acts designed to highlight the *strangeness* of the past as it is being playfully jerked into the present.”⁷² Just as the leaders of the West romanticize the past and attempt to roll back the progress made by countercultural movements of the 1970s and 1980s, new wavers do not seek to destroy or deconstruct the notion of the past. They wish to play with it and make a spectacle of the past and the increasing suburban culture of the decade.

Released in 1985, ABC’s *How to Be a ... Zillionaire!* album features four band members, Martin Fry, Mark White, Fiona Russell Powell (under the pseudonym, Eve), and David Yarritu. In actuality, Eve and Yarritu only served as a face for the band, providing little to no creative input or musicianship to the album itself. The cover of the album is plastered in various symbols, ranging from the United States flag to the Soviet hammer and sickle. Martin Fry remarks on the title track that he has “seen the future,” he “can’t afford it,” and that “someone just bought it.” For the song’s entirety, Fry pleads for the listener to tell him how to become a millionaire. In “Tower of London,” Fry not only mentions the fortress the Crown used as a prison for hundreds of years but also criticizes modern society in a city full of contradictions. Diplomats are performing target practice

⁷² Cateforis, 96.

in Saint James' Square while psychobillies "scream blue murder" on their way to the affluent district of Mayfair.⁷³ Everyone is pretending, playing a role disingenuous to who they truly are. This is similar to how many new wave musicians perform. The glossy façade is as inauthentic as can be, serving as a statement about the condition of Western politics. Nothing is genuine, and one must read between the lines before attaining the truth.

Another important new wave album is Depeche Mode's *Construction Time Again*, released in 1983. Heavily influenced by West Berlin industrial band Einstürzende Neubauten, the album incorporates jackhammer sounds and whip cracks, among other "found" sounds. It touches on themes of corporate greed and environmental disasters brought on by this greed. The album cover features a large, muscular man at the top of a mountain swinging a sledgehammer, reminiscent of socialist realistic art developed in the Soviet Union which commonly depicted the proletariat and celebrated their hard work.⁷⁴ While most artists using Soviet imagery may not actively support the USSR, the usage of these images in conjunction with socially conscious lyrics makes the musicians' message even more subversive and effective in response to an unsatisfactory society.

Moreover, Depeche Mode's 1984 release *Some Great Reward* features the song "People Are People," which was featured in the West German television coverage of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. The Soviet Union boycotted the Olympics that year in response to the United States led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. The USSR claimed the games became commercialized and that their athletes lacked security.⁷⁵ "People Are People" calls for the

⁷³ ABC, "Tower of London."

⁷⁴ Brian Griffith, photographer, "Construction Time Again," photograph (London: MUTE, 1983), <http://dmuniverse.com/62/depeche-mode-construction-time-again-cd-dvd.jpg>.

⁷⁵ Harold E. Wilson, "The golden opportunity: A Study of the Romanian manipulation of the Olympic Movement during the boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games," (doctoral thesis, Ohio State University, 1993), 65.

unity of people of “different colours” and “different creeds.”⁷⁶ Other themes in new wave include the fear of ignorance and complacency in the face of the barrage of information provided by ever-advancing technology. The band Oingo Boingo warns the listener of this in songs “Wake Up (It’s 1984)” and “Nothing to Fear.” While punk and post-punk rockers aggressively critiqued society, new wavers approached these issues more optimistically than their musical predecessors.

The last musical genre to be examined is mainstream pop produced by well-established musicians and which fared well on the charts of their respective countries. This category is broad and looks at wider musical trends and themes, not specific movements themselves. As new wave musicians invented the “politics of irony” in the early 1980s, with their hyper-manufactured image, clad in bright colors and wrapped in plastic, more mainstream artists incorporated this political irony in their music, as well. For example, British progressive rock (now pop) group Genesis released the single “Land of Confusion” from their *Invisible Touch* album in 1986. The declining popularity of progressive rock and the departure of lead singer Peter Gabriel forced Genesis to reinvent their image and thus refashioned themselves to appeal to a more conventional crowd. The cover of the single parodies the Beatles’ *With the Beatles* album released over 20 years prior with Genesis in puppet form on the cover instead of their real faces. “Land of Confusion” portrays the Reagans as foolish puppets, caricatures with exaggerated voices and body language.

The video opens with Ronald Reagan, Nancy Reagan, and a chimpanzee (referencing Reagan’s film *Bedtime for Bonzo*) in bed. Ronald Reagan kisses the chimpanzee good night and then falls asleep, having a nightmare which triggers the music video itself.⁷⁷ Full of references to Cold War enemies and events, the music video and song take a very Reagan-critical stance. Singer

⁷⁶ Depeche Mode, “People Are People.”

