

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

MIXING POP AND POLITICS

a study of political pop music in Britain in the 1980s

A Pro Gradu Thesis

by

Sari Kytölä

Department of English

2000

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
ENGLANNIN KIELEN LAITOS

Sari Kytölä

MIXING POP AND POLITICS

a study of political pop music in Britain in the 1980s

Pro gradu -työ

Englantilainen filologia

Helmikuu 2000

74 sivua

Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää kuinka popmusiikin avulla kuvaillaan 1980-luvun englantilaista yhteiskuntaa. Tutkielmassa on analysoitu 42 lauluntekstiä ajalta, jolloin Margaret Thatcher toimi Ison Britannian pääministerinä. Tavoitteena on selvittää, kuinka totuudenmukaisen kuvan laulut antavat yhteiskunnasta. Materiaali koostuu laulujen teksteistä, lauluntekijöistä kertovista teoksista ja historian teoksista. Tutkielmassa kuvataan myös sitä, miten popmusiikki muuttui poliittiseksi.

Tutkielman aihepiirit on valittu lauluista yleisimmin löytyneistä aiheista. Näitä ovat vallankäyttäjät, työväenyhdistykset, yhteiskunnan sosiaaliset ongelmat sekä kaksi suurpaa kriisiä ulkopoliittikan alueella, Falklandin sota ja Pohjois-Irlannin tilanne. Analysoidut laulut käsittelevät poliittisia aiheita, kuvailevat muutoksia yhteiskunnassa, paneutuvat päivittäiseen elämään ja ihmisten tunteisiin. Laulujen antamat mielikuvat yhteiskunnasta ovat hyvin realistisia ja paljastavia. Joissain teksteissä näkyy laulunkirjoittajan vihaisuus ja turhautuminen. Toisissa taas laulun tarkoitusta on haettava taustoista. Popmusiikin tekijät ovat käyttäneet parhaiten hallitsemaansa taitoaan pyrkimyksissään vaikuttaa yhteiskuntaan ja ihmisten mielipiteisiin. Poliittisen popmusiikin suosio juuri 1980-luvun Britanniassa kertoo paljon maan yhteiskunnallisesta tilanteesta ja ihmisten asenteista.

Asiasanat: pop music, rock media, working class values

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. THE PEOPLE IN POWER.....	9
1.1 Songs about Margaret Thatcher and her politics.....	9
1.2 Songs about the royal family.....	19
2. SUPPORT FOR TRADE UNIONS AND MINERS' STRIKE....	24
3. CRITICISM OF DOMESTIC POLITICS.....	31
3.1 Ills in the society.....	31
3.2 Unemployment.....	39
3.3 Rioting.....	42
3.4 Racism.....	48
4. CRITICISM OF FOREIGN POLICY.....	55
4.1 The Falkland War.....	55
4.2 Northern Ireland.....	60
CONCLUSION.....	67
PRIMARY SOURCES:	
Records.....	71
SECONDARY SOURCES:	
Bibliography.....	74

INTRODUCTION

Rock and roll has been political right from the start. It started as the music of the black people, as rhythm and blues, but was spread into everybody's awareness in the 1950s by people like Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran, Little Richard, and Chuch Berry. It was a great shock for many because it was loud and fast, it had 'jungle beat', and it had a power to arouse and excite young people.

In the 1930s and 1940s folk songs were clearly used as a political force. The greatest folk hero, Woody Guthrie, raised money for the dustbowl refugees in the 1940s and he toured the migrant workers' camps. He made songs from emotional praises to protests, like :`This Land Is Your Land', `Pastures To Plenty', `Union Maid', and `Deportees'. Another respected 'founding father' of folk music is Pete Seeger. He has made music for five decades and has spent his life singing for a vast array of causes, from civil rights to anti-war, anti-apartheid, and anti-nuclear campaigns, the new Latin America song movement, and ecology (Denselow, 1989:5). In 1948 Pete Seeger supported the Progressive Party, and the presidential campaign of Henry Wallace. He toured with a black singer Paul Robeson and they were faced with angry attacks and crowds. Seeger's `If I Had A Hammer' could not be performed in many places, because the lyrics were considered highly controversial. Fifteen years later the song became a popular nightclub favourite, performed by Trini Lopez, and sold 4.5 million copies all over the world (Denselow, 1989:13). This is a perfect example of how political songs can be so tied to their original context that their messages turn weak or even meaningless later on. On the other hand, they can also be vague and have less initial impact but they may last longer.

In Britain, there were artists like Tommy Steele, who used the American folk and blues music as their model, but the political aspect was left out of the songs. Ewan MacColl was an exception. He had sang and acted in political street theatre in the depressed north-west, written songs for the

mass trespass on the moors in the 1930s, and tramped across Britain as a political songwriter and experimental dramatist (Denselow, 1989:18). During his career he has written songs for the striking miners and against apartheid and some of his work has been censored by record companies. In the 1980s, when political pop music was used again as a powerful form of expression, Ewan MacColl's work has been recognized. In January, 1985, his seventieth birthday was celebrated with a concert at London's Festival Hall and the miners' leader, Arthur Scargill, presented him with a miner's lamp. A year later he appeared at the Royal Albert Hall, at the Heroes concert to mark the anniversary of the ending of the miners' strike. In events like these British pop and folk music could find a common political cause.

By the 1960s pop music had become a growing business, and the artists had to deal with commerce and fashion. Gradually, musicians disengaged themselves from civil rights campaigns, and those still politically active began to switch their attention to the Vietnam war and to individual freedom. The 'Flower Power' and the global 'love messages' of the hippie era deliberately turned away from politics. In Britain, the Labour Party had won the elections of the 1964 ending the Conservative rule that had lasted for thirteen years. The new government of Harold Wilson was faced with a new phenomenon, pop music was fast becoming Britain's best-known export, thanks to the Beatles. When the band was awarded MBEs in 1965 it also improved the government's image in relating to the young. Nevertheless, British pop music became distanced from party politics and increasingly hostile to the whole system. There were protests about government's part in the growing nuclear arms race in Aldermaston and battles with the unions were sympathized and followed with interest (Denselow: 1989:92.)

Ray Davies, the singer and the songwriter of the Kinks, was bravely unfashionable to remind the people about poverty in Britain in his song 'Dead End Street', and dealt with the destruction of the English countryside, or the plight of the aristocracy under a Labour government.

He also produced the first anti-union pop song, 'Get Back In Line', written about the powers of the American unions and about the individual fighting against the harrassment of the authority (Denselow, 1989:95).

In 1971 the Conservatives were back in power. Edward Heath took over from Wilson between 1970 and 1974. In this era, Bob Marley was the inspirer of the new British political pop. He invaded the western pop world with a new musical culture, reggae music from the Caribbean. Many people had emigrated to Britain from the West Indies. They were attracted by their new rights provided by the 1948 Nationality Act, and there were many recruitment campaigns by London Transport and British Hotels and Restaurants Association. Naturally, they were soon also facing racism. Racism had been a strong issue in British politics since the forming of the National Front in 1967. Enoch Powell, a right-wing MP, who argued for a stop to immigration, was largely supported, since the economic situation in Britain had been weakening and unemployment figures were rising. In 1976 the issues were handled violently with riots in many major cities in Britain. Some musicians, like Eddy Grant, attacked furiously Powell's remarks while others, like Eric Clapton, voiced racist views. In 1976, he announced on stage in Birmingham, that he agreed with Enoch Powell, and that all the immigrants should be sent home. By stating an opinion on such a highly controversial matter publicly, he was remembered for a long time and was not asked to play on benefit concerts with racial messages like The Nelson Mandela shows or Rock Against Racism.

Punk music in the late 1970s was energetic, furious music played by mostly untalented young people who had nothing else to do. It was political music in its concept and language. It was full of cries of anarchy and it attacked even the Queen on her Silver Jubilee. Despite being banned from the radio 'God Save The Queen' by the Sex Pistols reached number two in the British charts. The punks used swastika symbols and needles, dressed in teared up clothes, used black make-up an dyed their hair. All this was done in order to shock people. The

attitudes and the messages of the punk bands were varying, and most of them hated their rivals. Therefore the punk phenomenon did not last very long and the music makers were finding new, calmer ways of dealing with political issues. Rock Against Racism (RAR) was formed in order to stop the National Front and to prevent pop music being used as a racist medium. (Denselow, 1989:142.) This kind of development of awareness in the music business led to the formation of many politically orientated bands and songwriters. Their roles changed from plain entertainers to informants.

In my thesis I will examine the lyrics of the British pop songs made in 1980s, during Margaret Thatcher's era, when political pop music suddenly became popular and started to sell well. I will investigate how society is portrayed in the lyrics and whether they have points in common with real life. In order to do so I will compare actual events with the song lyrics bearing in mind that lyrics may overreact and exaggerate things in order to be more effective. The themes that I have chosen are the most frequent ones found in the songs. I will also discuss whether the musicians are trying to influence their audience and perhaps even the people in power.

The present thesis is divided into four major parts. The first part will concentrate on the personalities of the leaders, Margaret Thatcher and the royals, and how they received quite different treatments in the pop lyrics. The second part of my thesis will discuss the major conflict which the conservatives were facing with the antiunion legislation and the miners' strike which gained a lot of support from the musicians. These incidents made many musicians take a stand on politics and eventually led them to support the Labour Party. The third part of the thesis will deal with domestic politics and the ills found in society. Songwriters concentrated mostly on poor living conditions, inequalities, and the unemployment problem, since these were the issues that concerned the young people. I will also include rioting and racism in this part because

they are the outcome of the poorly organized social politics. The last part of the thesis will concentrate on foreign politics and on the two biggest conflicts Margaret Thatcher was faced with during her career, namely the Falkland War and the situation in the Northern Ireland. I have chosen these particular themes because they portray British society in the 1980s and reveal a great deal of the problems that the people were faced with.

The thesis is based on over 300 British pop songs written during the 1980s. Political views can be found in all of them but the 42 songs that I will analyze more closely best describe the most frequently appearing political and social issues that were sung about in the 1980s. As a comparison to Margaret Thatcher and the way she was treated in the song lyrics I have also included the royal family in the first section about the people in power in order to point out how little there were songs about the royal family and how politely they were treated by the musicians. These selected songs are also easy to interpret, because the messages in them are stated clearly. As secondary sources I have used biographies that give useful background information on the songwriters and the songs, books about political pop music, and books about British society in the 1980s in order to be able to compare the actual social or political situation with the songlyrics.

The 1980s was a new era for political pop music in Britain. Rock Against Racism tours were well received and other tours with social causes, benefit records and benefit concerts became popular. Pop lyrics seemed to have a new purpose in giving both information and guidance for the young. The songs were such a strong weapon that the Labour Party started to use them in their campaigns, and the Red Wedge formation, which was created by pop musicians, was clearly supporting the Labour Party. To study songlyrics is interesting, because they reveal such information of society that cannot be found in the media. They tell us about reality, usually through the eyes of an individual and about how things affect his or her life. The stories they tell are seldom real ones but of the kind that the listener can relate to. The messages in the songs are

either explicit or hidden between the lines. Finding these hidden messages requires some background information. The interpretation of a song, however, always lies in the mind of the listener and therefore a song may have lots of interpretations. To study song lyrics is an important task also because in them you can find such information about society that cannot be found elsewhere, for example in history books. They tell you how things are being run and who decides to where the country is going. They also picture the life of an individual and give guidance and support to people who are suffering. They separate the right from wrong and encourage the listener to think that way too. In short, they have a curious power to influence people. You can sing to a song without thinking about the lyrics until they “hit you” and the song receives a new meaning. News is forgotten in a few weeks but songs can be played for years and years and their messages remain.

1. THE PEOPLE IN POWER

1.1 Songs about Margaret Thatcher and her politics

Margaret Thatcher was an easy target for songwriters. Her position as the leader of the country was difficult. As a strongminded woman, she annoyed many people in her government and among the public. Her ideas, policies, personality or her methods were not approved. To the public she seemed bourgeois and sounded stilted and severe. She was blamed for tyranny and dogmatism in her leadership. Her "I'm always right"- attitude irritated many people. There were jokes about her in the media on how she lived on vitamins and black coffee and relaxed by taking electric baths. Her character was also central in many politically orientated TV comedy series, such as *Spitting Image*. Many songwriters referred to her using only the word "She", and the listeners knew immediately who was meant.

