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‘The bastions of ignorance, mediocrity and control’(Loaded): British Punk fanzines, 1976-1984

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‘the bastions of ignorance, mediocrity and control’(*Loaded*): British Punk fanzines, 1976-1984

Ripped & Torn, 17 (1979), London College of Communication.

Introduction

The British punk movement has an unmistakable legacy: it’s remembered for energetic music, provocative fashion and anti-establishment rhetoric. Punk was a defiant youth

expression against everything conventional. But this cultural moment has repeatedly been framed by a 'nostalgic hue,' encapsulated primarily through dubious anecdotes and mythologised punk icons.[1] Recent scholarly attention, however, has increasingly acknowledged punk as a legitimate field of historical investigation. This has entailed some focus on the fan-made music magazines – "fanzines" or "zines" – through which punk sentiments were vocalised, recorded and shaped.

Zines exist in a longer history of countercultural print. Sheila Liming has likened them to underground broadsheets and pamphlets which attempted to reclaim free print in Britain as early as the 16th century. Most closely, they inherited their defining characteristics – homemade, unprofessional, and distributed through mail or at events – from American science-fiction fanzines in the 1930s.[2] In the late-1970s and early-1980s, zines developed a distinctive style. The use of cut'n'paste, imperfect type and chaotic pages came to define punk aesthetic. But they were also a vehicle for the youth attitudes at the heart of the punk movement.

Lucy Robinson argues that 'disseminated beyond profit and funding structures,' zines constitute a bottom-up history.[3] Indeed, "do it yourself" ("DIY") print acted as a mouthpiece for young people who perceived themselves as unrepresented in the mainstream, and therefore, provide an invaluable point of difference from mass-produced media. This dissertation will examine punk fanzines to consider youth viewpoints on their own terms. In doing so, it seeks to gain uncensored insight into contemporary experiences. More importantly, it hopes to reveal how the interactions and cultural discourse materialised in zines went on to shape youth communities. These communities will be observed at varying levels of politicisation, and then be considered in parallel to more recent iterations of youth culture.

[1] Matthew Worley, 'Teenage Warning: Punk, Politics and Youth Culture', in *No Future: Punk, Politics, and British Youth Culture, 1976-1984* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 20.
[2] Sheila Liming, 'Of Anarchy and Amateurism: Zine Publication and Print Dissent', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association,* 43.2 (2010), pp.124-131; Jess Baines, Tony Credland and Mark Pawson, 'Doing it Ourselves: Countercultural and Alternative Radical Publishing in the Decade before Punk', in *Ripped, Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976*, ed. by The Subcultures Network (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), p. 17.
[3] Lucy Robinson, 'Zines and History: Zines as History', in *Ripped, Torn and Cut,* p. 39.

Although briefly touching on some theoretical approaches, such as the works of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu, this dissertation will be driven primarily by the source material.[4] Zines will be examined through three key features: form, content, and subsequently, processes of community-formation. Zines were distinctive in form due to being self-made, personal, and not motivated by profit – the epitome of the punk "DIY" ethos. These were sites where punk was accessed, expressed and visualised with a self-proclaimed "authenticity." Looking beyond physical and visual features, Matt Grimes and Tim Wall argue that zines should be acknowledged for their verbal role in *producing* notions of punk.[5] They were a medium through which creator and audience could interact; a space for ongoing dialogue and debate about the meaning of punk. Through unique and interrelated form and content, zines can be understood as recording and shaping youth communities. The visible processes of participation and exchange between zine-creators ("zinesters"), fans and musicians amounted to a powerful sense of belonging and connection. This could extend locally, and nationally. A source-driven methodological approach allows us to consider punk communities through the very voices and cultural exchanges that catalysed them. Through a further examination of anarchist and far-right sources, this dissertation will put forward the argument that zines were effective in popularising more ideological interpretations of punk, and therefore, susceptible to radicalisation.

The topic will be examined mostly through the language used in source material, rather than overt engagement with debates surrounding terminology. Punk, Post-Punk and New Wave are all contested terms referencing unfixed and overlapping cultural moments and musical styles.[6] These don't necessarily map neatly onto the individuals and communities that engaged with them. Therefore, "punk" will be used more generally, and should be taken as an umbrella term for these three interrelated subcategories in the period 1976-1984. As is typical in assessment of youth movements, the term "subculture" will be employed occasionally – this is not to imply any assumptions about group homogeneity or fixed identity. Andy Bennet has rightfully criticised subcultural frameworks as 'a means to explain

[4] Raymond Williams, 'Towards a Sociology of Culture', in *Culture* (London: Fontana Press, 1981) pp. 9-32; Pierre Bourdieu 'The Market of Symbolic Goods', in *Print Cultures,* ed. by Caroline Davis (London: Red Globe Press, 2019), pp. 17-30 (first publ. in *Poetics,* 14 (1985), pp. 17-22 and 33-43).
[5] Matt Grimes and Tim Wall, 'Punk Zines: 'Symbols of Defiance' from the Print to the Digital Age', in *Fight Back: Punk, Politics and Resistance,* ed. by The Subcultures Network (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 293.
[6] For more on the origins and meanings of "punk", see Matthew Worley, 'What's This For? Punk's Contested Meanings', in *No Future: Punk, Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976-1984* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 24-48.

away socio-cultural practices that are far more complex and multi-faceted.'[7] The personal voice and contestation exhibited in zines supports this complexity: where used, "subculture" will simply refer to punk's separation and resistance to mainstream culture. While fully appreciating the need for these nuances in terminology elsewhere, a complete interrogation of their meanings and applicability is not necessary or possible in a dissertation of this scope.

Zines are, in their very nature, unconventional.[8] Disorderly and chaotic designs can not always be represented in transcribed text. This is representative of their unique value: zines are an unaltered material trace of how young people interpreted and reacted to contemporary cultural and socio-political affairs. It is hoped that a consideration of processes of community-formation in British punk zines will showcase the value of self-published medias as historical sources. What's more, the insights they provide are not limited to punk; these physical processes of cultural interaction have translated to accessible and unregulated digital spaces in the twenty-first century.

Literature Review

Punk – previously in the domain of popular histories – has recently enjoyed a new surge of historiographical attention.[9] This increasing regard for the historical importance of youth cultures has also unavoidably involved some investigation of fanzines.

"The Subcultures Network" (founded in 2011) have been fundamental in this development. A group of academics that contribute to a series with *Palgrave Macmillan*; their interdisciplinary approach has sought to demonstrate 'the ways in which subcultures and popular music serve as mediums for social change.'[10] Particularly relevant to this study is *Ripped, Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976* – an edited collection which focuses exclusively on the punk zine.[11] Matthew Worley has also been crucial in

[7] Andy Bennet, 'Situating 'Subculture': On the Origins and Limits of the Term for Understanding Youth Cultures', in *Researching Subcultures, Myth and Memory*, ed. by Bart van der Steen and Thierry P. F. Verburgh (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 19.
[8] Therefore, it will not always be possible to provide page numbers.
[9] For prominent popular histories of punk see Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber, 2001); Simon Reynolds, *Rip it up and Start Again: Post-Punk 1978-1984* (London: Faber, 2005).
[10] 'The Subcultures Network', *University of Reading* <https://research.reading.ac.uk/subcultures-network/about-us/> [accessed 9th April 2024].
[11] The Subcultures Network (eds), *Ripped, Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

legitimising punk as a point of historical investigation – both within "The Subcultures Network," and through his own independent works. Worley has interrogated youth experiences through an impressive range of focal points, including fanzines, the Cold War, and the far-right.[12] Zines have also become a growing point of academic interest more generally, in relation to a number of different contexts and spaces. Stephen Duncombe and Teal Triggs both published early works that proved the potential of zines for fruitful analysis.[13]

Recent scholarly enthusiasm for youth culture, punk, and zines more specifically, however, has largely manifested itself in edited collections or individual articles, in which a number of narrow focal points are analysed separately. Although these works have been invaluable in demonstrating the importance of youth experiences and mediums, their findings are limited to subcultural and spatial specificity. An analysis of British punk zines reflects this necessity – that cultures must be observed contextually. But by taking a broader look at this "zine scene" at the height of its productivity, this dissertation will consider how the very dynamics of community in zines were employed and directed in different ways. Through examining three overarching categorisations – "apolitical" punk, anarcho-punk, and neo-fascist punk – it intends to contribute further understanding of youth-community to this developing field of work.

