

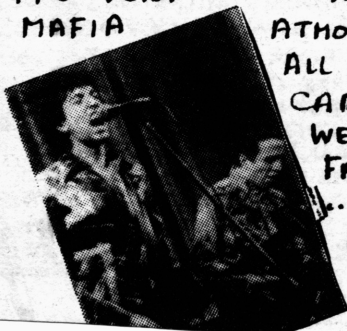
JUST "ALTERNATIVE 21"  
 SPRING 1978 "ULSTER" NO31.

# WATCHING THE REHEARSALS WITH...

## THE CLASH AND DAVE ANGRY

WHY I CHOSE THAT SATURDAY TO TRY & GET IN CONTACT WITH JOE STRUMMER. SEE, HE'D MORE OR LESS INVITED ME TO TALK TO HIM IN LONDON WHEN WE SPOKE TO HIM IN BELFAST AT CHRISTMAS. I GUESS IT WAS JUST PURE IRISH LUCK....

ANYWAY, I ARRIVED AT THE "GREAT WHITE MANSION" IN W.1. EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON. THE DISTRICT IS TYPICAL OF LONDON - THERE'S NOWHERE LIKE IT IN N. IRELAND. I PASSED BY EUSTON TOWER WHERE THE HUGE CAPITAL RADIO BUILDING STANDS. JOE TRIED TO ADD A BIT OF SPRAY-CAN COLOUR TO THE UGLY EDIFICE A YEAR OR SO BACK. BUT THE THING IS CLEAN AGAIN. CLEAN, STERILE & SMUG. DOWN JOE'S STREET THERE'S A BIT OF SLITS GRAFFITI, BUT APART FROM THAT IT'S VERY MUCH A COOL MAFIA



JOE ISN'T AT HOME. HE'S MOVED ELSEWHERE SINCE HIS SOJOURN IN HOSPITAL. THE LOUS ARE HERE, BUT; WANNA SPEAK TO THEM?

AH, NO THANKS, I'LL PHONE THE STUDIOS WHERE YOU SAY THE BAND ARE AT THE MOMENT. BY THE WAY, MY SPIKY-TOPPED HOST SHOWED ME AROUND THE HOUSE.

LOOK, IT'S NO BIG WHITE MANSION.

NO WAY. IT'S A SQUAT. THAT'S ALL. JOE HAD A ROOM THERE.

I SAW A SIGN ON ONE DOOR. IT SAID. "DO NOT DISTURB BETWEEN 9-12 A.M. & 2 P.M."

5 P.M.

-LOUS

IN

REHEARSAL."

AH, THE GLAMOROUS LIVES THAT THESE YOUNG PUNK-ROCKERS LEAD....

I PHONE-UP.

GIRL ANSWERS. WAIT A MINUTE. "ALTERNATIVE ULSTER"? ... JOE SAYS IT'S O.K. THERE IN A CAFE AT THE MOMENT.. HURRY OVER...

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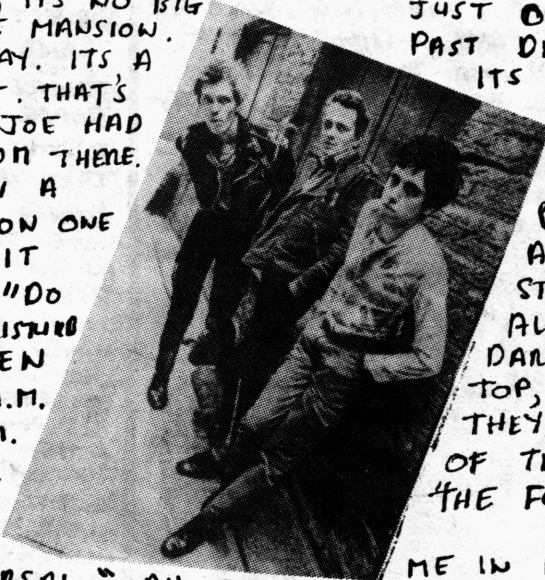
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REHEARSAL."

NOW, THE ATMOSPHERE OF CHALK-FARM-ROAD IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. I RECKON ITS ONE OF THE BEST AREAS OF LONDON - ALL MARKETS, ALL HUSTLE & BUSTLE, AND, THANK GOD, FRIENDLY VIBES. THE STUDIO IS JUST OVER THE BRIDGE, PAST DINGY DINGWALLS.

ITS DOWN A SORT OF ENTRÉE. WE KNOCK ON THE DOOR & A BOUNCER (?) SHOWS US UP A FLIGHT OF VERY STEEP WOODEN STAIRS. ALL SMOKE & DARKNESS AT THE TOP, BUT THERE THEY ARE, THE 4 OF THEM, WATCHING "THE FONZ" ON T.V....