Margaret Thatcher's career as a Prime Minister started in 1979. In music business punk music was fading away, but the style of lyrics began to develop into a more socially conscious one. Pop musicians in Britain started to take a stand and speak out their opinions about politics. For example, the Housemartins were a witty politically orientated band, who made songs about the government, the Prime Minister, the royalty and the authorities. In a song called 'Freedom' they attack the conservatives and the media:

From the front page news to the interviews
 It's sink the red and lift the blues
 They pretend their different points of view
 But it's really only different shades of blue
 So this is freedom?
 I doubt their truth.

(The Housemartins, 'Freedom' in 1986)

Here the song blames the media for supporting the conservatives and not staying independent. It questions the truth presented by the media and asks where the freedom of expression is. The song itself is a fast, happy tune, like most of the songs by the Housemartins, and its political content is easily missed because of the cheerfulness of the song. However, the band never tried to hide their political orientation. Not only was it apparent in the lyrics but also in interviews and in concerts where they spoke out their left-wing views. This kind of political support never seemed to harm their popularity.

Also Billy Bragg has made many politically critical songs. In his song 'Ideology' he is attacking the government and Margaret Thatcher and making suggestions on how things could be better.

When one voice rules the nation
 Just because they're top of the pile
 Doesn't mean their vision is the clearest
 The voices of the people
 Are falling on deaf ears
 Our politicians all become careerists
 They must declare their intrests
 But not their company cars
 Is there more to a seat in Parliament
 Than sitting on your arse
 And the best of all this bad bunch
 Are shouting to be heard
 Above the sound of ideologies clashing

The first verse is about how "one voice", the conservatives, are ruling the country and how politicians are no longer interested in promoting their voters' issues but only their own. They no longer listen to their voters, but have become "careerists" enjoying their privileges and their self-imposed image of importance. Billy Bragg questions whether there is "more to a seat in Parliament than sitting on your arse", what else there is hidden behind the scenes. In the end of the verse the singer describes the Parliament session and its ridiculous way of dealing with issues by shouting.

Outside the patient millions
 Who put them into power
 Expect a little more back for their taxes
 Like school, beds in hospital
 And peace in our bloody time
 All they get is old men grinding axes
 Who've built their private fortunes
 On the things they can rely
 The Courts, the secret handshake
 The Stock Exchange and the old school tie
 For God and Queen and Country
 All things they justify
 Above the sound of ideologies clashing
 God bless the Civil Service
 The nations saving grace
 While we expect democracy
 They're laughing in our face
 And although our cries get louder
 Their laughter gets louder still
 Above the sound of ideologies clashing

(Billy Bragg, 'Ideology' in 1986)

The song continues with a description of what the people really want and what the society needs. It also mentions the needless war of the Falklands. What the people in power do, according to Bragg, is to concentrate on building their private fortunes by secret deals. The end of the song blames the people in power for forgetting democracy and the people they are representing.

Elvis Costello blames Margaret Thatcher for using people to promote her own political career in his song 'Tramp The Dirt Down'.

I saw a newspaper picture from the political campaign
 A woman was kissing a child, who was obviously in pain
 She spills with compassion, as that young child's
 Face in her hands she cries
 Can you imagine all that greed and avarice
 Coming down on that child's lips

The song begins with a description of a photograph where Margaret Thatcher is holding a child in pain. Thatcher's expression is full of

compassion, but the songwriter argues that it is really greed and avarice that is "spilled" on the child's face. She cannot see the pain on the child's face. The song continues with a wish that the songwriter would be able to see the day of Thatcher's death.

Well I hope I don't die too soon
 I pray the Lord my soul to save
 Oh I'll be a good boy, I'm trying so hard to behave
 Because there's one thing I know,
 I'd like to live long enough to savour
 That's when they finally put you in the ground
 I'll stand on your grave and tramp the dirt down

The hatred the songwriter is expressing in this verse towards Margaret Thatcher is unbelievable. He calls her dirt, he wishes for her death, and wants to visit her grave in order to tramp it down. The song continues by describing Thatcher's actions and explains where this hatred comes from.

When England was the whore of the world
 Margaret was her madam
 And the future looked as bright as clear as
 The black tar macadam
 Well I hope that she sleeps well at night,
 Isn't haunted by every tiny detail
 'Cos when she held that lovely face in her hands
 All she thought of was betrayal

Here the songwriter clearly states his opinion about Thatcher's foreign policy. He claims that "England was the whore of the world" meaning the special relationship that Britain had with the USA. The Government was supporting the USA, both in good and bad, and spending loads of money in defence costs. "The tiny details" in the song refers to the people in Britain and to the poor economical situation of the country.

And now the cynical ones say that it all ends
 The same in the long run
 Try telling that to the desperate father who just
 Squeezed the life from his only son
 And how it's only voices in your head

And dreams you never dreamt
 Try telling him the subtle difference between
 Justice and contempt
 Try telling me she isn't angry
 With this pitiful discontent
 When they flaunt it in your face as you
 Line up for punishment
 And then expect you to say "Thank you"
 Straighten up, look proud and pleased
 Because you've got the symptoms
 You haven't got the whole disease
 Just like a schoolboy, whose head's like a tin-can
 Filled up with dreams then poured down the drain
 Try telling to the both sides
 Being blown bits or beaten and maimed
 Who takes all the glory and none of the shame

The songwriter continues the song by describing different individuals at the time of desperation where justice and governmental actions cannot be reasoned with. The song indicates that Margaret Thatcher could not accept this discontent people were expressing and that people should be punished for doing so, and that they should afterwards thank her for it, as if this discontent could be cured. The song ends with a picture of the mindlessness of war and fighting, where people were being sacrificed and Margaret Thatcher was taking the glory for it.

Well I hope you live long now
 I pray the Lord your soul to keep
 I think I'll be going before we fold our arms
 And start to weep
 I never thought for a moment that human life
 Could be so cheap
 'Cos when they finally put you in the ground
 They'll stand there laughing
 And tramp the dirt down

(Elvis Costello, 'Tramp The Dirt Down' in 1989)

The songwriter reminds the listeners of Thatcher's values and expects that there will be others too waiting for her death. The song clearly indicates how cold and feelingless Margaret Thatcher's politics were. According to the song, she was only using people and was not able to

see their anguish and despair. People were only a means of giving her a positive self-image and at the same time, she expected that people should only be grateful of her. The end of the song describes where this kind of behaviour leads to. People will eventually treat you just like you treat them.

Elvis Costello was not the only one to make songs about the death of Margaret Thatcher. Also Morrissey recorded a song called 'Margaret On The Guillotine' in 1988. He felt that the Government was preventing people from forming their own opinions. He also went in the extreme in his statements. In an interview Morrissey said: "The only thing that could possibly save British politics would be Margaret Thatcher's assassination." After this statement he was swamped by telephone calls from the British press asking him what he would do if a fan went out and shot Mrs Thatcher. "Well, I'd obviously marry this person" was his answer which the press would not print. "They're not interested in that view", Morrissey said. (Robertson, 1988:38.)

Some of the statements in the songs were so strong that the BBC banned them, in the same way as they had done in 1970s with Paul McCartney's song 'Give Ireland Back To The Irish', for example. In the early 1980s, the Beat's 'Stand Down Margaret' was suppressed from the national radio, and in 1985 the Fine Young Cannibals were treated the same way with their single 'Blue'. According to Roland Gift, the singer and songwriter of the band, the song was about falling out of love with the Government (Edge, 1991:41).

My hometown is falling down, I'm mad about that
 And the people there don't seem to care, I'm mad about that
 Good God almighty, there's no denying
 Life would be better if I never ever had to live with you
 Blue, it's a colour so cruel

(The Fine Young Cannibals, 'Blue' in 1985)

The song was an attack on the Conservatives. Banning it, like so many

other political songs, frustrated Roland Gift: "It's indicative of the way things are going in England at the moment. There is a definite repression of free speech and access to information. And now you have a situation where someone like Elvis Costello is banned from live television because he slags off Margaret Thatcher. It's sad and very sickening." (Edge, 1991:83).

A band called the Blow Monkeys dedicated their album to Mrs Thatcher in 1987 by calling it 'She Was A Grocer's Daughter'. The album consists of many songs in which Margaret Thatcher's politics are criticised. The title refers to Mrs Thatcher's father, Alfred Robert Thatcher, who was a manager of a small store and a Methodist lay preacher. Later he was a school governor. The album was released just before the election. 'The Day After You', a duet of the Blow Monkeys and the soul legend Curtis Mayfield, was released as a single from that album. However, the band had to withdraw the single and release it again four days after the election because none of the major radio stations would have played any critical songs in the sensitive pre-election period (Denselow, 1989:229).

Everybody says that the country's in a mess
And that soon will come the day.
But she's making plans to stay, plans to stay.

It'll soon be nine and can't believe
That people behave so graciously
It's been eight long years in the wilderness.

(The Blow Monkeys, 'The Day After You' in 1987)

The song itself was giving hints about how people should be voting. The country had had to suffer from Margaret Thatcher's policies, "the wilderness", for eight years, and the people should be wanting a change in power. In another song from that album 'Checking Out' Dr. Robert, the singer and songwriter of the Blow Monkeys, asked Margaret Thatcher straightforwardly to withdraw from politics:

If she gets in again

Well, people, that would be the end

You should say I'm running
But I've seen this coming

You could make my day
But you choose to stay

(The Blow Monkeys, 'Checking Out' in 1987)

The songwriter was also making suggestions about how things will come to an end if Margaret Thatcher will be re-elected. The same theme also continued in a song 'How Long Can A Bad Thing Last':

How long can a bad thing last
This is what people should ask
If you're feeling down, get your vote to cast
How long, been going on for too long

A woman I know makes a living out of this
And the sad thing is that the victims don't resist
You can take it or leave it or fake it or put it down
But believe me it's a bad day brother when you're not around
(So get up and find out how things could be)
Are you making fun of me, are you making fun of me
(So wake up and make up your mind to be free)
Ooh there's that woman on the TV

So get up, get up and go
You gotta, you gotta make her stand down
She's gotta, she's gotta move on
Been going, been going on for too long
How Long! can she go on
We gotta make her stand down

(The Blow Monkeys, 'How Long Can A Bad Thing Last' in 1987)

The Blow Monkeys were once again urging people to vote against Margaret Thatcher. There was also a terrible realisation in the song about how Thatcher was making money out of her politics and people were not reacting to that, "the victims don't resist".

It was a real concern for many artists, such as the Blow Monkeys, that the young people were not voting at all in the elections. They thought that the only way to get rid of the conservative government was to wake up the young and make them vote. Therefore, the musicians started to encourage people to vote.

If we don't move - the move's our last
We deprive ourselves of our only chance

You've got the choice, for what it's worth
You know a third term's gonna cost the earth

The power that you need is in your hands
Or a one party state is how we'll stand
Every vote is our hopes lost
Make it your decision and your cross
X marks the spot, that could change your lives
Every vote cast for a better time
Now once and for all the right must go
Now one for all - register to vote

(The Style Council, 'Right To Go' in 1987)

An Irish band, U2, also expressed their opinion about the election of 1987 when they played Bob Dylan's song 'Maggie's Farm' in Wembley:

"Well, you've got a few days to make up your mind ...
Now, we sing songs about how our country's divided.
Well, it seems to me that your country is pretty divided at the moment ...
Well, Bono's no preacher, I'm not going to tell you how to vote...
But you all will be voting, won't you?
Sing for me - I ain't gonna work on Maggie's Farm no more."

(Melody Maker, June 13, 1987)

It is interesting to find such startling and offensive lyrics in the songs from The Housemartins, Morrissey, Elvis Costello, Billy Bragg, and The Blow Monkeys. Pop music seemed to acquire a new function as a political forum, which could be seen as a revival from the 1950s and 1960s folk

music and political pop song. The songwriters were expressing straightforward opinions, anger and frustration about politics and risked their own musical careers in doing so. The songs criticize a lot but do not offer solutions. The fact they do not suggest any solutions is, in fact, something that has been bothering political music all the time. Instead, the aim of political pop songs has often been the realisation of the problem. It is important to the musicians to be heard and such measures like banning songs sometimes gives them good and free publicity. This is the case, for example, with The Sex Pistols' song 'God Save The Queen' which went into number one in the national charts despite the banning.

1.2 Songs about the royal family

The Queen and the royal family were clearly a more sensitive topic for songs. After all, what were they personally to be blamed for? Only the institution as such was something that could be questioned. When The Sex Pistols recorded their song 'God Save The Queen' in the jubilee year, it was considered in poor taste, and the BBC duly banned it. However, Johnny Rotten, the singer of the band, explained that the single was nothing personal against the Queen, it was against what she stood for.