Structure

Even within the limitation of British punk, zines have covered a variety of topics that would be impossible to cover in a study of this size. Zines capture the experiences of different regional areas, as well as racial, gender and queer identities – this is without taking into account the variety of material in countless international contexts. Rather than tackling these topics incompletely, the varying degrees to which British punk culture was politicised will be

[12] Worley, 'Teenage Warning: Punk, Politics and Youth Culture', in *No Future,* pp. 1-23; Matthew Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines, 1976-84: 'While the World was Dying, did you Wonder Why?', *History Workshop Journal,* 79 (2015), pp.76-106, doi:10.1093/hwj/dbu043; Matthew Worley, 'One Nation Under the Bomb: The Cold War and British Punk to 1984', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism,* 5.2 (2011), pp.65-83; Matthew Worley and Nigel Copsey, 'White Youth: The far right, punk and British youth culture, 1977-87' in *Tomorrow Belongs to Us: The British Far Right since 1967,* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp.113-131.
[13] Stephen Duncombe 'One: Zines', in *Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (Portland: Bloomington, 1997), pp. 6-21; Teal Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic', *Journal of Design History,* 19 (2006), pp. 69-81.

analysed more broadly. It is hoped that this will act as a background against which numerous different focal points could be further investigated.

The first chapter will focus on the zine as a material representation of the central tenets of British punk: alternative thinking, "DIY," and youth togetherness. Rather than simply analysing zines as a record, it will interrogate how zines shaped and defined punk itself. Early emphasis was often centred on the consolidation of music-communities. This chapter will consider how, through self-analysis, the form became increasingly ideological.

The second chapter will examine the growth of anarcho-punk and how, particularly in the 1980s, zines and punk became vehicles for social activism and ideological debate. These zines offer invaluable insights into contemporary youth experiences and discontent in a turbulent period of British history. Additionally, they represent the strength of cultural communities in uniting people under common identity and belief.

The third chapter will examine how the communities fostered in punk zines were vulnerable and well-suited to extremist politics. Far-right appropriation of the zine harnessed both its unregulated format, and the appeal of youth culture. This final chapter will consider how prior ideological-cultural combinations came to influence neo-fascist politics on an international scale.

It should be noted that whilst these categories emerged in a loosely chronological order, with each influencing the next, this is undoubtedly a generalisation. The "zine scene" was complex, overlapping, and personal. So whilst sequential development should be acknowledged, it must not be overemphasised. More crucial is the way in which this structure demonstrates the varying ways that youth communities could be channelled – as a format for fan communication, youth recreation, or ideological mobilisation. Often, these functions existed simultaneously.

1. Zines and the Punk Movement: *The "DIY" ethos*

British punk emerged in 1976 as a point of difference; an energetic escape for a disenfranchised youth. Most prominently, Malcolm Mclaren and Vivienne Westwood's shop *SEX* offered an 'embrace of hedonistic escapism.'[14] Through their provocative fashion and promotion of the *Sex Pistols,* a radical subversion of rock came into being: featuring fetish-wear, images of sexual deviancy and swastikas, the punk image was as loud and shocking as its music. Notions of radical youth rebellion were amplified by press depictions of moral outrage, namely in response to the *Sex Pistols* swearing on live TV in December 1976, and their release of *God Save the Queen* (and defacing of the Queen) in tandem with the 1977 Silver Jubilee.[15] Punk bands called social conformity into question. With the *Buzzcocks'* self-release of *Spiral Scratch* in 1977, music institutions themselves were undermined. Through loud and uncontrollable youth expression, punk placed itself in opposition to then-mainstream "hippy culture" and acted as a call to action.[16]

In it's ambition to provoke reaction and enact an assault on conformity, punk subverted any conventional demarcations of the political spectrum.[17] Such an oppositional stance reflected a wider atmosphere of disillusionment and destabilisation in Britain in the 1970s. This can be credited to a number of issues, including economic turbulence (perpetuated by high inflation, unemployment, devaluation of the pound, and an oil crisis), post-imperial insecurity, and conflict in Northern Ireland.[18] But the youth of the late 1970s also witnessed a broader transition away from collectivist principles. Social anxieties reflected the collapse of the welfare-capitalist assumptions which had underpinned Britain's "postwar consensus."[19] Punk language, style, and iconography represented a dystopian depiction of post-industrial modernity; a rhetoric of decline, passivity and consumption.[20]

In the late 1970s, messages of urgency and youth independence were invigorated by the rapid growth of the punk music scene. Accordingly, fan-made magazines offered hasty updates on the flourishing of "punk" in a format that aligned with its ideologies. The first and

[14] David Wilkinson, 'Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't Have?): Punk, Politics and Same-Sex Passion', *Key Words: A Journal of Cultural Materialism,* 13 (2015), p. 62.
[15] Worley, 'Teenage Warning', p. 6.
[16] Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue', p. 70.
[17] Nick Bentley, 'Punk Fiction; Punk in Fiction', in *Youth Subcultures in Fiction, Film and Other Media*, ed. by Nick Bentley, Beth Johnson and Andrzej Zieleniec (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 52.
[18] Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', p. 88.
[19] David Wilkinson, 'Post-Punk, Thatcherism and the Libertarian Left', *Post-Punk, Politics and Pleasure in Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 49.
[20] Worley, 'One Nation Under the Bomb', p. 70; Worley, 'Teenage Warning', p. 7.

most prominent of these British zines was Mark Perry's *Sniffin' Glue* (1976-1977). This was closely followed by an inspired Tony Drayton, whose *Ripped & Torn* produced 18 issues from 1976-1979. These two zines – widely acknowledged as the most prominent and renowned in Britain – helped establish the medium as a central vehicle in the proliferation and communication of punk.

Sniffin' Glue and *Ripped & Torn* emphasised punk as a music-community. For the majority of *Sniffin' Glue*'s run, it consisted predominantly of reviews and commentaries on music and gigs – articulated in simple type-written font, a scattering of pictures, and distinctive marker-written titles. Both zines analysed what punk should mean to the youth. "Mark P." and "Tony D." encouraged their readers to 'flood the market with punk-writing,' 'go out and create,' and resist any restriction on their freedom, imagination, or individuality.[21] Creative expression was promoted as something outside of the conventional 'system' and 'security' of life, conceived as: school, steady job, family and car, hard work, and retirement.[22] But these messages of non-conformity and independent action, whilst prominent, were framed primarily through music as a point of difference. They credited the energy and lyrics of the *Sex Pistols* and *The Clash* as 'preaching an alternative.'[23] Ideology, identity, and music were intertwined. *Ripped & Torn* combined these in creating an independent punk music-chart through mail-in reader participation. Here, an interactive community worked outside institutional structure in the name of "DIY" independence, driven fundamentally by their belonging to a shared fan-base. It was this combination of participation-consumption and sense of youth ownership that was an effective baseline for consolidating communities with little spatial limitation, and which would later come to be increasingly politicised.