⁷⁷ Genesis, “Land of Confusion,” Filmed [1986], YouTube video, 5:30, posted [December 2010], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHmH1xQ2Pf4>.

Phil Collins pleads “Now this is the world we live in / And these are the hands we’re given / Use them and let’s start trying / To make it a place worth fighting for.”⁷⁸ The video received heavy airplay on MTV and peaked at #4 on the US *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and #14 on the UK Singles chart.⁷⁹ The video also received a Grammy Award for Best Concept Music Video, demonstrating its cultural impact.⁸⁰



Ronald Reagan, meaning to call for a nurse to fetch him a glass of water, accidentally calls for nuclear detonation instead.

War protest in music did not cease after the end of the 1970s nor did the fear of nuclear annihilation. Since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, anti-nuclear movements gained much traction with groups such as Greenpeace, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service. Additionally, the fear caused by the 1979 Three Mile Island accident and the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, further exacerbated Cold War tensions. This anxiety is felt in songs such as David Bowie’s “Time Will Crawl,” released in 1987, directly influenced by the Chernobyl disaster. The song addresses the dangers of pollution and irreversible environmental destruction.⁸¹ Other songs dealing with anti-nuclear and anti-war themes include “Games Without Frontiers” by Peter Gabriel (1980), “Enola Gay” by Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, “Army Dreamers” by Kate Bush (1981), “99 Luftballons” by Nena

⁷⁸ Genesis, “Land of Confusion.”

⁷⁹ “Official Singles Chart Top 100: 28 December 1986 – 03 January 1987,” Official Charts Company, accessed October 18, 2017, <http://www.officialcharts.com/charts/singles-chart/19861228/7501/>.

⁸⁰ “Genesis Awards,” *AllMusic*, accessed October 18, 2017, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/genesis-mn0000199995/awards>.

⁸¹ David Bowie, ? ... The Interview, EMI America SPRO-79112, 1987, vinyl record.

(1983), “Die Wüste lebt” by Peter Schilling (1983), “Dancing with Tears in My Eyes” by Ultravox (1983), “Hammer to Fall” by Queen (1984), “Russians” by Sting (1985), and “Manhattan Project” by Rush (1985). These artists span many genres from new wave to art rock to progressive rock and so on, demonstrating how widespread the fear of war and mutually assured destruction between East and West truly was.

The question still lingers: What did these defiant rockers and musicians truly amount to? Could music truly spark rebellion and revolution, contrary to the musings of the Clash’s “Revolutionary Rock,” and be something more than a way to vent frustrations? Through rapidly advancing technology, the world was at nearly everyone’s fingertips by the mid-1980s. On July 13, 1985, the world’s largest concert took place: Live Aid. Broadcasted to over one and a half billion people in 150 countries worldwide, founders Bob Geldof (of the band the Boomtown Rats) and Midge Ure (Ultravox) teamed up to raise money to aid famine victims in Ethiopia. The concert generated \$67 million, proving that music was capable of massive fundraising and turning the average person’s focus from inward out toward a greater goal.⁸² Although Live Aid was certainly not the first benefit concert, Live Aid became the largest and most influential. The concert helped further meld the public and private spheres together and showed that music and popular culture could not be separated from politics.

Following the charity singles, “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” (penned by Geldof and Ure) and “We Are the World” (by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie) released earlier in 1985, Live Aid utilized massive screen projections and television broadcasting to spread the humanitarian message around the world. Writing prior to the event, journalist George Hackett

⁸² Bradford Martin, *The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011), 71.

highlights that Live Aid producer Michael Mitchell's aim was to "use television to catalyze the world."⁸³ Historian Bradford Martin argues that "Live Aid paved the way for new constituencies, exposing young music fans to political issues" and "opened up space for cultural events to broad politics."⁸⁴ No previous event accomplished this feat on such a grand scale before. More mega-events soon followed. These included: Farm Aid, the Sun City project (Artists United Against Apartheid), and Amnesty International's Conspiracy of Hope concerts.⁸⁵ Journalist Robert Hilburn claimed celebrities and rock stars were historically difficult to trust, but now they intermingled with politics and charitable causes. In a time when England was rife with political unrest and uncertainty, Live Aid brought a sense of optimism.⁸⁶ While the public's political consciousness grew because of Live Aid, many criticisms of the concert persist even after thirty years.

To begin, many believed Live Aid was not as effective as its organizers contended. Music journalist Greil Marcus argued Live Aid was more about boosting the stardom of the performing musicians than about providing relief for the famine victims.⁸⁷ Organizer Bill Graham recognized that even if there was no famine, a concert of such a massive scale would still sell just as many tickets. The event also carefully appealed to clean-cut corporate types in the middle-age demographic. Producer Michael Mitchell knew that if they appealed to 18-year-olds, they would not raise as much money; thus, appealing to a more privileged demographic worked in Live Aid's

⁸³ George Hackett, "Banding Together for Africa," *Newsweek*, July 15, 1985.