With the marriage of Prince Charles the image of the royal family improved. Princess Diana was more than welcomed to the royal family by the public. She became a real heroine in the eyes of the British boys and girls. She was young, beautiful, kind and easy to relate to. Also the media loved her and she soon became everyday news in magazines and newspapers. She also became a topic for songs; for example, Prefab Sprout made a song about Princess Diana in 1985. The song appreciates her for her kindness and appearance, but the choice of words, especially the adjectives, are an indication of exaggeration in the same way as her role in the media was exaggerated:

All the boys I know love Diana
 Some calming apparition you bet she is
 The world careering nightmare somewhere it is
 Her arms reach out and stop the savagery
 At least they do for me

Her eyes China blue saucers
 She's born that way
 She tastes of apple strudel
 You can tell she does
 With arms that hold sweet William to her breast

(Prefab Sprout, 'Diana' in 1985)

The song portrays amazingly the future role that Princess Diana had as an advocate of the world peace. The lyrics are kind to her even with the

exaggerations of “China blue saucer eyes” and “apple strudel taste”, and the song itself is a nice, quiet tune, so that the irony is easily missed. Princess Diana is portrayed as the peacemaker of the world. She only has to appear and “reach out her arms” and the fighting and “savagery” will stop. At the time of making the song Princess Diana had just stepped into the royal family and did not have any political influence. It is curious how closely the song corresponds to what later actually took place. In the next verse the songwriter admires the picture of Princess Diana so much that he can even imagine how good she tastes. The song ends by cherishing the new prince.

All in all, not so many songs have been made about the royal family. With the media revealing their deepest secrets, the respect that people had towards them declined. In addition to this, the royal family was not involved in daily political issues and therefore could not be accused of unfair or bad decisions. The songwriters, except a few, did not bother to mention the royals in their songs. One exception was The Housemartins who mentioned the Queen in many of their songs. In ‘Flag Day’, for example, the fact that the Queen was one of the richest people in the world angered the band. The song pictures her as a stingy person who is not likely to give money for charity:

It’s a waste of time if you know what they mean
 Try shaking a box in front of the Queen
 ‘Cause her purse is fat and bursting at the seams

It’s a waste of time if you know what they mean
 Too many hands in too many pockets
 Not enough hands on heart

(The Housemartins ‘Flag Day’ in 1986)

The Housemartins were not only criticizing the Queen but also the people who supported and admired the royal family and spent a lot of money in order to follow their lives. It seemed that many people knew where Princess Diana spent her winter holiday while they did not know

where their own children were and would not even care to know:

The people who grinned themselves to death
 Smiled so much they failed to take a breath
 And even when their kids were starving
 They all thought the Queen was charming

(The Housemartins 'The People Who Grinned Themselves
 To Death' in 1987)

The Housemartins also reminded the listeners of the inequality of the people and of their tendency for blaming and criticizing others without looking at themselves. According to the band, they all should try to improve their lives by being active, by "getting up of their knees".

Famines will be famines, banquets will be banquets
 Some spend winter in a palace, some spend it in blankets
 Don't wag your fingers at them and turn to walk away
 Don't shoot someone tomorrow that you can shoot today
 You can wag your finger till your finger's sore
 Shake your head till it shakes no more

(The Housemartins, 'Get Up Off Our Knees' in 1986)

Morrissey, the singer and songwriter of The Smiths, expressed his view about the royal family in the album in 1986 'The Queen Is Dead'. The title itself was borrowed from Hubert Selby Junior's book 'Last Exit To Brooklyn' but within its new context, the homosexual angle is underplayed in favour of an assault on the Queen. Previously, Morrissey had been singing about how he would like to drop his trousers to the Queen, but now he was dreaming of her death. (Rogan, 1994:90.):

Farewell to this lands' cheerless marshes
 Hemmed in like a boar between arches
 Her very Lowness with her head in a sling
 I'm truly sorry - but it sounds like a wonderful thing

Morrissey's contempt for the Queen is revealed here in his choice of words, her Highness has been turned into "her very Lowness".

Dear Charles, don't you ever crave
To appear on the front of the Daily Mail
Dressed in your Mother's bridal veil?

So, I checked all the registered historical facts
And I was shocked into shame to discover
How I'm the 18th pale descendent
Of some old queen or other
Has the world changed or have I changed?

The imaginary transvestism of Prince Charles on the front page of the newspaper is mirrored by the singer's shock and shame at discovering skeletons in his own family tree.

As some 9-year old tough peddles drugs
(I never even knew what drugs were)
And so I broke into Palace
With a sponge and a rusty spanner
She said: "Eh, I know you, and you cannot sing"
I said: "That's nothing - you should hear me play piano"

Here the song turns into more pleasant teasing which is clearly inspired by the disturbed Michael Fagin who not only broke into Buckingham Palace, but actually entered the Queen's bedroom and chatted with her over a cigarette before being led away.

We can go for a walk where it's quiet and dry
And we can talk about precious things
But when you're tied to your Mother's apron
No one talks about castration

We can go for a walk where it's quiet and dry
And we can talk about precious things
Like love and law and poverty
These are things that kill me

We can go for a walk where it's quiet and dry
And we can talk about precious things
But the rain flattens my hair
These are the things that kill me

Passed the Pub that saps your body
And the Church - all they want is your money

The Queen is dead, boys
You can trust me, boys
Life is very long when you're lonely

(The Smiths, 'The Queen Is Dead' in 1987)

In the end of the song Morrissey proclaims the death of the Queen before returning to the more familiar selfish theme 'Life is very long when you're lonely'. (Kelly, 1994:90.)

Songs about the royal family were meant to raise questions about the necessity of the institution, but the attack was weak and it did not offer any alternatives. Many people felt that the attack on the royal family was an attack against the country and did not approve of it. Therefore the subject was rather sensitive to the record companies also. The fact that records were easily banned was a threat to business. It was easier to make songs about the government and blame it for how things were being run.

2. SUPPORT FOR TRADE UNIONS AND MINERS' STRIKE

Britain was in a deep economic depression when Margaret Thatcher came into power. The country had been suffering from the "Winter of discontent" in 1978-79 which brought series of strikes for higher pay. The strikes caused damage to the economy, disruption of services and discomfort to the citizens. It aroused widespread antipathy towards the power of the trade unions, exposed the weakness of the Labour Party in relation to the unions, and provided electoral support for Mrs Thatcher and the conservative anti-union legislation. (Halsey, 1986:93.)

One songwriter who questioned people's opinions about trade unions is Billy Bragg. For example, his 'Which Side Are You On' is a song about people who are fighting for their right to strike.

This government had an idea
And parliament made it law
It seems like it's illegal
To fight for the union any more

Which side are you on, boys
Which side are you on

We went out to join the picket line
For together we cannot fail
We got stopped by police at the county line
They said, " Go home boys or you're going to jail"

It's hard to explain to a crying child
Why her daddy can't go back
So the family suffer
But it hurts me more
To hear a scab say, Sod you, Jack

I'm bound to follow my conscience
And do whatever I can
But it'll take more than the union law
To knock the fight out of a working man

(Billy Bragg, 'Which Side Are You On' in 1985)

The song describes the situation through the eyes of a working class man. It is against the law to strike, but the man cannot go back to work even though his family needs the money. What hurts him even more are the 'scabs', the people who refuse to join the strike. The fight will continue no matter what the law says. In this way, Billy Bragg was actually using songwriting as a political force in the same way as folk song and artists like Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Ewan MacColl did in the 1930s and 1940s. He performed his songs in the manner which was known from the folk song period, acoustically and plainly with his guitar as the only instrument. He sang about issues which he thought were important, and was not bothered by the Socialist label that the rock media gave to him.

Mrs Thatcher blamed trade unions for the ineffectiveness of British industry. She was of the opinion that the industry was ready to be privatized. The strike of the British Steel in 1980 gave Mrs Thatcher an opportunity to fight against trade unions. It was her view that instead of the union negotiators it was the market which should decide the result of the strike. She wanted to renew entrepreneurial activity despite the workers. Mrs Thatcher's economic policy was strongly criticized in the Government. Opinion polls show that people's attitudes towards trade unions were inconsistent. A majority of the British thought that trade unions had too much power. Still, many of these people were themselves members of a union and tended to approve of their own union. There was a clear gulf between the presentation of unions in the mass media and people's personal experience of relationships at work. The union density level in 1981 was 51 % of the workers and in 1984 they had 11 million members in Britain. (Abercrombie and Warde, 1988:60.)

The coal industry represented all that was worst about British industry: it was over-manned, unproductive, archaic, and unprofitable. Britain was using far more coal, at a far higher cost, than was necessary and what was affordable. The Government had already made one attempt to close uneconomic pits in 1981.

One band which addressed this problem was U2. It made a song called 'Red Hill Mining Town' about a town based around a pit that was scheduled to be closed. It is a song about a man losing his self-respect and who clings onto his wife for some sort of support. The song is addressed to the destruction of working class values, the loss of trades and skills that had been passed down from father to son. Whole communities, entire villages, were based on coal mining and the area depended on the success of the pit. To close the mines meant closing of the community, which was the first step towards social problems. (Bowler and Dray, 1993:228.)

From Father to Son the blood runs thin
 Our faces frozen (still) against the wind
 The seam is split the coal face cracked
 The lines are long and there's no going back
 Through hands of steel and a heart of stone
 Our labour day has come and gone
 And you leave us holding on in Red Hill Town
 As the lights go down I'm hanging on
 You're all that's left to hold on
 I'm holding on
 You're all that's left to hold on

The glass is cut the bottle run dry
 Our love runs cold in caverns of the night
 We're wounded by fear injured in doubt
 I can lose myself you I can't live without
 Because you keep me holding on the Red Hill Town

And we scorch the earth set fire to the sky
 Stood so low to reach so high
 A link is lost the chain undone
 Now we wait all day for the night to come
 And it comes and it comes
 Like a hunter (child)
 I'm hanging on
 You're all that's left to hold on to
 We see love slowly stripped away
 Our love has seen a better day
 I'm holding on
 You're all that's left to hold on
 See the lights go down on Red Hill Town

(U2, 'Red Hill Mining Town' in 1987)

The song expresses the feelings of losing something that has been the basic element in life. The cruelty of decisions that the government has made about the pit closures is seen in the song from the losers point of view. The man in the song has never doubted the continuity of his work that has been done for generations. When it is taken away from him he loses the balance and the meaning of his life. The place where he lives also starts its slow death.

In March 1984, Ian MacGregor, the chairman of the National Coal Board, announced new closures of the uneconomic pits and Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), declared the miner's strike and war on the Government. He had failed three times on the ballot to get a majority in favour of strike action and after the strike had begun, coalfields, such as Nottingham, which did not want to strike, were simply closed down with the aid of Scargill's flying pickets. (Harris, 1988:168-170.) A cappella singer-group, Flying Pickets, named their band after this.

The dispute lasted twelve long and bitter months (Bowler and Dray, 1993:228). The strike itself was violent. The police were forced to take aggressive actions against the pickets. Gradually, the strikers were starved back to work since those on strike received virtually no money during the dispute. What had begun as a display of solidarity and of strength ultimately broke families apart under the economic and mental strain the strike imposed on them. The coal production in Britain collapsed and the strikers' families were starving. The strikers got some help, however: Some foreign countries began to collect donations and many pop musicians collected money by benefit concerts. At the same time, the Government was still closing down pits and starting to use more nuclear power and natural gas. All this inspired Sting to make a song called 'We Work The Black Seam Together' in 1985. The song questions the Government policy and makes a humanitarian plea for the miners. In the song he also points out the dangers of the nuclear power and states

his concern for the future.

This place has changed for good
 Your economic theory said it would
 It's hard for us to understand
 We can't give up our jobs the way we should
 Our blood has stained the coal
 We tunnelled deep inside the nation's soul
 We matter more than pounds and pence
 Your economic theory makes no sense

The first verse of the song pictures a pit and its surroundings after a closure. The place is not the same any longer. Mining industry has been a way of life in the area for generations and people cannot understand reasoning with economical facts about the work that they have been carrying through with pride for so long. The chorus of the song points out the dangers of the nuclear power.