A significant amount of zine content, then, was true to the *fan*zine label – music was listed and analysed, musicians were interviewed and the music "scene" was promoted. But this isn't necessarily the focal point from a historical lens. What makes the zine such an invaluable source isn't necessarily what they tell us about musical events and opinions, but rather the cultures and communities they encompassed. This culture, underneath disputed labels and "subcultural" groupings, captured the intangible feelings, attitudes and

[21] *Sniffin' Glue,* 5 (1976), p. 2; *Sniffin' Glue,* 8 (1977), p. 10; *Ripped & Torn,* 16 (1979).
[22] *Sniffin' Glue,* 8 (1977); *Ripped & Torn,* 14 (1977).
[23] *Ripped & Torn,* 4 (1977).

assumptions of the time.[24] These were frequently founded in common interest. As David Hesmondhalgh argues, we shouldn't look back on music in 'mythologized moments of rebellion,' but rather as something uniquely social and collective: 'music, especially when combined with other forms of communication … can be very powerful in forging, fostering, solidifying, and challenging values and attachments.'[25]

Equally valuable is the uniqueness of the zine as a physical medium, given the transparency offered by their (typically) non-profit and self-published status. "Zinesters" frequently pointed to their lack of officialdom and profit-motive as a source of pride and authenticity, proclaiming their material as 'written by fans … for fans' and as constituting 'THE music press, rather than the alternative.'[26] They were a materialisation of the "DIY ethos" and calls to youth action that were so central to punk-affiliated movements and sentiments. But given how they varied in content, and were often closely tied to the region and individual(s) from which they originated, zines also represented the lived experiences of young people and their communities. Moreover, they functioned as a point of communication between the two, on a local and national level.

The amateur production of zines allowed the formation of 'an alternative critical space' in counteraction to a media that was not only conceived of as hostile against punk, but also a force instilling social conformity and submission.[27] But the "DIY" message didn't just allow a subversion of the mainstream, it created a democratic space which was accessible to contribution and definition by fellow "zinesters" and readers alike.[28] This is apparent in inclusions of (often critical) letters, reviews, and the ever-present address to write in to. There were no fixed boundaries between creator and consumer or dynamics of competition within the "zine scene". In this sense, punk zines can be likened to Bourdieu's analysis of artistic and intellectual communities. Bourdieu argued that since communities engaging in restricted cultural production didn't compete for the largest market, they evaluated work on their own terms. That their audience consisted of 'critics and accomplices' allowed them to obey their

[24] Williams, 'Towards a Sociology of Culture', p. 27.
[25] David Hesmondhalgh, 'Commonality and Cosmopolitanism', *Why Music Matters* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 144-6.
[26] *Ripped & Torn,* 1 (1976); *Chainsaw,* 11 (1981), London College of Communication ("LCC").
[27] Dick Hebdige, 'Seven', in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Taylor & Francis, 1981), p. 111; Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', p. 88.
[28] Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue', p. 81.

own logic, irreducible to economic value.[29] Punk zines aren't a perfect example of this – they weren't exclusively for other "zinesters." But zines consistently promoted a vision of punk in which everyone was on equal terms, and should engage themselves in shared processes of identity-construction. In a sense, especially in earlier and more apolitical zines, it was this self-reflexive analysis and criticism that was the purported value of punk; it represented a shift from the hierarchical and fixed identities of conforming society. The closed communication and accessibility of punk culture celebrated in zines, then, can be understood as a stand against the imposition of a "system" – a consistent adversary in punk mentalities.

Zines – even when relatively apolitical and music-centred – acted as a forum for cultural-communication. But the role they played in *shaping* punk identities, through both content and design, mustn't be overlooked. Especially considering how quickly zines established themselves as a central component of the movement, they weren't just a subcultural record. Although certainly responsible for the distribution of punk ideas, they were also fundamental in producing them.[30]

Developing notions of what punk *meant* were consistently discussed and contested in zine content. In the first issue of *Sniffin' Glue*, "Mark P." described punk as 'rock in it's lowest form' … 'poor equipment, right clothes, empty head.' [31] This depiction was to be transformed by a "zine scene" obsessed with what punk "authenticity" looked like – and which bands, fashion items, and values possessed it. In the late-1970s and early-1980s, understandings of punk became increasingly defined by sincere action against conformity. As stated in *Loaded*, punk rock wasn't necessarily political, and yet it had taken on the image as a 'vital catalyst leading to a confrontation between youth and the bastions of ignorance, mediocrity and control.'[32] In a similar sentiment, "Tony D." summarised the distinct mix of unadulterated youth leisure and political statement which became typical of punk: 'Potentially, punk is the most beneficial force for productive change in society today (and the most fun).'[33] By his eighth issue, "Mark P." was insisting that his readers should 'chuck away the fucking stupid safety-pins, think about people's ideas.'[34] Punk zines, then, were rarely

[29] Bourdieu, 'The Market of Symbolic Goods', pp. 17-18.
[30] Grimes and Wall, 'Punk Zines', p. 293.
[31] *Sniffin' Glue,* 1 (1976), p. 8.
[32] *Loaded,* 5 (1977), p. 4.
[33] *Ripped & Torn,* 17 (1979), "LCC".
[34] *Sniffin' Glue,* 8 (1977), p. 10.

exclusively a space to inform about the music "scene". Early analyses of "punk" (although clearly less ideological than their later counterparts) established the notion that punk should regulate itself and demand meaningful change through its flourishing culture.

Punk style and design were also developed in zines. This was certainly influenced by low-cost and amateur means of production. Zines were typically reliant on increased accessibility to photocopiers in office spaces, Letraset fonts, typewriters, cut'n'stick ransom-style letters, collage, and the aid of sympathetic printers.[35] These processes were often visible in the final product. This aesthetic also assigned to – and contributed to – a broader punk "DIY" look. Contemporary artists Jamie Reid and Linder Sterling, for example, both used collage to fuse and subvert notions of identity, authority, and consumption.[36] Triggs describes the symbols and typographic style of zines as a 'graphic language,' which established a sense of identity and visually resisted journalistic convention.[37] The visibility of hand-made processes, alongside the use of personal voice and occasional reference to production itself, all helped create an informal connection between zine creator and consumer. Subtle characteristics – such as Mark Perry's bold handwriting or the missing "n" on "Charlie Chainsaw's" typewriter – made the handiwork of a zine recognisable and familiar.[38] Insights into production reiterated zines as the manifestation of punk "authenticity" and togetherness. The first issue of *Pulp* featured empty pages with scrawled explanations: 'Photo copying is not cheap!!!', ''This Page wasn't supposed to be empty – better fill it up quickly.'[39] Visual design, whether intentional or a by-product of production, contributed to the articulation of youth identities. Zine aesthetics defied convention, celebrated creative action, and established a sense of personal connection.

In both content and design, the 'subterranean web' of alternative media was a space to debate and contest; to transform 'passive observer' into 'active participant.'[40] The degree to which zines were performing this function – the flourishing of the "scene" – is something which drew regular self-commentary. This also allows us to assess how significant and numerous their production was. Although this certainly varied between regions and access to

[35] Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue', p. 76.
[36] Worley, 'One Nation Under the Bomb', p. 70.
[37] Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue', pp. 73-75.
[38] *Sniffin' Glue*; *Chainsaw*.
[39] *Pulp fanzine,* 1 (1979), Bishopsgate Institute ("BI").
[40] Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', pp. 78-81.

distributors, self-analysis of zines tracks their dramatic increase in the early-1980s. In 1979, *Jamming* estimated that there were 150 zines in circulation, and noted that 'stagnant' and 'half-hearted' zine cooperatives were preventing them from their potential as a 'truepress.'[41] By 1981, *Chainsaw* found zine production to be 'absolutely astonishing,' with a UK circulation of 'well over 100,000,' apparently meeting that of official magazines such as *NME*.[42] The second edition of *Kill Your Pet Puppy* (1980) alone produced 2,500 copies.[43] With this proliferation came an increase in "zine reviews," which listed, analysed and promoted counter-parts. The degree to which many zines were invested in their own self-made "scene" in addition to the fan "scene" from which they originated, demonstrates how they acted as an active sight of community-formation. Here, youth mobilisation, connection and energy (often across spatial distances) were valued alongside the physical act of going to gigs. This point is persistently reiterated in calls for reader-participation, for letters and ideas, and for people to make their own zines. As outlined in *Acts of Defiance* (1983), this wasn't just about content, it was about connection: 'write to one of us or all of us cos its all about meeting people and communicating, making new friends, broadening your horizons – we'd love to hear from you!!!'.[44] The consolidation of a self-made media was passionately encouraged, observed, and harnessed as a source of collective identity. Given the value assigned to the zine as a point of connection, and how dramatically participation increased, these sources provide incredible insight into identity-construction and distinct youth sentiment that developed in the late-1970s and early-1980s.