⁸⁴ Martin, 71.

⁸⁵ Neal Ullestad, "Rock and rebellion: subversive effects of Live Aid and 'Sun City'," *Popular Music* 6, no. 1, (January 1987): 67

⁸⁶ Robert Hilburn, "Live Aid Aftermath: Rock Goes Good Guy – The Rebels emerge as a positive force," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 21, 1985.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

favor.⁸⁸ Live Aid organizers saw the massive amounts of corporate sponsorship as a necessary evil. Despite the audience's intentions, Geldof's vision was still to help those in Ethiopia.

The last major critique of Live Aid regarded how its fundraising was used. Bob Geldof promised one hundred percent of the money received by the Band Aid foundation would go directly to Africa.⁸⁹ The \$67 million raised during "Rock's Night of Glory"⁹⁰ did not fully make its way to Ethiopian famine victims. In *Spin's* 1986 exposé, the atrocities possibly directed funded by Live Aid came to light. Most of these famines in Ethiopia were entirely man-made by government planes napalming rebel farms, contradicting previously reported information claiming droughts caused the famines. A certain proportion of this money went straight to Derg (Ethiopian Communist junta) chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam and his army to purchase weapons instead of food and supplies for famine victims.⁹¹ Another article released by the BBC alleges that upwards of 90-95% of Live Aid funds did not reach the victims. The truthfulness of this article is in question as the BBC further investigated these claims after the Band Aid Trust filed a formal complaint against BBC's Andrew Whitehead's article.⁹² Though some of these claims may be exaggerated, acknowledging the flaws of coordinating such a mega-event helps to pave away to more effective benefits in the future. Regardless of this controversy, it is important to note that only a decade or two prior to Live Aid, musicians would not have such impact or reach. The usage of emotional political imagery and modern technology allowed for these musicians-turned-politicians to create a platform to effectively exact change in a way that even the government could not.

⁸⁸ Samuel G. Freedman, "Live Aid and the Woodstock Nation" *New York Times*, July 18, 1985.

⁸⁹ Esther B. Fein, "Stands and Phone Lines Jammed for Aid Concert," *New York Times*, July 14, 1985.

⁹⁰ Robert Hilburn, "Ending Hunger: Now that we can, we must" *Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1985.

⁹¹ Robert Keating, "Live Aid: The Terrible Truth," *Spin*, July 1986.

⁹² Peter Horrocks and Andrew Whitehead, "Bob, Band Aid and how the rebels bought their arms," BBC, March 6, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2010/03/ethiopia.html>.

Live Aid's global impact is without comparison. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, musicians took the opportunity to celebrate the fall of Communism and the reunification of Germany. Just prior to the fall, Bruce Springsteen performed in East Germany to a crowd of three hundred thousand people in 1988. Though the East German government sought to ease tensions by allowing one of the most famous American musicians to play, Springsteen's presence only further exacerbated the East Germans' need to be free. Present at the concert, Jörg Beneke claimed "it was a nail in the coffin for East Germany."⁹³ Soon thereafter, Pink Floyd's Roger Waters performed the band's album, *The Wall*, in Berlin in 1990. Additionally, Waters performed "The Tide is Turning (After Live Aid)" from his 1987 album *Radio K.A.O.S.* at the concert, closing the concert on an optimistic note. The song questions the primacy of East and West and notes that the "satellite's confused" because the "airwaves were full of compassion and light."⁹⁴ The Cold War ended, and a sense of optimism filled the hearts of the world.

Lastly, the effects of Western pop music were felt as distantly as Eastern Europe and Russia. Just as rock 'n' roll in the U.S. and U.K. became the primary voice of the youth in the 1950s and 1960s, rock made it past the Iron Curtain and was celebrated by Soviet youth. Early Soviet rock bands fashioned themselves after popular Western groups. Young people in the Eastern Bloc celebrated leisure, sex (through innuendo) and the "freedom of movement (of one's body)," according to historian Jonathyne Briggs.⁹⁵ Rock music often conflicted with both the Communist ideals of the East but also the more liberal ideals of the West. In 1983, Konstantin Chernenko, member of the ruling Politburo, claimed this Western influence was an attempt by the

⁹³ Kate Connolly, "The night Bruce Springsteen played East Berlin – and the wall cracked," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/jul/05/bruce-springsteen-east-germany-berlin-wall>.

⁹⁴ Roger Waters, "The Tide is Turning (After Live Aid)."