One day in a nuclear age
 They may understand our rage
 They build machines that they can't control
 And bury the waste in a great big hole
 Power was to become cheap and clean
 Grimy faces were never seen
 But deadly for twelve thousand years
 Is carbon fourteen
 We work the black seam together

The seam lies underground
 Three million years of pressure packed it down
 We walk through ancient forest lands
 And light a thousand cities with our hands
 Your dark satanic mills
 Have made redundant all our mining skills
 You can't exchange a six inch band
 For all the poisoned steams in Cumberland

Our conscious lives run deep
 You cling onto your mountain while we sleep
 This way of life is part of me
 There is no price so only let me be
 And should the children weep
 The turning world will sing their souls to sleep

When you have sunk without a trace
The universe will suck me into place

(Sting, 'We Work The Black Seam Together' in 1985)

The last two verses of the song reflect the disappointment of the miners and how no compensations will change their lives for the better. The fact that times are changing, 'the world is turning', cannot be helped.

On 9 March, 1985, just four days after miners in most part of the country had marched back to work, a benefit show was held in Logan Hall in London's Bloomsbury. The show reflected the radical new mood in British pop music. The miners' strike changed many young musicians' views on what the unions were all about. Those who wrote songs specifically about the strike found that the major record companies were not interested in their records. The Enemy Within released a dance record called 'Strike!', which set the voice of Arthur Scargill to a synthesized beat. The record was released by the independent Rough Trade label, and it was claimed to be the first protest record in twenty years. The independent record labels were also responsible for many fund-raising compilation albums. The fight for the trade unions was at its strongest at the time of the miners' strike and the involvement of the pop musicians meant that also the young found out what was going on.

Many artists were also willing to openly support the Labour Party and fight against the Conservatives. This led to a loose-knit organization called the Red Wedge. It was formed in the Labour Party's main committee room on 23 July 1985. The organisation was to provide an umbrella for musicians who supported the Labour Party. It included musicians and bands like Billy Bragg, Paul Weller, Working Week, Madness, Lloyd Cole, Fine Young Cannibals, and others. The artists would help Labour by giving concerts and local Labour politicians came to the concerts and talked to the audience about local political issues. Young people were a perfect target to collect new votes for the Labour Party, because in the disastrous election in 1983 nearly half of those

aged under 26 had not voted at all. The first Red Wedge tour started 26 January 1986 and included Billy Bragg, Paul Weller, Junior Giscombe, Jimmy Sommerville and Jerry Dammers. Billy Bragg continued to tour around England with MPs appearing at each show and Labour Party material was handed out to the audience. Nothing like this had happened in the country before. This is how Billy Bragg explained his involvement with Red Wedge (Bragg in Salewicz, 1989:21): "Red Wedge gave me the opportunity to put my art, my pop, together with politics and action. Otherwise I couldn't have done it." After the Labour Party lost the election in 1987 Red Wedge faded away, but Billy Bragg and other artists continued to fight for the fundamental human rights. This kind of political involvement and support for an established political party was curious, brave and something that had not happened before in the history of rock and roll.

3. CRITICISM OF DOMESTIC POLITICS

3.1 Ills in the society

Many people blamed Mrs Thatcher for the social situation they were forced to live in. The policy of loosening the control on private enterprise, subordinate the unions, cut spending, reduce taxes, and allow old-fashioned industries to perish was not what everybody wanted. According to Abrams and Brown (in Abercrombie and Warde, 1988:515), public expenditure in the beginning of the 1980s was increased in defence, law and order, and slightly in social security costs, while it was diminished in education, health and personal social services and housing costs. The emphasis of the Government policy was clearly on defense, not on the lives of the people. Soon this was reflected in the song lyrics which portrayed the humble lives of ordinary people in a society that did not seem to care. For example, Billy Bragg made a song called 'The Homefront' about family life in Britain. The song tells about different generations and their expectations about life. It also portrays the instability of life. Violence has spread as close as the neighbours and you need 'another lock on the door' to feel secure. People are talking about better life and the Government is making promises that cannot be kept.

Father mows the lawn and Mother peels the potatoes
 Grandma lays the table alone
 And adjusts the photograph of the unknown soldier
 In this Holy of Holies, the Home
 And from the TV an unwatched voice
 Suggests the answer is to plant more trees
 The scrawl on the wall says what about the workers
 And the voice of the people says more salt please

The song begins with a picture of a family consisting two generations, father, mother and grandmother. They all seem very alone, taking care of their own duties and concentrating on things that are important to each of them; 'grandma adjusts a photograph of the unknown soldier' suggests

that the war has had an effect onto her life. History is also reflected by the 'scrawl on the wall'. The only intruder into this idyll is the TV that makes unreal suggestions about improving life and living conditions, when people actually want 'more salt please', some real actions and improvements.

Mother shakes her head and reads aloud from the newspaper
 As father puts another lock on the door
 And reflects upon the violent times that we are living in
 While chatting with the wife beater next door
 If paradise to you is cheap beer and overtime
 Home truths are easily missed
 Something that every football fan knows
 It only takes five fingers to form a fist

The second verse of the song concentrates on describing violence and how people react to it. The mother reacts to the newspaper and the father secures the house by putting 'another lock on the door', while at the same time the family is living next to a violent man without paying much attention to this. The family accepts his behaviour and reasons that his violence is due to too much work and beer.

And when it rains here it rains so hard
 But never hard enough to wash away the sorrow
 I'll trade my love today for a greater love tomorrow
 The lonely child looks out and dreams of independence
 From the family life sentence

The chorus verse is a plea from the third generation, the child, waiting for the time of his or her independence and ability to leave home and begin a new life, which he or she expects to be a better one.

Mother sees but does not read the peeling posters
 And can't believe that there's a world to be won
 But in the public school and in the public houses
 The Battle of Britain goes on
 The constant promise of jam tomorrow
 Is the New Breed's litany and verse
 If it takes another war to fill the churches of England

Then the world the meek inherit, what will it be worth
 Mother fights the tears and Father his sense of outrage
 And attempts to justify the sacrifice
 To pass their creed down to another generation
 'Anything for the quiet life'
 In the Land of Thousand Doses
 Where nostalgia is the opium of the age
 Our place in History is as
 Clock watchers, old timers, window shoppers.

(Billy Bragg, 'The Homefront' in 1988)

The last two verses of the song portray the disappointment and frustration that the parents are feeling now. They have accepted that the promises have not been kept, 'she can't believe that there's a world to be won'. People have started to live in the past, in what if's. Those who still believe in the future are the young. The young, however, are facing a new problem, drug usage, which destroys their expectations about life.

A similar kind of frustration in life can be found in a verse in 'Synchronicity II', a song by Sting:

Another suburban morning
 Grandmother screaming at the wall
 We have to shout above the din of our rice crispies
 We can't hear anything at all
 Mother chants her litany of boredom and frustration
 But we know all her suicides are fake
 Daddy only stares into the distance
 There's only so much that he can take

(The Police, 'Synchronicity II' in 1983)

The frustrations that everybody seems to be feeling are brought up in many different ways, by shouting, threatening by suicides, talking constantly about it. The real victim here on a verge of a breakdown is the father, who keeps it quiet and keeps the pain inside him.

These kinds of songs concentrate on picturing ordinary life with a great frustration. The question, who is to blame lies in the background but no

obvious guilty party can be found. In fact, the people who fall into frustration can be blamed for too high expectations. The songs, however, were easy to relate to because they told the story of ordinary people and reflected the thoughts of many listeners. Hearing that there was frustration everywhere could probably ease the listener's anguish. That is why perhaps the songs became quite popular.

Many musicians made songs about city life and concentrated on the appalling living conditions there. Housing had changed in the course of time and pompous development plans in the cities began to appear in the beginning of the 1980s. Old communities were swept away to be replaced by tower-block apartment complexes and flat, featureless housing estates. The money spent in these constructions angered many people. For example, the Jam made a song 'The Planners' Dream Goes Wrong' in 1982. The song describes the false proudness and expectations of the people responsible for planning the buildings and the frustration of the people who actually had to live in them.

Letting loose the lunatics - wasn't the greatest of ideas
 Giving them plans and money to squander
 Should have been the worst of our fears
 The dream life luxury living was a pleasant No. 10. whim
 But somewhere down the lines of production
 They left out human beings

In the first verse of the song Paul Weller, the writer of the song, calls the planners of the buildings lunatics. He also points his finger to the Prime Minister from whom, he claims, the plans originated. These megalomaniac plans took lots of money but left out the people. The song continues with giving examples how things went wrong, and how the apartments are not suitable for people to live in.

They were gonna build communities
 It was going to pie in the sky
 But the piss stench hallways and broken down lifts
 Say the planners dream went wrong

If the people were made to live in boxes

God would have given them string
 To tie around themselves at bed time
 And stop their dreams falling through the ceiling

And the public school boy computers
 Keep spewing out our future
 The house in the country designs the 14th floor
 Old Mrs Smith don't get out much more
 Coitus interruptus 'cause of next door rows
 Your washing gets nicked when the lights go out
 Baby's scream in the nightmare throng
 But planners just get embarrassed
 When their plans go wrong!

(The Jam, 'The Planners' Dream Goes Wrong' in 1982)

At the end of the song Paul Weller makes suggestions about the qualifications of the planners "the public school boy computers" with "a house in the country" , unqualified men who have made money with their plans, and then continues by describing an ordinary and poor life in these blocks, people fighting, babies crying, things being stolen, the constant fear that people have to live with. There was room for many families in these giant blocks, but at the same time the people living there became insecure, rootless and lonely, because you could not really make friends there. No-one seemed to be taking care of the houses since they were built and they decayed rapidly. Graffiti making was one way for the children and the young to 'prove they lived there' and to let out their anxiety. Vandalism was another way of showing their existence.

The towers of London, these crumbling blocks,
 Reality estates that the hero's got
 And every hour's marked by the chime of clock
 And whatcha gonna do when the darkness surrounds?
 You can piss in the lifts which have broken down
 You can watch from the debris the last bedroom light
 We're invisible here just past midnight

This song 'Up In Heaven (Not Only Here)' by the Clash is almost a variant to the Jam's song, but it paints even a bleaker and more realistic picture of the living conditions. There were no activities available for the young,

the buildings were badly built, people had to live too closely with poor insulation and no fittings, and there were no playgrounds for the children nearby.

The wives hate their husbands, and their husbands don't care
 Their children daub slogans to prove they lived there
 A giant pipe organ up in the air
 You can't live in a home which should not have been build
 By the bourgeois clercks who bear no guilt
 When the wind hits this building the building it tilts
 One day it will surely fall to the ground

Fear is just another commodity here
 They sell us peeping-holes to peep when we hear
 A bang on the door resoundingly clear
 Who would really want to move in here
 The children play far away the corridors are bare
 This room is a cage its like captivity
 How can anyone exist in such misery?

(The Clash 'Up In Heaven (Not Only Here)' in 1980)

The criticism in the songs reflected the criticism in the media at that time. Nobody seemed to be happy about the new constructions, the plans had been too hasty and needed a great deal of improvements. In the songs, the city life itself was also criticised. Social relations were relatively impersonal, impermanent, varied and unpredictable and people suffered from fear and solitude. The songs reflected the problem that sudden migration to the cities brought about. People, especially the young, came from distant rural districts in search for work and they needed places to live in. The mistakes that the housing developers made by inaccurate and hasty planning were probably also exaggerated by the people who were not used to live in cities and they were facing a new form of social life, from home-centredness and neighbourhood to impermanent social relations and solitude (Abercrombie and Warde, 1988:323).

In 1986, Matt Johnson, the songwriter of a band called The The, put together many ills of the British society in one very popular song 'Heartland'. This breathy, moody ballad deals with a divided Britain, a

collapsing welfare state. It points out the inequality of the people, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the waste of public funds. It concludes with a sarcastic remark on foreign policy.

Beneath the old iron bridges, across the Victorian parks,
 & all the frightened people, running home before dark,
 Past the Saturday Morning cinema -
 that lies crumbling to the ground,
 & the piss stinking shopping centre in the new side of town.
 Then come to smell the seasons change, & watch the city,
 - as the sun goes down again.

The song begins with the theme of changing society and once again it is pointed out that the changes have not been too good. The old, crumbling buildings are reminders of how things used to be and this vision is contrasted with new, stinking shopping centres in the new side of town. The last line of the first verse invites the listener to see the changes in society and what they have brought along.

Here comes another winter, of long shadows and high hopes,
 Here comes another winter, waiting for utopia,
 - waiting for hell to freeze over.

The chorus of the song describes the idle expectations of the people, that after the winter things will improve. But the songwriter knows that they are waiting for utopia, things will not change until 'hell freezes over'.