With the growth of the "scene" and shift towards more forward-looking, politicised and flexible conceptions of punk, zines became more experimental and varied from 1979.[45] Some further embraced chaotic and disorderly design, while others took on more polished aesthetics. Use of colour and contrast also became frequent. These stylistic advances often incorporated text, and reflected an increased emphasis on socio-political concerns. *Guttersnipe* printed information and experiences of apartheid over pictures of South African children (Fig. 1), whilst *Ripped & Torn* depicted a screaming boy behind its argument for zero-population-growth policies (Fig. 2).[46] But many zines remained heavily music-focused,

[41] *Jamming,* 9 (1979), "BI".
[42] *Chainsaw,* 11 (1981), "LCC".
[43] *Kill Your Pet Puppy,* 2 (1980), "LCC".
[44] *Acts of Defiance,* 7 (1983).
[45] Wilkinson, 'Post-Punk, Thatcherism and the Libertarian Left', pp. 49-51.
[46] *Guttersnipe,* 7 (1979), "BI"; *Ripped & Torn*, 17 (1979), "LCC".

and others expanded their creative offerings in different directions, including poetry, illustration, and humour. *Chainsaw* imagined contemporary concerns in comedic cartoons (such as post-nuclear-devastation mutants), meanwhile *Cross Now* explicitly prioritised light-heartedness over any 'strong, economic or social views.'[47] So whilst a trend towards ideological conviction was certainly significant, it shouldn't be seen as all-encompassing.

Figure 1. *Guttersnipe,* 7 (1979), "BI".

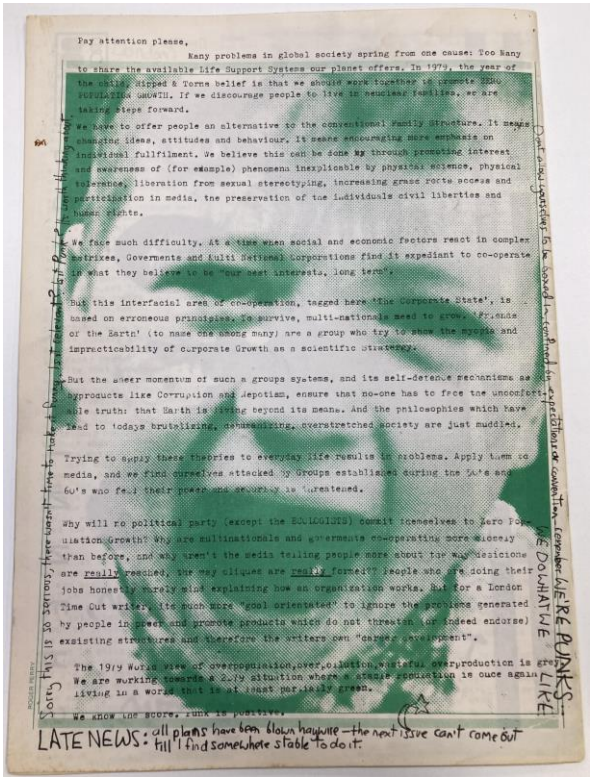

Figure 2. *Ripped & Torn*, 17 (1979), "LCC".

In their accessible "DIY" attitude and formation of communities through shared interests, zines captured processes of youth expression and identity-formation in a period of anxiety and disillusionment. From the end of the 1970s, this took an increasingly stylised, analytical and ideological form – but they ultimately remained personal and varied. In this function of recording and shaping youth experience – in materialising and producing "punk" - zines were profoundly impactful on constructions of youth community. The prominence of zines as an "alternative media" is enough to grant them a legitimate place within the history of print communication; they weren't just a 'subcultural eccentricity.'[48] Moreover, the distinctive communities fostered in zines – built on a combination of youth interests,

[47] *Chainsaw,* 11 (1981), "LCC"; *Cross Now,* 2 (1980), "LCC".
[48] Liming, 'Of Anarchy and Amateurism', pp. 122-3.

nonconformity, calls to action, and uncensored expression – acted as a foundation which could be easily adapted and utilised in more political forms.

2. Anarcho-punk Fanzines: *The ideological shift*

Zines varied enormously, and weren't confined to any one formula. Underpinning these different iterations, however, was a process of community-formation which engaged with youth culture and recreation, alongside the practise and promotion of independent thinking. As anarchism developed as a more distinct subsection of punk in the early-1980s ("anarcho-punk"), it brought socio-political topics to the forefront of zine content; typically communicated alongside interest in an associated music "scene." Anarcho-punk zines utilised and developed punk cultural-communities with a clearer sense of ideological conviction. Through engagement and commentary on contemporary affairs, "zinesters" captured adolescent experiences of the turbulent early Thatcher years, which celebrated neo-liberalist principles of fiscal discipline and self-dependence, and would come to shape British politics.[49] They also demonstrate how effectively youth culture could become imbued with political meaning.

Although anarchic thinking was inherently aligned with punk anti-establishmentarianism, early claims to "anarchy" and employment of its "A" symbol had typically been unclear and contradictory. Most punk bands with initial prominence had signed to major record labels by 1980 – an act of submission to the very system they'd positioned themselves against.[50] Explicitly anarchic bands emerged as "authentic" counterparts. In particular, *Crass* put ideology at the forefront of its music. After spending nearly a decade as a travelling commune, in the late-1970s and early-1980s *Crass* used their music, record sleeves and pamphlets to promote the pacifist destruction of all authority.[51] In the 1980s, a proliferation of anarcho-punk bands and zines offered a range of competing interpretations of anarchism, including personal defiance, pacifist action, and the violent overhaul of the state. Grimes argues that by demonstrating their commitment and conviction,

[49] Bernhard Rieger, 'British Varieties of Neoliberalism: Unemployment Policy from Thatcher to Blair', in *The Neoliberal Age? Britain since the 1970s*, ed. by Aled Davies, Ben Jackson, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite (London: UCL Press, 2021), pp. 120-129.
[50] Brian Cogan, '"Do They Owe Us a Living? Of Course They Do!" Crass, Throbbing Gristle, and Anarchy and Radicalism in Early English Punk Rock', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, 2 (2007), pp. 77-78.
[51] Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', p. 95; Cogan, '"Do They Owe Us a Living? Of Course They Do!", pp. 80-83.

zine editors possessed a position of authority in shaping a more radical, ideological notion of punk; they were sources of information and inspiration.[52] This is apparent in two examples: *Kill Your Pet Puppy* and *Acts of Defiance.*

Kill Your Pet Puppy ("KYPP", 1980-1983), edited by Tony Drayton, marks a distinctive shift from his earlier *Ripped & Torn* (1976-1979). *KYPP* valued anarchic thinking over music, promoting a "punk" that was primarily ideological. Although "Tony D." long possessed an anti-establishment position (as a self-proclaimed 'enemy of the state'), this was rather limited in action – 'I don't mean fighting literally, I mean using your brain.'[53] *KYPP* took a much more radical approach. Disputing *Crass*' pacifist-anarchism, it argued that 'to be an anarchist means … to confront the state in all its manifestations,' and that this would necessitate violent action.[54] The second issue omitted interviews, reviews, and 'anything resembling the usual fanzine format,' instead favouring in-depth explanations of its anarcho-punk ideology.[55] This can be summarised as violent anarchism supported by education; the promotion of personal identity and individuality; and the want to destroy 'false, national gods and institutions that have … forced you to be slaves at their alters.'[56] Emphasis on the punk "scene" was less on its capabilities for youth leisure and socialisation, and instead looked upon as a mobilising force for radically alternative thinking and living. This sense of intention was also reflected in the careful production of vibrant and stimulating pages. Colour, contrast and collage were employed to interrogate notions of identity (Fig. 3*)* and attack hierarchical structures across religion, politics and gender (Fig. 4). Written content was also cast in front of colourful and subversive backgrounds, despite the expense of double-printing (Fig. 5).[57] *KYPP*, in both content and form, prioritised effect and ideological expression. Here, youth culture was reframed; not only could its communities defy convention, *KYPP* sought to mobilise its readers to enact change through anarchic living.