JOE GREET ME IN HIS USUAL RELAXED FRIENDLY MANNER. I SIT DOWN BESIDE HIM & SHOW HIM THE "GREEN" A.U. HE REMEMBERS US & HES GOT ONE ALREADY! HE SAID, "YEAH IM PLEASED WITH IT, IT TURNED INTO A GOOD STORY, I SPOSE..." SUDDENLY NICK JONES EMERGES FROM



THE FAR CORNER AND LOOKS AT THE FANZINE. HE'S GOT ONE TOO, BERNI RHODES HAVING BOUGHT ONE THAT POODLE "NICKED" ONCE THE FOWZ WAS OVER, THE BAND GET-UP & JUMP DOWN BELOW WHERE A DRUMKIT & ASSORTED GUITARS LIE. IT TRANSPIRES THAT THE BAND ARE REHEARSING A PROGRAMME FOR B.D.C. 2, ANYWAY, I'M TREATED TO A FREE CLASH GIG AS THE BAND SLASH THROUGH ABOUT SEVEN

WEIGHT NEW SONGS, ALL OF WHICH ARE (HOPEFULLY) CUTS FOR THE NEW ALBUM. I'LL BE HONEST, MY OPINION IS COMPLETELY SUBJECTIVE AS THE CLASH ARE WITHOUT DOUBT MY FAVOURITE ALL TIME BAND, BUT EVEN PLAYING THROUGH SONGS MINUS THE LYRICS, THEY'RE MILES AHEAD OF ANYBODY ELSE. THEY MAKE BANDS LIKE SHAM LOOK POSITIVELY STUPID. THE POWER, RAW, BUT RESTRAINED & REFINED TO PERFECTION IS AWESOME. THE SONGS STIR SOMETHING INSIDE OF YOU: I KNOW IT SOUNDS PAFT, BUT THEY MOVE YOU IN THE WAY THAT HYMNS & THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ARE SUPPOSED TO MOVE YOU. I SAW THE BUZZCOCKS LATER THAT SATURDAY AND, TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, THERE'S NOT EVEN IN THE SAME

LEAGUE AS THE CLASH. THEY STARTED OFF WITH A SONG WHICH COULD BE CALLED "COLD IN YOUR HEART", STRUMMER JUST CUTTING THROUGH THE SONGS AND YOURS TRULY TRYING TO PICK-OUT THE HOOK LINES. EACH SONG THEY PLAYED TWICE. ONCE WITH LYRICS, ONCE (BEFORE THAT) WITHOUT WORDS. EACH SONG STOOD-OUT AS BEING MUCH MORE

MELODIC THAN EARLIER MATERIAL.



LOTS OF LONG SLOPING, MELODIC HOOK-LINES LIKE THAT IN THE MIDDLE OF "CLASH CITY ROCKERS" - THE GARY GLITTER BIT. AFTER ABOUT THE THIRD SONG, PAUL & NICK SUDDENLY BROKE INTO THE RIFF (?) OF "COMPLETE CONTROL". ITS A SIGN OF THE HIGH STANDARD OF THE 3 PRECEDING NEW SONGS THAT I DIDN'T WANT THE BAND TO PLAY WOT IS PROBABLY MY FAVOURITE SINGLE OF ALL TIME. ANYWAY, JOE CALMLY STOPS THE TEMPORARY DISORDER - IT DOESN'T REQUIRE HAND-WAVING, IT DOESN'T REQUIRE EVEN

SO MUCH AS A NOD - JOE JUST LOOKS AT THEM & HIS EXPRESSION IS ENOUGH TO RECAPTURE THE DUO'S ATTENTION. "ROIGHT, 'CITY ROCKERS'. O.K.?" JONES YELLS AN EXCITED "WONE, TWO, FREE, FAWE!" AND THEY'RE AWAY, THE POODLE ROCKING AROUND ON THE SPOT, ATTEMPTING A SORT OF CHUCIC BERRY "DUCK-WALK" AND LOOKING UP AT US FOR APPROVAL. & I CAN'T HELP LAUGHING. HE LAUGHS TOO...AND MISSES THE BACK-UP VOCALS. SUDDENLY,

JOE STOPS IN MID-SONG.

"ITS TOO FAST, TAKE IT SLOWER.." HE DRAWLS, TELLING TOPPER HEADON HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE. IN FACT, THIS HAPPENED QUITE A FEW TIMES DURING THE NEXT HOUR - PERHAPS THE CLASH DRUMMING PROBLEM IS SOMETHING THAT WILL NEVER BE SOLVED. ANYWAY, NICK'S WORK ON "TOMMY GUN" WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE TO THESE EARS, JOE WORKING UP A RITE OLD SWEAT ON THE CLOSING BIT, HIS LEFT LEG & RIGHT ARM POUNDING UP & DOWN IN A FRENZY. THEY END WITH A NEW REGGAE NUMBER - VERY IMPRESSIVE. THEY RETURN UPSTAIRS TO SEE T.R.B. ON T.V., JOES TELLS ME THERE'LL BE MORE SAX. ON THE NEW ALBUM, THE PLAYER ONCE AGAIN BEING C.C. CURTIS OF GLORIA MUNDI. NICK SAID SOMETHING ABOUT KEYBOARDS, BUT HE WASN'T IN A STATE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. A BAND CALLED SAD CAFE COMES ON T.V. JOE TAKES A DRAG AND MUTES: "THERE'S NOT SAD. THERE'S PATHETIC."