

**RABBLE ROUSING**

*Clockwise from far left: Imran Amed; Vivienne Westwood (far right) on the streets of London in 1977; Gareth Pugh with Daphne Guinness at his A/W '12-13 show in Paris; Malcolm McLaren; Paul Simonon of the band The Clash (1977)*



*The British school*  
BY IMRAN AMED



Alexander McQueen A/W '96-97



**B**lack fishnet stockings and spiked jewelry. Safety pins and heavy, black eyeliner. Black garbage bags transformed into dresses. Black leather jackets, rubber boots and vinyl clothing. And, of course, military boots, motorcycle boots and brothel creepers, all in varying shades of distressed black.

These are some of the visual signifiers of the wave of punk rock fashions that bonded groups of young people together in their rejection of the mainstream in the 1970s. The quasi-uniform came with a sense of solidarity that announced to passers-by, “I belong too,” or perhaps more accurately, “I don’t belong!”

Indeed, when the Sex Pistols and The Clash—who were at the vanguard of this new musical movement, born in London and shaking up the world—made their shock-and-awe voices heard on the global music scene, their musical rebellion was accompanied by

a kind of dress that set into motion a fashion revolution that has endured in the years since then, and has remained a part of the collective consciousness of fashion designers around the world, and the collective psyche of this great city.

Of course, it was Vivienne Westwood and the Sex Pistols’ manager, Malcolm McLaren, who were the first proponents of punk within the fashion world. Their shop at 430 King’s Road, called ‘Sex’, was a cornerstone of the punk scene that emerged in London in the 1970s. Since then, we have seen punk-inspired fashions from a great many designers coming out of London, from Alexander McQueen and Zandra Rhodes to Gareth Pugh, the most recent designer in a long line of rebellious fashion geniuses.

Even today, one can’t really think of London and fashion without reflecting on the musical and cultural movements that sit alongside them. The latest cool band to come out of London and make global waves is The xx. But while band members Oliver Sim, Jamie Smith and Romy Madley Croft are a far cry from punk in their musical sounds, the DNA of punk fashion flows through their skinny black jeans, leather vests and black boots.

Long live punk fashion!  
*Imran Amed is the founder and editor of the Business of Fashion* ■