[52] Matt Grimes, 'From Protest to Resistance: British Anarcho-Punk Zines (1980-1984) as Sites of Resistance and Symbols of Defiance', in *The Aesthetic of Our Anger: Anarcho-punk, Politics and Music*, ed. by Mike Dines and Matthew Worley (London: Minor Compositions, 2016), pp. 158-172.
[53] *Ripped & Torn*, 14 (1978).
[54] *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 1 (1980), p. 16.
[55] *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 2 (1980), "LCC".
[56] *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 2 (1980), "LCC".
[57] Drayton doubled costs of the second issue by overprinting colours with black text, 'Kill Your Pet Puppy issue 2', *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 10 February 2013 <https://killyourpetpuppy.co.uk/news/kill-your-pet-puppy-issue-2-febmarch-1980/> [accessed 13 April 2024].

Figure 3. *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 1 (1980), p.17.

Figure 4. *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 4 (1981), p.23.

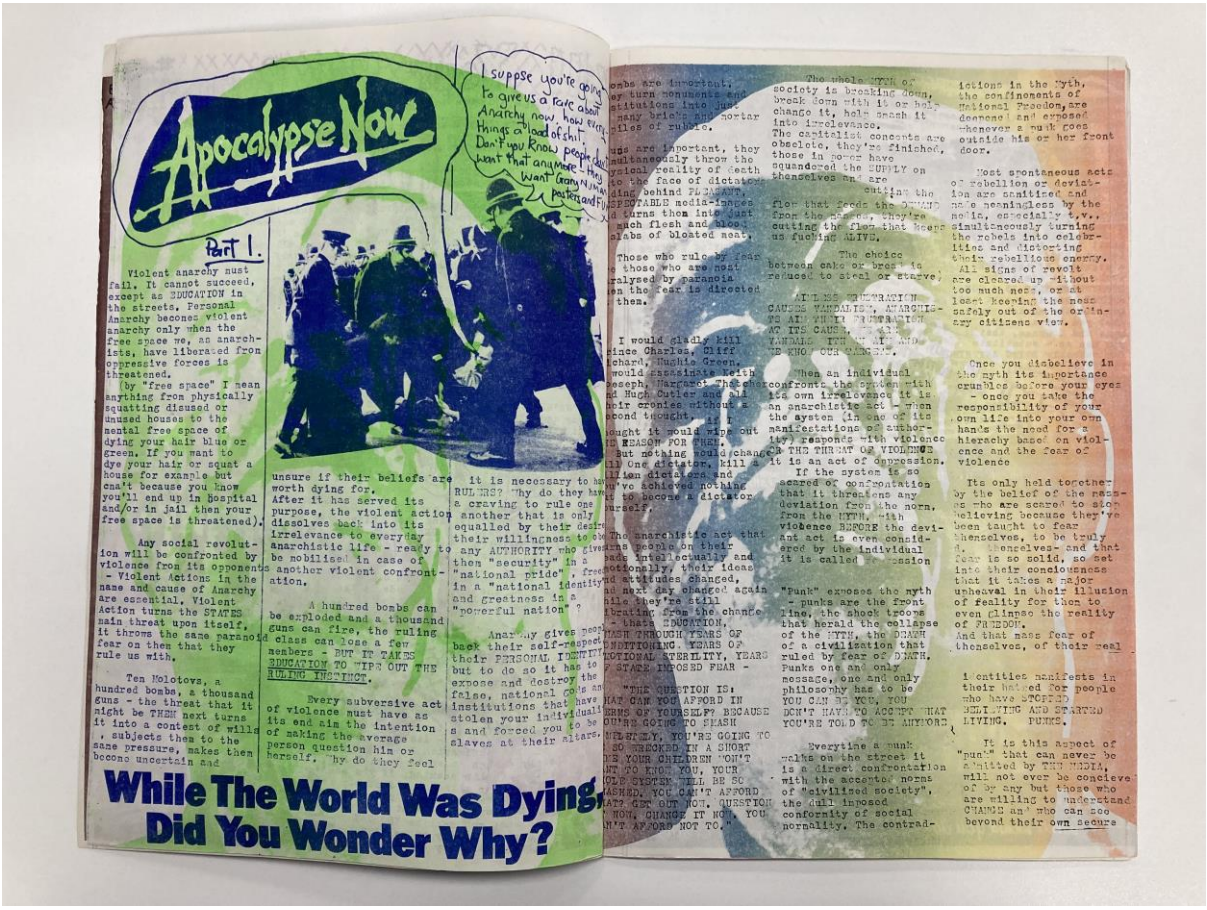

Figure 5. *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 2 (1980), pp. 4-5, "LCC".

Acts of Defiance ("AD") maintained a more "traditional" zine aesthetic, with predominantly black-and-white designs that communicated 'urgency and immediacy.'[58] Generally, it put less emphasis on overarching ideologies – instead, *AD* was closely tied to the local anarcho-punk scene in Sunderland, and presented clearly-articulated viewpoints on a number of socio-political issues. These included the mistreatment of women and arrogant masculinity; animal rights and veganism; international inequalities and injustices; the evils of religion; opposition to warfare, nuclear weapons and militarism; domestic concerns such as education, the police and Thatcher; and more everyday punk problems: squatting, "magic mushrooms," glue sniffing, and transport fairs.[59] Such a variety of topics reflects the breadth of activism within anarcho-punk movements, and provides insight into contemporary issues from oft-overlooked youth viewpoints. Moreover, they demonstrate the ways anarcho-punk zines could use their cultural "scene" to inform and promote socially-inclusive values.

AD attacked gender constructs and hierarchies that were frequently reproduced in more "apolitical" punk zines. The role of women in punk was repeatedly belittled. Despite involving women in its production, *Sniffin' Glue* habitually sexualised and dismissed them. This is revealed in comments such as 'I've *even* allowed a female to write in this ish', that if Debbie Harry 'stripped off it'd be great!', and an amazed admiration for "honest bird" Cherry Vanilla: 'I normally can't stand women rockers.'[60] Cazz Blase has drawn attention to the importance of women as zine creators and contributors, highlighting how the employment of women in clerical roles gave them invaluable access to typewriters and photocopiers.[61] Perhaps the most prominent voice against sexism in punk was Lucy Whitman ("Lucy Toothpaste"). Writing for *Temporary Hoarding* and *Drastic Measures*, she protested against the mistreatment and objectification of women in the male-dominated music industry, as well as issues such as pay inequality, eating disorders, pornography, rape and homophobia.[62]

AD reveals how debates surrounding gender appeared outside more exclusively feminist material; condemning presumptions of female subservience and male empowerment.

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[58] Hebdige, 'Seven', p. 111.
[59] *Acts of Defiance*, 3-7 (1982-3).
[60] *Sniffin' Glue,* 6 (1977), p. 2; *Sniffin' Glue,* 5 (1976), p. 9; *Sniffin' Glue,* 8 (1977), p.8.
[61] Cazz Blase, 'Invisible Women: The Role of Women in Punk Fanzine Creation', in *Ripped, Torn and Cut,* pp. 76-85.
[62] *Temporary Hoarding,* 3,4,7 (1977-1979), "BI"; *Drastic Measures,* 1-3, (1979-1980), "BI".

