

Did the Sex Pistols go too far?

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An essay I wrote in my History of Rock and Roll class in College.

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The Sex Pistols started the punk rock phenomena in England when they came out with their controversial singles "Anarchy in the UK" and "God Save the Queen" during Queen Elizabeth II's silver jubilee. These two songs caused the Sex Pistols' music to be banned in England. I feel that this was so controversial because, during my time in England, I learned that it is almost a sin to talk bad about the Queen (this is probably because throughout the country's history, citizens would get their heads chopped off for saying anything negative about their king or queen). In America, we have the freedom of speech and are not shunned for criticizing our leader.

Green Day's "American Idiot" album made fun of the Bush administration and caused some controversy, but their music was not banned. In my opinion, the lyrics to "American Idiot" are far more explicit than "God Save the Queen". Here is the beginning of "God Save the Queen": "God save the queen/The fascist regime/They made you a moron/Potential H-bomb God save the queen/She aint no human being/There is no future/In England's dreaming Don't be told what you want/Don't be told what you need/There's no future no future/No future for you".

Here is the beginning of "American Idiot": "Don't want to be an American idiot/Don't want a nation under the new media/And can you hear the sound of hysteria?/The subliminal mind fuck America.Welcome to a new kind of tension/All across the alien nation/Where everything isn't meant to be okay/Television dreams of tomorrow/We're not the ones who're meant to follow/For that's enough to argue. Well maybe I'm the faggot America/I'm not a part of a redneck agenda/Now everybody do the propaganda/And sing along to the age of paranoia".

The Sex Pistols took a chance and spoke their mind. They were chastised for talking ill of the Queen, but in doing so they kicked off punk rock and earned their place in the Rock Hall of Fame in 2006 (<http://rockhall.com/inductees/sex-pistols/>). So back to my original question; did the Sex Pistols go too far? In my opinion (as an American), no, there should have been the right to speak their minds, but if I were to ask anyone in England that same question I am almost positive the answer would be, "yes, they went too far. Nobody has the right to insult our Queen".

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