This is the land, where nothing changes,
 The land of red buses and blue blooded babies,
 This is the place where pensioners are raped,
 And their hearts are being cut, from the welfare state,
 Let the poor drink the milk, while the rich eat the honey,
 Let the bums count their blessings, while they count the money.

In the second verse, conservatism, how things never change, is pointed out and the songwriter is making hints about the colours of red and blue. The contrast between the rich and the poor is evident, Britain is no longer a welfare state in the eyes of the forgotten pensioners.

So many people can't express what's on their minds,
 Nobody knows them and nobody ever will,
 Until their backs are broken and their dreams are stolen,
 And they can't get what they want then they're gonna get angry!

The song continues with the same theme that can be found in Billy Bragg's and Sting's songs about disappointments in life. Finally, when people's expectations are not met they get angry and frustrated. This was seen especially during the rioting years when people started to show their disappointments through the use of violence.

Well it ain't written in the papers, but it's written on the walls;
 The way this country is dividing to fall,
 So the cranes are moving on the skyline -
 Trying to knock down - this town -
 But the stains on the heartland, can never be removed,
 From this country, that's sick, sad & confused.

Here the songwriter points out how the truth of how things really are can not be read in the media, but on the walls, in graffiti. So, whatever changes and new developments are taking place, the stains, the problems and misconduct still remain. The country is sick, sad and confused. It is also argued at the end of the song, that Britain no longer belongs to the British, but it is actually governed by the USA which also gets all their money.

The ammunitions have been passed and the lords been praised,
 But the wars on the televisions will never be explained,
 All the bakers getting sweaty, beneath their white collars,
 As the pound in our pocket, turns into a dollar.
 This is the 51st state - of the U.S.A.

(The The, 'Heartland' in 1986)

This conclusion is a reflection of people's feeling that Margaret Thatcher had sold Britain to the USA. Britain's foreign policy of the time supported the USA and Thatcher was spending a lot of money in armament, while people felt that the money should have been spent in the improvement of the social welfare, to help the poor and needy.

3.2 Unemployment

In pop music unemployment was frequently mentioned, since it was a big concern for the young people. UB40 even named their band according to an unemployment benefit form. The punk music phenomenon of the late 1970s had risen among the unemployed young people unable to do anything else than to protest and preach anarchy. Many of them could not even play any instruments or sing; nevertheless, they were successful. Punk offered an opportunity for identification for unemployed school leavers. The Sex Pistols were above all the symbol of this social situation. Nevertheless, punk music was soon to disappear, because it did not offer any solutions, and the success of the bands made it impossible for them to be authentic in their misery. The unemployment problem still remained, and songs were made even by chart bands like the Dire Straits:

I used to go to work but they shut it down
 I've got a right to go to work but there's no work here to be found
 Yes and they say we're gonna have to pay what's owed
 We're gonna have to reap from some seed that's been sowed

(The Dire Straits 'Telegraph Road' in 1982)

Here the verse questions people's right to work. What if there is no work? Unemployment problem was reasoned by the government as an inevitable outcome of recession and industrial change. Margaret Thatcher's policy of privatisation resulted in many dismissals. According to Kenneth Harris (1988:105), the Government kept on explaining that the unemployment problem was due to the fact that workers were pricing themselves out of their jobs, as directed by the trade unions. At the same time the Government was pursuing a tight monetary policy regardless of the economic circumstances, the recession of the world economy and high exchange rates. As a result of the economic depression and the steep rise in unemployment from the beginning of the 1980s, Mrs Thatcher faced a chorus of disapproval. According to Abercrombie and

Warde (1988:96), in August 1980 the figures showed two million unemployed. In January 1982 the figures had risen to over three million and stayed there until 1986. In April 1986, 3.3 million people, a total of 13.7 % of the population, were registered unemployed. Unemployment was particularly high among the working class, the ethnic minorities, the young, the old, the sick and the disabled. The humiliation of being unemployed was described by, for example, the singer Paul Weller as follows:

There's better ways of losing your pride
Than waiting in queues for a cheque at a time

But there's better ways to make ends meet
Than shuffling through life dead on your feet
But here we are and there they stay
With their very small handouts in a very big way

(The Style Council, 'Iwasadoledadstoyboy' in 1988)

Here the songwriter is making suggestions about improving life, and that there are better ways to lead a life than "shuffle it through" by trying out opportunities, taking risks in life. However, people never do that, perhaps because they are too afraid of it, "but here we are and there they stay", "they" referring to the people who are responsible of how the unemployed are treated; how much unemployment benefit they can get and how they should apply for it. The song ends with a humiliating note on how the benefits are given, that people should be grateful for what they get, even though the 'handouts' are not sufficient.

The Fine Young Cannibals made their first hit single 'Johnny Come Home' in 1985. It was a song about young people running away from home, looking for some opportunities or adventure. The song was based on a TV documentary of the same name. In the documentary the young people from the north came down to London thinking that they would find their fortune there. The same theme was central in the song 'Move To Work'. Only now it was a young couple whose only way forward was for

the man to go South in search of a job. Their love was dealt with appealingly:

I wish there was another way for us
For you and me my love
But if I miss the train
There won't be another
And if I get there late
They'll say don't you bother

(Fine Young Cannibals 'Move To Work' in 1985)

To get a job may require a lot. You may get only one opportunity. You may have to leave your home, familiar surroundings, your family and friends. To work and live in a big city and to make new acquaintances can be easy for some but very difficult for others, and dealing with difficulties can be insurmountable. The change of life can be harder than accepting the work.

3.3 Rioting

Margaret Thatcher was faced with rioting right from the beginning of her career as Prime Minister. Rioting in the inner-cities of Britain characterized the beginning of the 1980s. There had been riots before, too, but this time they were happening in many parts of the country at the same time. The riots started from Southall in London on April 23, 1979. Mrs Thatcher was elected into power the following day. A year after, there was rioting in Bristol, Brixton, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leeds, Hull and in many other parts of the country simultaneously (Benyon and Solomos, 1987:3-4.) The first riot wave ended in the summer of 1981. It was clear that people were frustrated and rioting was the strongest means of protest. Most of the rioters were young, unemployed people who felt deprived and depressed in society. Many pop songs describe this gloomy atmosphere especially from the young people's point of view:

11 pm all the pubs shut,
 The radio reads you 'A Book At Bedtime'.
 Midnight, and the TV channels have all closed down,
 Outside the buses and trains have stopped running.
 Anyone on the streets after midnight
 Stands a good chance of being stopped by the police.
 It's so grey in London Town
 With a Panda car crawling around,
 Here it comes, eleven o'clock,
 Where can we go now?

(The Clash, 'Remote Control' in 1977)

This verse of the song, 'Remote Control' by the Clash, describes the atmosphere at midnight in a city which cannot provide any places to go to at your freetime, not even your home. There is nothing to do, no TV or radio programmes are on, and if you stay in the streets the police will surely come to ask for your intentions. A similar kind of description of nightly events of the young people is given in another song by the Clash, 'The Crooked Beat':

So one by one they come on down
 From the tower blocks of my hometown
 Stepping with the rhythm of the rockers beat
 Drowning out the pressure of the crooked street

It has a crooked past this crooked street
 Where cars patrol this crooked beat
 Badges flash and sirens wail
 They'll be taking one and all to jail
 Prance! Prance! You want a law to dance?

(The Clash 'The Crooked Beat' in 1980)

The song describes an illegal attempt to have fun, the organisation of a private disco where all the young people of the area can get together at night. This party is stopped by the police and everybody is arrested. The song ends with a question, "you want a law to dance?", referring to this strong action taken by the police when the only crime is dancing.

Since the beginning of the riot wave of the eighties many people's attitudes towards the police changed from trust to even hostility. Police brutality was evident, people were being arrested but also injured and even killed by the police. The police were also being blamed for unnecessary raids. They were looking for evidence of unlawful drinking and they also searched houses for petrol bombs. This kind of conduct also contributed to the eruption of disorder in the streets. (Benyon and Solomos, 1987:3-4.) At the same time the rioters felt that this was an effective way of protesting. According to Lord Scarman (in Benyon and Solomos, 1987:28), many rioters believed that violence was attracting the attention of the mass media and that they got their message across to the people as a whole. Vandalism was also widespread. For some people rioting even meant excitement, mindless violence and fun. After all the inner cities did not provide much recreation activities. The media and MPs called rioting moral degeneration and blamed rioters of their decline with respect to the rule of law (Benyon and Solomos, 1987:30-31). These changes in society made Joe Stummer to write a song called 'Know Your Rights' about law and order in Britain. It is an announcement that Joe Stummer shouts in the air with a furious beat and a wailing

guitar in the background:

This is a public service announcement with guitar
 Know your rights
 All three of em
 I say
 Number 1
 You have the right not to be killed
 Murder is a crime!
 Unless it was done by a policeman or aristocrat

The song expresses the inequality of people. The first right in the song indicates that the law is not the same with everybody. You can even get away with murder if you are somebody important.

Number 2
 You have the right to food, money
 Providing of course you don't mind
 A little humiliation, investigation
 If you cross your fingers, rehabilitation

Wang! Young offenders! Know your rights

This right concerns those who live on welfare. They have to accept the intrusion to their lives in order to receive the monthly cheque. The worst treatment that you can get is that you are left alone when the help is needed the most, for example, at the time when you get out of prison.

Number 3
 You have the right to freeeeeeee speech
 As long as you are not dumb enough
 To actually try it

So this right actually exists on paper. If you speak out your mind in public, you will be in trouble. The songwriter can think of only three basic human rights and they only exist on paper.

Know your rights
 These are your rights
 All three of 'em

It has been suggested in some quarters
That this is not enough

Well...
Get off the streets, get off the streets, run
Don't you have a home to go to, smush

In this stanza the songwriter suggests that people are getting angry and beginning to show their power. The frustration is beginning to show as acts of violence and therefore the safest place to be is at home.

Finally then I will read your rights
You have the right to remain silent
You are warned that anything you say
Can and will be taken down
Used as evidence against you

Listen to this, run

(The Clash, 'Know Your Rights' in 1982)

The song ends by suggesting that the only rights most people are likely to experience are the ones the police read while making an arrest. The song reflects the atmosphere of the time. It seems that the people and the police are at war with each other and that the people are frustrated because their pleas are being answered by sheer violence and arrests. The issues are not being discussed by anyone.

The Clash kept up their rebellious, left-wing image through many of their songs. They strongly criticized the police and the leaders of the country and defended the average citizen in songs like 'Police On My Back', 'Kingston Advice', 'I Fought The Law And The Law Won' and 'White Riot', in which Joe Strummer points out the fact:

All the power is in the hands of people
Rich enough to buy it,
While we walk the streets
Too chicken to even try it

(The Clash, 'White Riot' in 1977)

He points out that only the rich have the power and he calls out people to do something about it, to protest.

The Clash finally broke through with their 1982 album 'Combat Rock', which sold platinum even in the United States and sounded much smoother than anything they had done before. But this was somewhat deceptive, as most of the songs contained a message of some significance (e.g. 'Know Your Rights'). And as the title implies, much of it reflects the group's views on politics, the problems of inner city life, and war. "When a band as politically direct as The Clash gets through to over a million people, you know there's some hope left in the world", says the band's spokesman, Kosmo Vinyl (Miles, Tobler and Peachy 1992:98).

In September and October 1985 serious rioting again became the focus of attention in the West Midlands, Bristol and Birmingham. When people started to react the same way as before it made even pop singers wonder what was wrong with the country. For example, Matt Johnson, who forms a one-man band called The The, wrote a song in 1989 about the young people and how the society is treating them:

When you cast your eyes upon the skylines
Of this once proud nation
Can you sense the fear and the hatred
Growing in the hearts of its population?

And our youth are being seduced
By the greedy hands of politics and half-truths

The beaten generation, the beaten generation
Reared on a diet of prejudice and mis-information.
The beaten generation, the beaten generation
Open your eyes, open your imagination.

We're being sedated by the gasoline fumes
And hypnotised by the satellites
Into believing what is good and what is right.

In the first part of the song Matt Johnson questions what is wrong with

the country, since the people who used to be so proud of it now only can feel anger and hatred. Then he turns to the young people who are “blinded by mis-information and prejudice” and threatened by the growth of the media. In his view, the people should wake up to reality and not be fooled by empty promises or truths.

You may be worshipping the temples of mammon
Or lost in the prisons of religion.
But can you still walk back to happiness,
When you've nowhere left to run?