"The Working Woman" depicts the story of a woman's life from school, to employment in a factory, and into the role of housewife: cooking, cleaning, staying home, and raising a baby. It regarded this relatively conventional progression of womanhood – subject to the 'inconsistent, uncertain, arbitrary will of Men' – as born slavery.[63] Here, the "system" depicted in *Sniffin' Glue* and *Ripped & Torn* is complicated; the life-course becomes even more limited from the perspective of women. A critique of the machismo furthered this, considering the ways in which male behaviour might impose and contribute to social hierarchies. *AD* attacked masculinity that derived from 'how many heads you can smash in' and treating women like a 'piece of meat.' These men, not aligning with *AD*'s values, were explicitly excluded from the community: 'Big Cock? Big Head? Big Man? FUCK OFF!'[64] On the one hand, commentary on gender reflects a sense of youth anticipation and resistance against conforming to social expectations, and conventionally desired futures. Critiques of these roles weren't exclusively directed towards abstract notions of "authority," they were applied to peers within the subculture. But shifts in gender discourse also portray punk as an evolving standpoint, and one that increasingly prioritised a sense of social obligation.

Anti-war sentiment had been closely connected with countercultural movements prior to punk, especially since the establishment of CND (*Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*) in 1958.[65] In 1982, this was framed by British military response to the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands. With no economic, geopolitical or strategic rational – and many Britons unaware of the very existence of the crown colony – retaliation was justified by a rather abstract defence of the principles of international political conduct.[66] Conflict lasted 74 days, but drew commentary from *AD* into the following year. Far-removed from the 'transitory delights' of style and music, cut'n'paste aesthetic was 'refracted through a dystopian lens' to capture the horrors of war.[67] Images of conflict were combined with the CND logo, ransom-note typography, and the juxtaposition of 'nature,' 'humanity' and 'freedom,' with 'hate', 'violence' and death (Fig. 6, Fig. 7).

[63] *Acts of Defiance*, 3 (1982), pp. 10-11.
[64] *Acts of Defiance*, 4 (1982), p. 9.
[65] Greta Jones, 'The Mushroom-Shaped Cloud: British Scientists' Opposition to Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945-57', *Annuals of Science*, 43 (1986), pp. 3-4.
[66] David M. McCourt, 'Role-Playing and Identity Affirmation in International Politics: Britain's Reinvasion of the Falklands, 1982', *Review of International Studies*, 37.4 (2011), pp. 1599-1617.
[67] Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', p. 98.

AD also interrogated notions of remembrance and the idealisation of patriotic death. Disputing notions of military honour, it argued that the 'piles of disfigured bodies' didn't matter to Thatcher's Conservative government – 'as long as your filthy pride remains intact, as long as the British Empire remains supreme it doesn't matter.'[68] Printed alongside the image of a dead soldier and the depiction of Margaret Thatcher as a Nazi (Fig.8), *AD* visualised its interpretation of war as the consequence of authoritarianism and dehumanisation.[69] Surrounded by terms 'bigot,' 'hypocrite' and 'liar' on the cover of issue 6, Thatcher became an 'icon of state repression' in punk, due to her association with war and the 'ruthless' restructuring of the British economy.[70] Action and victory in the Falklands has been widely credited as transforming the popularity of the Conservatives after recession, increased taxes, mass unemployment and rioting in the early-1980s.[71] Whilst this is likely true, zines can provide us with an alternative viewpoint to the celebratory 'GOTCHA' and victory 'V' employed in the mainstream press.[72] *AD* captures a passionate sentiment of opposition, and demonstrates how zines could be employed as a potent material for activism.

[68] *Acts of Defiance,* 6 (1983), p. 31.

[69] *Acts of Defiance*, 7 (1983), pp. 14-15.

[70] *Acts of Defiance,* 6 (1983); Worley, 'Punk, Politics and British (Fan)zines', p. 98; Wilkinson, 'Post-Punk and the Politics of Postwar Popular Music', in *Post-Punk, Politics and Pleasure in Britain,* p. 49.

[71] Harold D. Clarke, William Mishler, Paul Whiteley, 'Recapturing the Falklands: Models of Conservative Popularity, 1979-83', *British Journal of Political Science,* 20 (1990), 67-81; Richard Vinen, 'Primitive Politics, 1979-83' in *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009), pp. 103-132.

[72] 'GOTCHA: Our Lads Sink Gunboat and Hole Cruiser', *The Sun*, 4 May 1982; 'V', *Daily Express,* 13 June 1982.

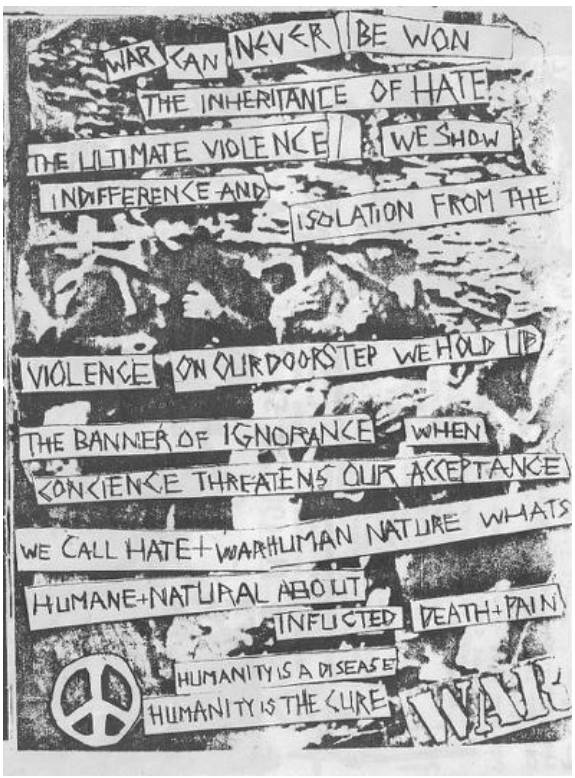

Figure 6. *Acts of Defiance,* 3 (1982), p. 16.

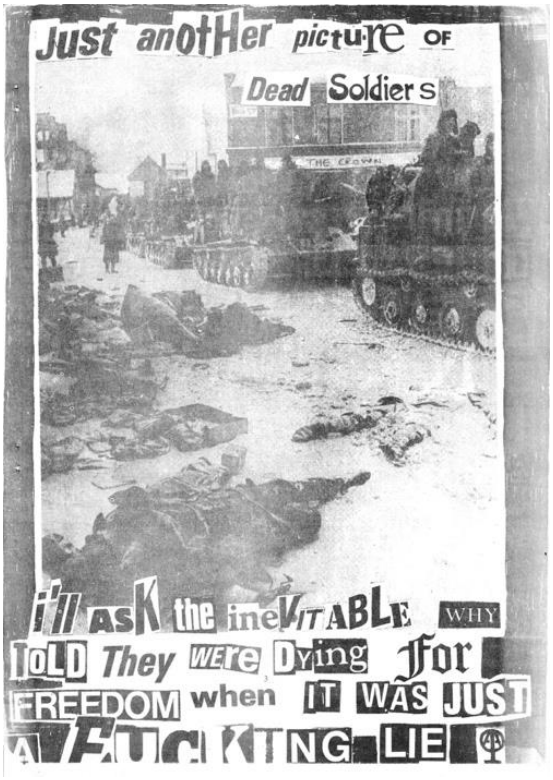

Figure 7. *Acts of Defiance,* 5 (1983), p. 29.