⁹⁵ Jonathyne Briggs, "Is Eastern Youth Culture So Different from the West?" in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc*, ed. William J. Risch (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 269.

“enemy” to “[try to] exploit youthful psychology.”⁹⁶ In Moscow, leadership forced discothèques to ban dancing and that Soviet music played through the speakers instead of popular hits from the West. Before his death, President Leonid Brezhnev relaxed authoritative control over the arts and did not believe rock culture posed a significant threat. His successor, Yuri Andropov felt a return to orthodoxy was in order.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, not even authoritarian regimes could tame such a movement. Similar to the effects of rock ‘n’ roll on Western youth, music allowed young people of the Eastern Bloc to create a sense of community and identity outside of the grips of Communism.

By the mid-1980s, the popularity of Western groups waned in the East and Soviet rock groups proliferated. Though influenced by the West, these musicians began to pen songs dealing with real social and political problems on the domestic front instead of imitating their Western idols. The documentary “Is it Easy to Be Young?” shows young people at a concert in Latvia and, according to journalist William Echikson, none of them appear to be interested in Communism. Declining numbers in youth Communist Party enrollment appear to correlate with Echikson’s claims. Much music from the East was hard and biting; some even criticized Soviet military policy. Hungarian group Public Enemy faced a prison sentence for singing the lyrics “Russian Nukes are no Nukes; They are here to caress you.”⁹⁸ The fears and disillusionment of ruling powers felt by the citizens of countries in both the East and West prove that perhaps both sides are not quite as different as they may appear.

Soon enough, state-sponsored VIAs (Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles) appeared everywhere. Soviet authorities accepted that Western style music would not disappear from the

⁹⁶ James Mitchell, “Rock is rolled out of Soviet discos” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 5, 1983.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ William Echikson, “E. Europe rock keeps youth dancing – and officials on toes,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 16, 1987.

airwaves; thus, they installed these VIAs in places such as BAM (Baikal-Amur Mainline) Railway construction sites. The state believed that if it could produce bands with a similar sound and image to those of the West, it could isolate the people from further, more “harmful” Western influence. The government allowed some Western artists such as Elton John to perform concerts under strict regulation. This was ultimately not a success, the harsh regulatory laws simply pushed musicians further underground. People held informal concerts in apartments and as VIAs were not allowed to express the disillusionment felt by the workers on the BAM, said workers staged protests and circulated *magnitizdat* (illegal recordings – especially of rock music) in work zones.⁹⁹

Soviet Russian music also made its way to the West. California record producer Joanna Stingray released a double album set of music by four Leningrad bands titled *Red Wave*. Stingray wrote on the album that she “brought their music to the West in hope of creating better understanding between people. MUSIC HAS NO BORDERS!”¹⁰⁰ Though many Communist leaders saw pop and rock music of the West as bourgeois decadence and in direct conflict with the ideals of Socialist Realism, the truth is that popular music is not completely antithetical to Communism. Just as musical stylings evolved throughout the 1980s in the West as a reaction to the changing political culture of the decade, so too did music in the East.

Constantly on the brink of nuclear destruction, tensions were at an all-time high during the Cold War. Countries fought wars on a micro-level, instead of duking it out on a grander scale. By the 1980s, the Cold War began to wind down, but nevertheless Western leaders feared the spread of Communism and the East feared capitalistic, bourgeois influence. Instead of a large-scale war between the United States and its allies against the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc, small,

⁹⁹ Briggs, 280.

¹⁰⁰ Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Block*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 233.

indirect conflicts took place and both sides engaged in a war of ideas and propaganda. Popular music produced during this time perfectly encapsulated both the hopes and concerns of the 1980s. In the West, the United States of America, England, and West Germany took full advantage of the technological options available and released an astronomical amount of creative output.

Leaders of the West, especially U.S. President Ronald Reagan and U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher looked back on the past through rose-tinted glasses. In their administration, they sought to evoke a sense of nostalgia and to right the wrongs brought on by the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s. This gave way to a large leftist response, seen in many songs and albums produced during the time. Like Reagan and Thatcher, musicians looked to the past; however, popular music aimed to *deconstruct* Western culture's immediate past in response, not allow for its return.

Thus, the fusion of the public sphere with the political and cultural spheres was solidified. While image was always a concern for musicians, the advancement of technology such as the introduction of MTV, the increased affordability of recording equipment, and the improvement of television broadcasting technology, allowed for musicians to become even more like politicians and broadcast their message on a grand scale. By examining movements such as post-punk, industrial, and new wave and general trends in mainstream pop music, one can better understand how politics influences culture and how culture, and music specifically, can effect change on a worldwide scale. Contrary to what the Clash claim in the satirical "Revolution Rock," music is a powerful tool and can spark its own kind of revolution.

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