And if they send in the special police
To deliver us from liberty and keep us from peace.

Then won't the words sit ill upon their tongues,
When they tell us justice is being done
And that freedom lives in the barrels of a warm gun?

(The The, 'The Beat(en) Generation in 1989)

The end of the song continues to question reality and what is important in our lives. People may get absorbed in money or religion so deeply that the songwriter wonders whether people can leave these things behind and try to find true happiness from somewhere else. In the same way the songwriter questions the conflicts in the society and wonders why they are dealt with more violence.

Rioting ended during the year 1986 with no clear improvement in the living standards of the rioters. Many people were killed, injured or arrested with no actual results. It was a huge cost to the society.

3.4 Racism

In the end of the 1970s racism had already developed into a constant and powerful element in the British society. The citizenship principle and the immigrant population of ethnic groups were difficult things to deal with by the dominantly white society. According to A.H.Halsey (1986:67), these small ethnic minorities, immigrants mainly from Africa, the West Indies, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (from the so-called 'New Commonwealth'), formed 4,4 per cent of the total population. Their citizenship was assured by law, but it was in practice fragile. Immigrants were seen as threats and rivals in the white society. Things like jobs, social services, houses etc. that you could have could be theirs as well. At the time of recession and unemployment it was difficult for some people to accept this. This dangerous atmosphere was commented on by, for example, Roddy Frame, the singer and song-writer of the Aztec Camera, in his song 'Good Morning Britain':

From the Tyne to where the Thames does flow
 My English brothers and sisters know
 It's not a case of where you go
 It's race and greed and colour
 From the police cell to the deep dark grave
 On the undergrounds just stop away
 Don't be too black don't be too gay
 Just get a little duller

(Aztec Camera 'Good Morning Britain' in 1990)

This verse is about melting into the crowd. If you belong to a minority of some kind it is wiser that you do not emphasize it, "don't be too black". You have to act like the majority expects. People are not interested in your comings or goings, they just want to know what you represent, how race conscious you are, how greedy you are and whether or not you are going to step on somebody's toes.

Racial issues began to be seen in music styles too. Reggae music

became popular amongst the West Indians and their children in Britain. From the time Jamaican Bob Marley and the Wailers did their first British shows in 1973, the music of the Caribbean started to become familiar even among white audiences (Denselow, 1989:138). The style of rasta-dreadlocks, the Ethiopian colours of red, green and yellow, and the jargon full of metaphor became common amongst the black youth. What drove the music and black identity together was, according to Iain Chambers (1986:166-167), the brutal reality of racism. Black youth discovered the possibility of translating their daily experience of racism, urban poverty and a forced marginality into the religious "sufferin" of the Rasta. In a few years reggae music had achieved world-wide popularity and in Britain even old punk bands, such as The Clash and The Police, began to use the reggae rhythm in their songs. Punks saw in the 'exile' of Rastafarianism and in the concrete refusal of black British youth to recognise Authority, a rejection close to their own stylistic aspirations (Chambers, 1986:190). Many 'Two-tone' bands such as The Specials, The Madness, The Beat and The UB 40 were formed. They presented reggae, ska music, and dub, music that used only the reggae rhythm with echoes and snatches of the song. These bands included both white and black members. Mick Jones, a former member of The Clash, formed a similar band called Big Audio Dynamite in the mid-1980s. This band dealt with racial issues in many of their songs. They also had a way of presenting these issues with a touch of humour and a light rhythm, so that the audience could dance and smile while listening to the strong message conveyed by the words:

A stranger's a friend you just don't know
 With a shake of the hand we could give it a go
 I look kinda pale, they call me gringo
 You got funny hair, they call you negro

Under this skin say we're all the same
 How come when I turn my back
 You call me funny names

The song begins by pointing out that people cannot be the same. Despite

this, they have the chance to get to know different cultures and make friends with different people. In the chorus the song nevertheless turns around and questions why then difference cannot be accepted. Why do the same prejudices prevail? The song continues with the same theme:

I'm not like you, you're not like me
 Don't think that will ever change
 It's obvious to see
 You're not like me, I'm not like you
 Don't mean that we can't get along
 And like each other too

Recognize the difference
 Give thanks we're not the same
 Variety's the spice of life
 Hey fella what's your name

Some live in the city, some come from ghettos
 Eat funny food, speak funny lingo

Yes, a stranger's a friend you just don't know
 Forever by your side just like a shadow
 Under this skin say we're all the same
 How come when I turn my back
 You call me funny names

(Big Audio Dynamite, 'Funny Names' in 1988)

Another "black and white" group, The Specials, dealt with racism, inner city decay and tension in their lyrics. At the same time, they were popular and frequently in the national Top Ten chart. Their 'Ghost Town' is a song made in 1981 which hauntingly describes the atmosphere in society at that time. The song has a slow reggae beat and a wailing echo in the background creating a desolate feeling. The lyrics are sung slowly and quietly, except in the chorus where the music suddenly turns from a gloomy tune into a cheerful one: at this point the lyrics begin to portray how it used to be in the good old days.

This town is 'coming like a ghost town
 All the clubs have been closed down
 This place is 'coming like a ghost town

Bands won't play no more
 Too much fighting on the dance floor
 Do you remember the good old days
 Before the ghost town
 We danced and sang and the music played
 Inna de boomtown

This town is 'coming like a ghost town
 Why must the youth fight against themselves
 Government is leaving youth on the shelf
 This place is 'coming like a ghost town
 No job to be found in this country
 Can't go on no more the people getting angry

This town is 'coming like a ghost town

(The Specials, 'Ghost Town' in 1981)

The song questions racism and rioting and people's frustration. Why have things changed when life used to be so good, when everyone was living and dancing together? The song ends by blaming the government of it all. As the unemployment figures rose, and Britain's inner cities were torn by riots, the country's best-selling record was this lament about the closure of factories and nightclubs. The despair of the country could be heard all over the world.

Some people in Britain were not hiding their racist views and they took strong actions against the black population. In the years between 1976 and 1981, according to the historian Peter Fryer, thirty-one black people in Britain were murdered by racists (Fryer in Widgery, 1986:17). The fear was beginning to show in major cities; people started to walk in groups, minicab firms specialized in taking people to work and school, Asian school kids were let out of school earlier so that they would have time to get home unmolested, and their home windows were boarded up.

The following song by Morrissey is a sad story of an Asian schoolboy who tries to take revenge because of the death of his best friend. It also comments on the serious problem of drug usage among immigrants. The

song has a slow waltzing rhythm. It gradually reveals the boy's intentions and the way in which his friend's death had actually taken place.

Day oh so late strangely the sun still shone
 Oh Asian boy what are you on?
 Day oh so late strangely the sun still shone
 Oh Asian boy what drugs are you on?
 Tooled-up Asian boy has come here to take revenge
 For the cruel cold killing of his very best friend
 Tooled-up Asian boy has come here to take revenge
 For the cruel cold killing of his only friend
 Peace through the school so quiet in the hall
 It's a strange sign for one of what's to come
 Tough and hard and pale
 Oh they may just impale you on railings
 Oh English boys it must be wrong
 Three against one? Brakes slammed, and
 As far as I could tell
 Brave Asian boy dealt a blow and fell
 I'm just passing through here
 On my way to somewhere civilised
 And maybe I'll even arrive
 Maybe I'll even arrive?

(Morrissey, 'Asian Rut' in 1991)

Morrissey gives a very realistic picture about the cruelty of people. The Asian boy is alone, now that his only friend has died, in a mess with his drug usage problem. He is about to take revenge and commit a crime that will imprison him. The 'English' boys, on the other hand, will probably get away with the crime. Morrissey ends his song with a hope that things could be more civilised somewhere else.

Another song by Morrissey, 'Bengali In Platforms' was strongly criticized because of its racial issues. Morrissey was blamed for racist views in the song, but what he actually does in the song is to explain why it is so difficult for immigrants to fit in society. They dress differently, they look different, and their customs are different. The way they take pride in preserving their culture irritates many. This is what the white majority cannot accept or even understand. You must put your plans and

expectations aside if you cannot be like the rest, the majority. Otherwise, you will always be treated as different, as an immigrant, no matter how good your intentions are.

No no no he does not want to depress you
 Oh no no no no he only wants to impress you
 Bengali in platforms
 He only wants to embrace your culture
 And to be your friend forever
 Bengali, Bengali, oh shelve your western plans
 And understand
 That life is hard enough when you belong here
 A silver-studded rim that glistens
 And an ankle-star that ... blinds me
 A lemon sole so very high
 Which only reminds me to tell you gently
 Shelve your plans
 Bengali, Bengali, it's the touchy march of time
 That binds you
 Don't blame me don't hate me
 Just because I'm the one to tell you
 That life is hard enough when you belong here
 Shelve your western plans
 Life is hard enough when you belong here

(Morrissey, 'Bengali In Platforms' in 1988)

The song expresses the feelings of the majority and points out that there is racism everywhere, in people's thoughts, even if they are not expressed so loudly.

The strongest expression of racism in Britain could be seen in 1967, when The National Front, Britain's neo-fascist political party, was formed. In the mid-1970s it gained its minority support and attracted much publicity. In a by-election at Stechford in 1977, its candidate had 8.1 % of the votes cast. It remained, however, a marginal force and in 1979 it divided into three rival organisations; National Front (Constitutional), National Front and British National Party. By this time many of the 'racialist' votes were brought back to the Conservatives because of Mrs Thatcher's harsh line on immigration controls. (Widgery, 1986:111).

Many rock artists wanted to act against racism. In Britain, reggae music helped to inspire the Rock Against Racism (RAR) movement (formed in 1976), which helped to turn the unfocused rebellion of the punk bands into a greater political awareness amongst British musicians. It was Britain's first music-based political pressure group. A year later the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) was founded. Members of the Labour Party also became involved, and Neil Kinnock was one of those elected to the ANL steering committee. These two organisations held concerts and demonstrations throughout the country to raise young people's awareness, and even to raise funds for the families suffering from discrimination. The growth of Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain in the 1980s proved that racism was still an issue to be fought against.

4. CRITICISM OF FOREIGN POLICY

4.1 The Falkland War

Throughout Mrs Thatcher's period as Prime Minister, Great Britain was involved in many conflicts and events around the world. The war in Falkland Islands probably guaranteed Mrs Thatcher's victory in the 1983 general election. It could be claimed that the beginning of the Falkland War was due to a misconception by both the British and the Argentinians. The Argentinians believed that Britain no longer had the political will or national conviction to defend a small patch of land so far away in the southern Atlantic. One reason for this belief was the proposed withdrawal of the armed ice patrol vessel HMS Endurance from active service at the end of its 1981-82 tour of duty. This was proposed by the British Government in order to save the cost of 2 million pounds a year. Another reason was the British Nationality Bill which the Government passed and which deprived about 800 Falkland Islanders of British citizenship. These actions seemed to indicate a final weakening of the British interest in the Falkland Islands. (Harris, 1988:122-130.) Argentina thus concluded that an invasion was possible and invaded the Islands on 2 April, 1982. The basic survival of neither nation was at stake, nor did the respective governments wish to have to confess to their citizens that its miscalculations about the other's intentions had led to a conflict. In other words, what neither was prepared to admit publicly was that they were formally at war. (Byrd, 1988:137.)

Once the news of the war was received and the recruitment of the task forces begun, the public began to react as well. People seemed to be confused about the situation. Many songwriters attacked the absurdity of the war. Elvis Costello's 'Shipbuilding' is a perfect example of the atmosphere.

Is it worth it
A new winter coat and shoes for the wife
And a bicycle on the boy's birthday

It's just a rumour that was spread around town
 By the women and children
 Soon we'll be shipbuilding

The song begins by portraying a working class family and the possibility that for once there will be money in the family to spend on something extra. The war has created work in the shipyards and the family must feel grateful for it.

Well I ask you
 The boy said 'Dad they're going to take me to task
 But I'll be back by Christmas'
 It's just a rumour that was spread around town
 Somebody said that someone got filled in
 For saying that people get killed in
 The result of this shipbuilding

The song continues by dealing with a conflicting emotion, with the reality of war, how young people have to go and fight the war with the possibility of being killed. This fact, of course, cannot be openly discussed because the public atmosphere must be kept victorious and optimistic and nobody should question the war.