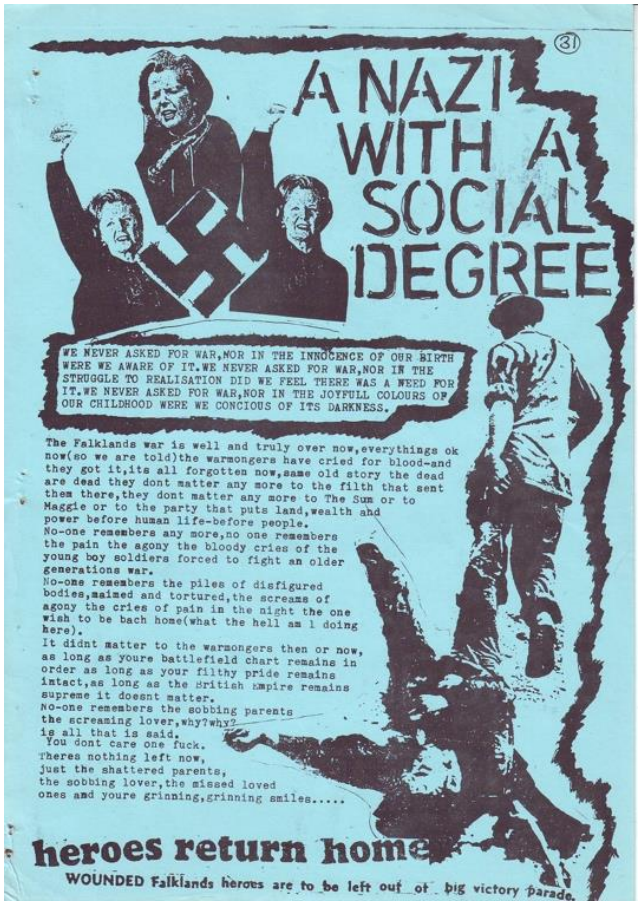

Figure 8. *Acts of Defiance,* 6 (1983), p. 31.

The final issue of *AD* noted that it had been gradually cutting down the music-side of the zine; that plenty of fanzines covered music, 'hardly any contain interesting, informative articles.'[73] Despite an apparent shift in emphasis, then, music did sustain a role in most anarcho-punk zines – including *KYPP* and *AD*.[74] These zines exhibited similar dynamics of community to their "apolitical" counterparts, only here, lyrics, content and style were directed towards a more developed ideological standpoint. *AD,* for example, provided regular updates on anarcho-punk music in (and visiting) the Sunderland area. Much of this was centred around "The Bunker," an old school transformed into an alternative youth centre, which hosted gigs, the Sunderland Youth CND, rehearsal rooms, a drama group and print room.[75] This reflects how the communities fostered in anarcho-punk zines often translated to real, regional and often close-knit groups. Anarchic zines advocated proactive resistance and alternative living; this was practised as well as promoted. Both zines featured stories and comics about the groups of squatters who created them: the "Puppy Collective" and "Grangey-Anarchos."[76] These zines built on and shaped real-life communities. This interactive, mutually-constructive relationship amplified anarchic thinking and experiences beyond the limitations of physical community. Zines and the development of an anarcho-punk "scene" formed a subsection of youth culture that was, at its core, ideologically driven.

3. Youth Culture and Neo-fascism – *the appropriation of zines*

Youth-oriented culture was a powerful force in consolidating group identity. Punk had united people across the country under a sense of belonging; a non-spatial community connected by nonconformity and music. By the 1980s, the role of zines in disseminating and elaborating youth culture was well established, and increasingly ideological. This also made them vulnerable to radicalisation. Although early punk had employed fascist imagery to provoke and subvert, from the late 1970s, it was increasingly associated with and employed by the far-right.

This must be considered within the precarious political revival of the British far-right. After various splits and rearrangements in post-war fascism, the National Front ("NF"),

[73] *Acts of Defiance*, 7 (1983), p.2.
[74] With the exception of *Kill Your Pet Puppy*, 2 (1980).
[75] *Acts of Defiance*, 4 (1982), pp. 13-14.
[76] *Acts of Defiance*, 5 (1983, pp. 30-31; *Acts of Defiance*, 6 (1983), pp. 18-19; *Acts of* Defiance, 7, (1983), p. 38; *Kill Your Pet* Puppy, 2 (1980), "LCC", pp. 8-11.

founded in the late 1960s, sought a more politically legitimate approach. Invigorated by Enoch Powell's "*Rivers of Blood"* speech in 1968 and surging discourse surrounding immigration, the NF saw significant growth in the 1970s.[77] In 1977, the NF won 5.3% of the vote in the Greater London Council Elections. But ambitions for greater electoral success never came into fruition. This has been partly credited to the more constitutional 'popular authoritarianism' offered by Thatcher, whose premiership would last the entirety of the 1980s.[78] Limited political gains, however, allowed for the growing prominence of a more unregulated youth element. The growth of far-right sentiments and street violence triggered the formation of the Anti-Nazi League ("ANL") in 1977, whose *Rock Against Racism* ("RAR") concerts sought to mobilise opposition through (mostly punk) music.

Despite the formation of ANL, the Youth National Front ("YNF") saw 'exponential' growth 1978.[79] This was partly due to the distribution of its paper, *Bulldog*. Founded and initially edited by Joe Pearce, *Bulldog* reveals how youth culture was harnessed and propagandised by the far-right. Early editions of *Bulldog* had a relatively simplistic typed format, and provided updates on YNF activities and news more generally. From the outset, youth leisure and "fun" were emphasised in the promotion of extremist politics. Readers were promised that joining the YNF would add 'excitement' to their lives - 'make new mates,' enjoy 'football, marches, booze-ups, holidays, demos, discos and much more.'[80] In this sense, *Bulldog* incorporated and consolidated youth community in its processes of political persuasion.

Despite portraying itself as an official news source, the "broadsheet" was a simple, A4-size amateur production, edited by YNF member Joe Pearce (although this became more ambiguous after his prosecutions in the early 1980s).[81] It was a monthly, low-cost publication (typically between 3 and 15 pence), priding itself on being 'written by, and for, youth' and voicing the 'teenage view of nationalism.'[82] In its essential format, then, *Bulldog* can be interpreted as a political zine. It expressed youth sentiments in an accessible way, reinforced

[77] Ryan Shaffer, 'The Fascist Tradition, 1967-1977, in *Music, Youth and International Links in Post-War British Fascism: The Transformation of Extremism*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 25-63.
[78] Worley and Copsey, 'White Youth', pp. 114-116.
[79] Shaffer, 'Youth Against Tradition, 1977-1983', in *Music, Youth and International Links in Post-War British Fascism*, pp. 61-72.
[80] *Bulldog*, 4 (1977), p. 2, Searchlight Archive ("SA"); *Bulldog*, 6 (1978), p. 2, "SA".
[81] For more on Pearce's charges under the "Race Relations Act" see Shaffer, 'Youth Against Tradition', p. 88.
[82] *Bulldog*, 4 (1977), p. 1, "SA".

youth community, and was distributed in youth spaces, such as schools, football matches, and concerts.[83] Even in the inclusion of a personal address for mail order and reader contribution, *Bulldog* imitated the zine.

From the late 1970s, the YNF started to incorporate and appropriate punk more explicitly. Most obviously, *Rock Against Communism* ("RAC") was a direct response to the music activism of RAR. RAC took punk's attack on the music industry and promotion of alternative thinking, but reframed these against 'left-wingers,' 'anti-British traitors' and the 'brainwashing' of RAR.[84] Although recreational activities, such as football, had long been a focus of *Bulldog*, RAC marked a new focus on music, and more specifically, a violent interpretation of punk. Accordingly, *Bulldog* became more closely aligned with zine content: it reviewed anti-communist records and established a reader-contributed music chart, similar to that of *Ripped & Torn.*[85] This new emphasis was a retaliation against the techniques of ANL, but also triggered the development of a neo-fascist youth culture.[86]

In the 1980s, issues featured increasingly engaging design and use of colour (Fig. 9), and started commenting on music that was either explicitly far-right, or perceived as aligned with its values. Although under a guise of formality, the processes of community-formation visible in *Bulldog* are comparable to those in anarcho-punk zines. A music and stylistic "scene" was combined with socio-political commentary that supported the central narratives of fascist thinking. The "news" sections of *Bulldog* claimed that white people were being 'attacked, robbed, raped and mugged' by black people, described racial tension in East London as a 'race war,' and employed the pseudo-science of eugenics.[87] These reports constructed 'myths of victimhood' in which white British people were under persecution from racial "others," and NF members under persecution from the government and media.[88]

[83] The fourth issue reported selling 700 copies at a *Madness* concert.
[84] *Bulldog,* 14 (1978), "SA".
[85] *Bulldog,* 14 (1978), "SA"; *Bulldog*, 30 (1982), "SA".
[86] Shaffer, 'Youth Against Tradition', p. 74.
[87] *Bulldog,* 10 (1978), "SA".
[88] Holger Marcks, Janina Pawelz, 'From Myths of Victimhood To Fantasies of Violence: How Far-Right Narratives of Imperilment Work', *Terrorism and Political Violence,* 34.7 (2022) p. 1417, doi:10.1080/09546553.2020.1788544; *Bulldog,* 10 (1978), p. 3, "SA".

