

Clash declares war on man who picks up their tab

(Herald staff writer)

SAN BERNARDINO — The Clash unleashed its own brand of guerrilla warfare upon US II this weekend, temporarily derailing this rock 'n' roll train of peace, love and understanding.

While preaching positive thinking and communication, the US II people saw The Clash's outrage over aspects of the three-day festival blow up in their faces.

The Clash controversy — which, at first, was falsely rumored to mean the group might be pulling out of the festival at

the last minute — centred around their demand that Steven Wozniak, US II's head honcho, put 10 per cent of what he has spent on the festival back into this California community.

Translated, that means the group wanted the money to go to needy types who couldn't afford to come to US II.

Wozniak's initial response was to say that The Clash was getting paid \$500,000 (plus \$200,000 in expenses) and they could write their own cheque.

However, he did relent and co-signed a cheque with the

band donating \$38,000 to an unknown charity.

The Clash, however, still called a press conference prior to their set Saturday night (the group was the headlining act that evening).

At the conference, the group's manager and press agent — Bernard Rhode and Cosmo Vinyl — blasted Wozniak in no uncertain terms saying he could damn well afford to help the poor and if not, "there are better things to spend his money on than rock concerts."

The Clash spokesmen then

said the band would perform in the Los Angeles area in June at substantially reduced prices, subsidized by what it has earned at US II.

When asked why the band just didn't pull out of US II altogether, the group's spokesman said "because there'd be a riot out there and, besides, Van Halen would call us commies."

The affair over the cheque to charity seemed odd to most, since Wozniak lost millions last year and could possibly do the same this time around.

As a result, the contrived controversy seemed aimed more at drawing attention to other aspects of US II such as the high price of admission, food and transportation, poor treatment of the press (most of whom can't get near the front of the stage or backstage), as well as the absence of black performers.

As guitarist Joe Strummer said when on stage Saturday night:

"East L.A. (the city's black area) isn't going to stay there

forever. If there's going to be a future, it's got to come from all parts and not just some great white way down the middle!"

The Clash also pointedly put down US II's proposed joining of technology and humanity for a better world.

The whole affair came to a stormy ending when stage hands refused to let the band perform a second encore, even taking the instruments from their hands. A minor scuffle ensued, while fans were filing out of the US II concert bowl.