With all the will in the world
 Diving for dear life
 When we could be diving for pearls

It's just a rumour that was spread around town
 A telegram or a picture postcard
 Within weeks they'll be reopening the shipyards
 And notifying the next of kin
 Once again
 It's all we're skilled in
 We will be shipbuilding

(Elvis Costello, 'Shipbuilding' in 1983)

The end of the song asks questions and rises doubts. The song does not try to find any scapegoats. It names no politicians or countries. It just evokes people's experiences, emotions and concerns about the war.

In another song by Elvis Costello 'Peace In Our Time' there is a short reference to the Falkland War in the 3rd verse:

They're lighting a bonfire upon every hilltop in the land.
Just another tiny island invaded
When he's got the whole world in his hands.

The song is a more global anti-war song and it also reminds the listener of the power of the USA:

The heavyweight Champion fights in the international
Propaganda Star Wars.
There's already one spaceman in the White House,
What do you want another one for?

(Elvis Costello, 'Peace In Our Time' 1982)

Other songs written about the Falkland War concentrated on the lives of the soldiers, the losses, and the purpose of the war. The British task force entered Falklands on 22 April after their peace offer was rejected. In the first few days of the fighting the frigates *Ardent* and *Antelope*, and the supply ship *Atlantic Conveyor* were sunk, five British warships were damaged, and the destroyer *Coventry* had to be abandoned. On 2 May the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* was torpedoed by a British submarine and sank with heavy loss of lives. The sinking of the *Belgrano* was the issue of argument in public. The vessel was heading away from the battle when it was sunk. On 4 May *HMS Sheffield* was hit by an Exocet air-to-sea missile, with the loss of twenty lives. (Harris, 1988:137.) These grim events seemed to change the atmosphere of the war. People became more aware and even frightened of the war.

The Bluebells' song 'South Atlantic Way' condemns the war completely. Many people were confused about the war as they were not sure about what it was that they were fighting for. The Falkland Islands was just a reminder of colonialism for many. Many people did not even know where these islands were situated. The shipping of men to fight for and even die for these islands seemed unnecessary. This song reflects those feelings.

I was a recruit fresh out of school
 As we set sail South Atlantic way
 We were tuned so high we could almost fly
 We had goons and ginks to chase away
 They say that men are brave and fools
 That's what the people say
 But soldiers know that men are fools down
 South Atlantic way

And I believed what the papers say
 And I believed that yesterday

The song begins by pointing out how young the soldiers are, how far away the islands are situated, and how these young men can not really understand why they are being sent to fight. The Argentines are being called by nicknames "goons and ginks" which makes it easier to reason why these people have to be fought against. The reasoning of the war in the media has made this young soldier understand what they are sent to do, but like the last line of the chorus tells us, the belief in the war has faded away.

And yet another country's youth to die
 And yet another vote's been won
 Another masked official lie
 Another dead son
 I was a recruit fresh full of hope
 As we set sail South Atlantic way
 When they said you're a hired killer now
 I thought my God, my God

In the second verse of the song, the soldier is faced with the reality of the fighting. Young people are dying for someone's political goals and the soldiers are no longer considered as war heroes. The whole war is being questioned.

Hey soldier tell me now
 Why win the battle and lose the war
 Hey soldier tell me now
 What the hell are you fighting for
 Well I've got shrapnel running through my mind
 I've glory in my head love of the country has made me blind
 To the living and the dead

And we rally round the Union Jack
We're brandishing our guns
We ain't so ready to go back killing other mother's sons

(Bluebells, 'South Atlantic Way' in 1984)

The last verse of the song reminds the listeners of the casualties and the dead in the war but also of the patriotic feelings of the soldiers. They are celebrating their victory but they also know that they do not want to be sent to another war. Their expectations of the war have been turned into reality.

On 14 June the Argentinian forces surrendered. The war left 255 British servicemen and civilians dead, many more injured, but the total number of casualties had been relatively low. Mrs Thatcher showed her happiness about the ending of the war by exclaiming 'Rejoice! Rejoice!' at the door of Downing Street. This was interpreted by her political opponents as insensitive or even warlike. Her friends considered it an expression of relief. (Harris, 1988:142.) The self confidence that Mrs Thatcher gained from the victory would later turn out as an image of 'being always right'. The recovery of the islands restored national honour and unity. It showed the world that British forces were to be taken seriously.

4.2 Northern Ireland

Many songs have been made about the Irish situation, therefore I will here discuss only few of them. The reason why I have chosen these particular songs is that they deal with the situation without bias. Furthermore, the songs have been quite popular so the lyrics have been heard by many people, and they have been enjoyed in a way many political songs never are. They have been danced to and sang along with.

Making songs about the situation in Northern Ireland is on the one hand very tempting, because there is a great deal to be said, dangerous on the other, especially if you are a local songwriter. Many bands have had some uneasy moments singing angry songs. The British broadcasters may also ban the song so that it will never be heard on TV and radio. Still, bands like U2, Pogues, Simple Minds, Police, That Petrol Emotion have made songs about Northern Ireland and sold millions of records expressing their opinions about the situation.

In 1921 the island was divided into two parts creating Irish Free State. The boundary between Northern Ireland and Irish Free State was settled in 1925. In 1948 Irish Free State became Eire - the Republic of Ireland. People in Northern Ireland were both Catholics and Protestants and conflict between them grew more intensive after the 'B' Specials (The Ulster Special Constabulary) were made a permanent force in Northern Ireland and after The Government's Special Powers Act of 1922 and 1954. With these acts some basic liberties were being denied from the Northern Irish: freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of trial by jury, and freedom from arrest without warrant. These acts were given in order to keep the peace in Northern Ireland but did not succeed in doing so.

In 1968-1972 the British government imposed direct rule in Northern Ireland. Many demonstrations were being held and on these occasions

violence was likely. 'The Troubles' began in Derry in August 1969. Eight people were killed and thousands injured in riots. The provisional IRA emerged early in 1970 from the Catholic ghettos initially as a defensive body. With the death of the first soldier in Northern Ireland in February in 1971 convinced politicians that the IRA had declared war (Arthur, 1984:114). Troubles and violence have been continuing ever since.

Many bands and songwriters had to be careful with their songs about the situation. Although not many of them were willing to take a stand, some were nevertheless interpreted to have done so. For example, Stiff Little Fingers, a band based in Belfast, admit having troubles and hard time. "My attitude to politics was that the whole thing was laughable - all the politicians did was wheel out the old fears every time", says Jake Burns, the singer and songwriter of the band. Burns and his band survived, according to him, "because both sides claimed us as their own." (Denselow, 1989:159.)

The Ruefrax song 'The Wild Colonial Boy' was a political song that received considerable air-play on British radio five years after they had first started singing it. The song was an attack on those Americans who delight over their Irish ancestry, and collect money for paramilitary groups. When they sing: 'It really gives me quite a thrill, to kill from far away', it is clear that their target is NORaid, the IRA's fund-raisers in the USA. (Denselow, 1989:160.)

Bands with more straightforward political views emerged from time to time in Northern Ireland. For example, That Petrol Emotion had a clearly Republican position. This was shown by one of the members John O'Neill changing his first name to Sean. Furthermore, their first LP, 'Manic Pop Thrill' (1986), had furious anti-English quotations on the sleeve and they also attacked Britain's use of plastic bullets in Northern Ireland on the sleeve of their single 'It's A Good Thing' (Denselow, 1989:161.) In another song 'Tension' the band attacks authorities, claims that they are liars, and accuses them of denying civil rights. The song

ends in a depressed note in a statement on how things will not change.

Fate in the struggle for self-determination
 Progress and change must soon be seen
 Pills the pain endured - and you haven't heard a word
 Of truth from corrupt authorities

We've had oppression and mass manipulation
 The censorship of soul's tragedy
 More than sleepless nights just for the civil right
 Of expressing our own identity

Nothing ever changes
 And don't ask me why

(That Petrol Emotion, 'Tension' in 1988)

U2 is an Irish band and the singer, Bono, comes from a Catholic-Protestant home. Their songs, with the lyrics by Bono, very early started on commenting on the Irish situation. The first references emerged on their second LP 'October' in 1981 in songs like 'Tomorrow' and 'Stranger In The Strange Land'. 'Sunday Bloody Sunday', a song from their third LP 'War' (1982) created a strong response and powerful emotions in the audience. It also created the biggest misunderstandings about the band. Many thought that the band wanted to remind their audience of the Bloody Sunday and some thought that they were even supporting the IRA. Therefore, when playing live in concerts, before the beginning of the song Bono shouted to the audience: "This is not a rebel song!" Bono also used to wave a white flag in their concerts in order to tell the audience that they wanted to get away from Green, White and Orange, away from the borders and restrictions. "I'd love to see a united Ireland but just don't believe you can put a gun to somebody's head at anytime to make him see your way. 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' is a day that no Irishman can forget, but should forget, which is what we were saying - 'How long must we sing this song?'" , explained Bono (Dunphy, 1987:205). The events of the Bloody Sunday took place in Derry on Sunday 30 January 1972 when an illegal anti-internment march resulted in a fight between a mob of youngsters and some army regiments. There

were allegations that shots had been fired towards the army from the Bogside. Paratroopers moved in firing recklessly and killed fourteen male civilians. All of the victims were innocent in the sense that an official tribunal failed to prove that any of the victims had been carrying weapons and the authorities felt it necessary to make out-of-court payments to the victims' relatives.

I can't believe the news today
 I can't close my eyes and make it go away
 Broken bottles under children's feet
 Bodies strewn across a dead end street
 But I won't heed the battle call
 It puts my back up, puts my back up against the wall
 Sunday, bloody Sunday
 Sunday, bloody Sunday

How long, how long must we sing this song?
 How long?
 Tonight we can be as one, tonight

And the battle's just begun
 There's many lost, but tell me who has won?
 The trenches dug within our hearts
 And mother's children, brothers, sisters torn apart

Wipe the tears from your eyes
 Wipe your tears away
 Wipe your bloodshot eyes

And it's true we are immune
 When fact is fiction and TV is reality
 And today the millions cry
 We eat and drink while tomorrow they die
 The real battle just begun
 To claim the victory Jesus won
 On a Sunday, bloody Sunday
 Sunday, bloody Sunday

(U2, 'Sunday, Bloody Sunday' in 1982)

The theme in the song is the futility and the hatred that is tearing the country apart. The trenches make unification impossible and people's

ways of thinking make it impossible for them to work constructively together in the future, for the first recruitment of any peaceful political settlement. The lyrics in the song are written from a personal point of view and they include everyday images of broken bottles, families being torn apart, and dead bodies on the streets of Belfast. The message of the song is that of aggressive pacifism. The song is a mixture of despair 'How long must we sing this song?' with a burst of hope 'Tonight we can be as one'. It may seem idealistic and naïve, but it was nevertheless a brave attempt to change Irish attitudes. In the Live Aid concert the song inspired a wholly different interpretation as the audience regarded it as a general condemnation of war anywhere in the world and the impact it can have on lives away from the front lines 'Today the millions cry. We eat and drink while tomorrow they die'. (Bowler and Dray, 1993:118).

'War' was a brave choice for a title for U2's third album and yet it was a very realistic one. 1982 was a year when conflicts raged around the world in places like the Falklands, the Middle East, South Africa, Poland, Northern Ireland, and Central America. Songs like 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' and 'Surrender' described the situation in Northern Ireland while 'Seconds' was a song about terrorism and bombs. A recurrent theme in the album was the repetition of historical mistakes, of people rooted in a traditional way of thinking and hatred, no longer caring why or what for.

A song by the Police called 'Invisible Sun' expresses concern for Irish children, and how they react to the situation. The tensions in which children live in Northern Ireland are inconceivable. From an early age on children are taught that there are two sides in the country. Many of them live in the Orange or Green ghettos, and the Catholic children go to different schools than the Protestant children.

I don't want to spend the rest of my life
Looking at the barrel of an armalite
I don't want to spend the rest of my days
Keeping out of trouble like the soldiers say

I don't want to spend my time in hell
 Looking at the walls of a prison cell
 I don't ever want to play the part
 Of a statistics on a government chart

The song begins by listing the things that children are grown up with in Northern Ireland. They see guns and soldiers every day, they are being warned not to get into trouble or else they will end up in prison. In this way they are warned not to take any actions of protest. The children's future has already been predicted in the statistics, but the song continues by expressing a longing for something different.

There has to be an invisible sun
 It gives its heat to everyone
 There has to be an invisible sun
 That gives us hope when the whole day's done

And they're only going to change this place
 By killing everybody in the human race
 And they would kill me for a cigarette
 But I don't want to die just yet

(The Police, 'Invisible Sun' in 1981)

The chorus explains how people manage in these surroundings, how they believe in things like the 'invisible sun' that gives them hope of a change. However, the song also gives a bleaker image of how things will change only by killing everybody, and how killing somebody does not require a stronger reason than 'a cigarette'. Both mental and physical violence is rules the area. The feel of hopelessness prevails in the song.

The lives of the children in the 1980s were still filled with bombings, armed men, violence and discrimination. Furthermore, their parents and older brothers and sisters were their role models and it was easy for them to adopt their thoughts and opinions about the situation. Therefore change for the better was not very likely. Roddy Frame, the singer and the songwriter of the one-man band, Aztec Camera, pointed out this common way of thinking in his song 'Good Morning Britain':

Twenty years and a loaded gun
Funerals, fear and the war ain't won
Paddy's still a figure of fun
It lightens up the danger

And a corporal sneers at a Catholic boy
And he eyes his gun like a rich man's toy
He's killing more than Celtic joy
Death is not a stranger

(Aztec Camera, 'Good Morning Britain' in 1990)

This verse of 'Good Morning Britain' describes the situation in Northern Ireland over twenty years time. With all the fightings and funerals the situation has not changed at all and it will not change until the attitudes of the people are changed. As long as 'paddy is still a figure of fun' and 'corporal' keeps on 'sneering at a Catholic boy' the efforts for peace settlement are wasted.

The situation in Northern Ireland has come to a new direction with a new peace agreement, but still the success of it can not be seen until in few years time. Songs about the situation in Northern Ireland can still be heard from bands like the Cranberries and singers like Sinead O'Connor, and concerts like 'Peace Together' in 1998 indicate that musicians still try to make an effort in reaching people's minds.

CONCLUSION

The songs I have analyzed describe British society during Margaret Thatcher's period as the Prime Minister. These songs comment on politics, describe changes in society and delve into everyday life. In my view, the lyrics are generally realistic and straightforward and they can reveal such information, eg. small details and thoughts of the people, that cannot be found in any other media. By commenting on daily life and politics, the musicians are using their power, hoping to influence the minds of the listeners. They do not give answers to the problems but share them with their audiences. They try to raise awareness and they have succeeded to do so because many of the songs that I have analyzed have in fact been quite popular. Songs are more easily recalled than political speeches and the face of a pop star is more familiar than that of any locally elected politician. However, the songwriter cannot control how a song is heard and how it is interpreted. In fact, the songwriter is walking on thin ice when he or she gets involved with politics. The subject is not the most ideal when thinking about the target group of pop music, the teenagers, and the purpose of pop music, to entertain. The record companies take risks in investing to political pop music. Still, it exists and I have also tried to find the reasons why it worked so well in the 1980s Britain.

Songs written about Margaret Thatcher and her politics concentrate on Thatcher's personality and on the strong leadership that she created during her career. For the first time in British music history the leader of the country was attacked strongly songs. Everything bad was seen as her fault. She was an easy target. That she was a strong-minded woman irritated many people, and the picture that media had already created about her demanded even stronger images of her in the song lyrics in order to startle people. Therefore, lyrics that picture Thatcher's death were not so surprising to find. However, I must question the naïvety of the songwriters. How was killing somebody going to solve problems and make things better? Once again, the songwriters were not really trying to

solve anything, but they only aimed at shocking the listeners and making sure that their songs were heard. However, at the same time some songwriters reminded their listeners that the political situation could be changed, urging them to vote, for example.

Songs about the royal family were less aggressive. The Sex Pistols had already made such a powerful attack on the Queen that it was no use repeating it. The royal family was a sensitive subject for songs in the 1980s because so many people admired its members especially after the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Those songwriters who dared to make songs about them concentrated on questioning the institution as such and criticized the people who kept on admiring them.

Songs supporting trade unions and especially the miners' strike dispute also made pop music political at the time. Musicians were clearly taking a stand and speaking out about the matter. Charity concerts were organized and these events were also attended by Labour politicians. This led to the formation of the Red Wedge organisation. For the first time in the history of British pop music musicians formed a politically orientated pressure group. The purpose of this was to bring the gap between politics and the lives of the young people closer to each other. However, the Red Wedge organisation suddenly disappeared after the 1987 election victory by the Conservatives. The political interest that pop musicians were showing in the beginning of the 1980s also calmed down from aggressive statements into hidden messages that could be read between the lines.

Songs about British society in the 1980s revealed many things that were hidden in the media. They concentrated on the lives of ordinary people and described how the changes in the society affected their lives. They were very realistic, and reflected the general gloomy atmosphere. The overwhelming pessimism in the songs told about the agony that people were feeling. Many new developments were dealt with anger and disapproval and the 'good old times' were compared with the new age. It

was obvious that things were not all right in the society. Problems like unemployment and poor urban development eventually led to rioting all over the country. Racism was also an issue about which musicians chose to make songs. Here the role of the songwriter was to remind the listeners of the importance of tolerance.

Songs about foreign policy proved that people were concerned about their future. The cold war period, nuclear armament, terrorism and warfare all over the world were making people scared. In particular, the war in the Falkland Islands and the situation in Northern Ireland worried people. The songs written about these events were very realistic and almost judgmental. For example, the Falkland War was justified in the media by claiming that it was necessary to fight the Argentinians, whereas in the songs it was completely condemned as an unnecessary attempt at the preservation of the empire. The songs reflected the questions in people's minds. Songs about Northern Ireland concentrated on reminding people how important it was to change attitudes and leave the history behind.

British pop music in the 1980s is a curious forum. The sudden interest of the musicians to make songs about society and politics prove that there was a need for this kind of expression. In the aftermath of punk music it was still important to concentrate on society and politics. The songs include alternative and detailed information about British society that cannot be found in other media. As a historical research songlyrics should not be neglected because history books only tell us about the main events leaving out the people's opinions and thoughts while songlyrics can only concentrate on ideas or on smaller issues that trouble people. They can also provide a new perspective on things. Some of the songs that I have analyzed are clearly trying to influence people to think differently and to change attitudes. How well they worked on people or against the songwriter would also be an interesting subject to investigate. Songlyrics have a curious power of bringing things close to the listener. They often tell a realistic story that is easy to relate to even

though it may be, and usually is, fictional. Their main purpose is entertainment but they also may have capacity of comfort and sharing the listener's anxiety. The songs that I have analyzed are written in different styles. Usually, the text in a song about a worrying issue is a sad and realistic one, but I have also found exceptions where the issue is approached humorously, for example Big Audio Dynamite's 'Funny Names' and in this way may stay in people's minds longer. Billy Bragg has a talent of writing songs in which he includes double meanings and synonyms that make his songs interesting to study. While studying the songlyrics of the 1980s Britain I have learnt more about the society and about the issues that troubled the people at that time. Some of the issues seem far and almost forgotten, for example the miner's strike, but the songlyrics have brought them back and the importance of these issues at the time clearly shows in the songlyrics.

PRIMARY SOURCES:**Records:**

Aztec Camera, *Good Morning Britain*, (R. Frame), Wea Records Ltd, 1990.

Big Audio Dynamite, *Funny Names*, (M. Jones, D. Letts), CBS, 1988.

Blow Monkeys, *Checking Out*, (Dr. Robert), RCA/Ariola Ltd, 1987.

Blow Monkeys, *How Long Can A Bad Thing Last*, (Dr. Robert), RCA/Ariola Ltd, 1987.

Blow Monkeys, *The Day After You*, (Dr. Robert), RCA/Ariola Ltd, 1987.

Bluebells, *South Atlantic Way*, (Bluebells), London, 1984.

Billy Bragg, *Ideology*, (B. Bragg), Go! Discs Ltd, 1986.

Billy Bragg, *The Homefront*, (B. Bragg), Go! Discs Ltd, 1986.

Billy Bragg, *Which Side Are You On?*, (B. Bragg), Go! Discs Ltd, 1984.

Clash, *Know Your Rights*, (Clash), CBS, 1982.

Clash, *Remote Control*, (Clash), CBS, 1977.

Clash, *The Crooked Beat*, (Clash), CBS, 1980.

Clash, *Up In Heaven (Not Only Here)*, (Clash), CBS, 1980.

Clash, *White Riot*, (Clash), CBS, 1977.

Elvis Costello, *Peace In Our Time*, (D.P.A. MacManus), Riviera Global Record Productions, 1982.

Elvis Costello, *Shipbuilding*, (D.P.A. MacManus), Riviera Global Record Productions, 1983.

Elvis Costello, *Tramp The Dirt Down*, (D.P.A. MacManus), Warner Bros. Records inc., 1989.

Dire Straits, *Telegraph Road*, (M. Knopfler), Phonogram, 1982.

Fine Young Cannibals, *Blue*, (Fine Young Cannibals), London

Records Ltd, 1985.

Fine Young Cannibals, *Move To Work*, (Fine Young Cannibals), London Records Ltd, 1985.

Housemartins, *Flag Day*, (P. Heaton/ S. Cullimore), Go! Discs Ltd, 1986.

Housemartins, *Freedom*, (P. Heaton/ S. Cullimore), Go! Discs Ltd, 1986.

Housemartins, *Get Up Off Our Knees*, (P. Heaton/ S. Cullimore), Go! Discs Ltd, 1986.

Housemartins, *The People Who Grinned Themselves To Death*, (P. Heaton/ S. Cullimore), Chrysalis Record Ltd, 1987.

Jam, *The Planners Dream Goes Wrong*, (P. Weller), Polydor Ltd, 1982.

Morrissey, *Asian Rut*, (Morrissey/ Nevin), EMI, 1991.

Morrissey, *Bengali In Platforms*, (Morrissey/ S. Street), EMI, 1988.

Morrissey, *Margaret On The Guillotine*, (Morrissey/ S. Street), Sire Records Company, 1988.

Police, *Invisible Sun*, (Sting), A & M Records Ltd, 1981.

Police, *Synchronicity II*, (Sting), A & M Records Ltd, 1983.

Prefab Sprout, *Diana*, (P. MacAloon), Kitchenware/ Columbia, 1985.

Ruefrex, *The Wild Colonial Boy*, (Ruefrex), Stff/ MCA, 1986.

Smiths, *The Queen Is Dead*, (Morrissey/ J. Marr), Sire Records Company, 1987.

Specials, *Ghost Town*, (J. Dammers), Rough Trade, 1981.

Sting, *We Work The Black Seam Together*, (Sting), A & M Records Ltd, 1985.

Style Council, *Iwasadoledadstoyboy*, (P. Weller), Polydor Ltd, 1988.

Style Council, *Right To Go*, (P. Weller/ White/ Dynamic Three), Polydor Ltd, 1987.

That Petrol Emotion, *Tension*, (O'Neill, McLaughla, O'Gormáin), Virgin, 1988.

The The, *Heartland*, (M. Johnson), CBS Records, 1986.

The The, *The Beat(en) Generation*, (M. Johnson), CBS Records, 1989.

U2, *Red Hill Mining Town*, (U2), Island Records Ltd, 1987..

U2, *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, (U2), Island Records Ltd, 1982.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Bibliography:

Abercrombie, Nicholas, and Alan Warde et al. 1988. *Contemporary British society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Arthur, Paul 1984. *Government and politics of Northern Ireland*. Essex: Longman Group Ltd.

Benyon, John, and John Solomos (eds.) 1987. *The roots of urban unrest*. Exeter.

Bowler, Dave, and Bryan Dray 1993. *U2 A conspiracy of hope*. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

Chambers, Iain 1986. *Urban rhythms, pop music and popular culture*. London: MacMillan Education Ltd.

Denselow, Robin 1989. *When the music's over. The story of political pop*. London: Faber and Faber.

Dunphy, Eamon 1987. *Unforgettable fire. The story of U2*. Suffolk: Viking.

Edge, Brian 1991. *The Fine Young Cannibals' story. The sweet and the sour*. Exeter: Omnibus Press.

Halsey, A.H. 1986. *Change in the British society*. Oxford: University Press.

Harris, Kenneth 1988. *Thatcher*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Kelly, David 1994. *The Q rock 'n' roll reader*. London: Omnibus Press.

Miles, John, John Tobler, and Mal Peachy (eds.) 1992. *The Clash. The new visual documentary*. Exeter: Omnibus Press.

Robertson, John 1988. *Morrissey in his own words*. London: Omnibus Press.

Salewicz, Chris 1989. *Billy Bragg. Midnights in Moscow*. London: Omnibus Press.

Widgery, David 1986. *Beating time*. London: Chatto and Windus.