KILL THE BILL

THE POLICE are out of control. They are no longer interested in serving the community, only their Tory paymasters. Is it any wonder that they have been nicknamed Thatcher's storm-troopers ?

White youth are the common victims of police harassment because we have nobody in Parliament to stand up for our rights. But at a time when there are strong arguments for taking away some of their vast powers, the Tories are planning to give them even more, with the Police Bill.

– Stop and search on the streets for any excuse.
– To search the homes of people who are not even suspected of having committed an offence.
– Forcible fingerprinting, strip-searches, and intimate body-searches, even on children of 10 years old.
– To keep people in jail for up to four days, without charging them for an offence.
– To continue carrying out investigations themselves, of complaints made against them.

– To charge people for what are now petty offences as 'serious arrestable offences'.

The Police Bill must be stopped if White youth are not to suffer even more State oppression. To the ordinary copper, who thinks 'he's only doing his duty', we ask you to join with us. More important than the blue uniform of the Capitalist Establishment and your loyalty to it is the uniform you can't throw off – your White skin. Loyalty to Race and Nation should be your ONLY duty.

SMASH THE SYSTEM

SOME TALK ABOUT IT . . . . . WHILE OTHERS TRY IT !

THE PROSPECT of Stopping the City appeals to many Radical British youth who came to realise long ago that if you want to Smash the System you don't start at the House of Commons, or for that matter the House of Lords. For both of these supposed seats of government are just a sham.

Power in this country is not based in the Chambers of Westminster, but in the offices of the banks and on the floor at the Stock Exchange. It doesn't really matter, to the real rulers of Britain, which Establishment party gets in, because however much they talk about 'reforming' the City of London, once in No.10 they take their orders from the same Bankers and Brokers.

It wasn't Thatcher who decided whether Britain should have gone to War with Argentina over the Falklands. The Banks were the ones who really made the decision, because they loaned the Government enough money to do so. But it wasn't out of any feelings of patriotism or love for the Falkland Islanders, **because the same banks financed the Argentinian invasion.**

Many Young National Front supporters went along to the 'Stop the City' demonstration on 29th March, believing that it would be an opportunity to bring the real power behind the Establishment to a grinding halt. It was a great disappointment to find that a large section of the demonstrators were C.N.D. supporters who spent the day painting each other's faces, blowing whistles and banging tambourines.

By the afternoon the frustration of some of the other demonstrators, who thought that the idea was to occupy buildings, such as the Stock Exchange, and disrupt the city's smooth running, overflowed as bank windows were smashed and smoke bombs were thrown. By the end of the day there were 350 arrests, for charges ranging from Breach of the Peace to Assault on the Police.

Painted faces and tambourines, or for that matter bricks and smoke bombs, will not 'Stop the City'. Only revolution led by the National Front, can smash the system once and for all.

Figure 9. *Bulldog,* 38 (1984), "SA".

References to women also combined fascist notions of gender and fecundity with youth culture. *Bulldog* had consistently promoted YNF as a site for youth interaction with the opposite gender: women were told 'you might meet your future hubby', and men promised that 'female members are all the right colour.' [89] Scott Burnett and John Richardson argue that depictions of sex and gender were central to post-war British fascism. This was centred around the idea that the reproduction of other "races" would cause the decline and replacement of the "British" population. Accordingly, black men were depicted as sexual predators, whilst white British men were depicted as masculine saviours who would 'procreate to secure the future of the race.'[90] Identifying the victims of 'Multi-Racial TERROR' as young mothers, old ladies, and teenage girls, *Bulldog* justified racial violence through notions of vulnerable femininity.[91] Associated images of female desirability became aligned with appeals to youth culture. The "RAC Bird" became a consistent feature,

[89] *Bulldog,* 4 (1977), p. 4, "SA"; *Bulldog*, 9 (1978), "SA".
[90] Scott Burnett, John E. Richardson, 'Breeders for Race and Nation': Gender, Sexuality and Fecundity in Post-war British Fascist Discourse', *Patterns of Prejudice,* 55.4 (2021), pp. 331-349, doi:10.1080/0031322X.2021.2011088.
[91] *Bulldog,* 32 (1983), "SA".

showcasing YNF women who were idealised due to an aesthetic and list of favourite artists that was invariably punk.[92]

The combination of music culture and overt masculinity also allowed the YNF to further its association with a 'white, male, violent and patriotic' subsection of punk: "skinheads."[93] Skinhead culture, originally a subsection of "mod" in the 1960s, saw a punk-infused revival in the late-1970s. Originally closely associated with the style and music of Jamaican immigrants, the latter skinhead culture fractured as many rejected black cultural roots and became associated with the far-right. These skinheads (or "skins") combined the masculinity of the original aesthetic with dark and provocative elements of punk (such as the controversial use of the swastika).[94] The subculture came to be associated with street-fighting, a military-inspired uniform - black MA-1 jackets, tall boots, and shaved hair – and stripped-down punk music, coined "Oi!".[95]

With youth radicalisation exacerbated by discontent in the early Thatcher years, and factionalism stagnating the main NF, the young "skin" element gained prominence in the early-1980s.[96] Less focus on electoral success allowed the NF to become increasingly associated with street violence and more explicit neo-Nazi ideology. The use of Nazi fonts and symbols in *Bulldog* and other skinhead zines ("skinzines") helped foster a more distinct sense of identity.[97] In 1983, the NF created a record label for far-right music. *White Noise Records* responded to and furthered the importance of youth culture – both in music, and resistance to institutional control. As with "anarcho-punk," the growing "skinhead" music scene was imbued with political meaning. *Bulldog* promoted early far-right albums "Skinhead Anthems" and "United Skins," and noted their inclusion of *Screwdriver* in particular.[98] *Screwdriver* were an established punk band in the late-1970s. Through his friendship with Pearce, frontman Ian Stuart Donaldson joined the YNF in 1979, and reformed *Screwdriver* as overtly neo-fascist in 1981.[99] This helped legitimise "Skinhead Rock," RAC,

[92] *Bulldog,* 14-16 (1978-9), "SA".
[93] Timothy S. Brown, 'Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and "Nazi Rock" in England and Germany, *Journal of Social History,* 38 (2004), p.163.
[94] Brown, 'Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics', pp. 157-172; Worley and Copsey, 'White Youth', p. 125.
[95] Ana Raposo and Roger Sabin, 'New Visual Identities for British Neo-Fascist Rock (1982-1987)', in *Tomorrow Belongs to Us,* pp. 134; Brown, 'Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics', pp. 159-161.
[96]Brown, 'Subculture, Pop Music and Politics', p. 162; Shaffer, 'Youth Against Tradition', p. 84.
[97] Raposo and Sabin, 'New Visual Identities for British Neo-Fascist Rock', pp. 133-136.
[98] *Bulldog,* 31 (1983), "SA".
[99] Shaffer, 'Youth Against Tradition, 1977-1983', p. 87.

and the subculture more generally. Through a contract with German label *Rock-O-Rama*, *White Noise Records* also established international connections.[100] Existing at the political fringe and in the realm of youth culture, *Bulldog* and RAC instigated a "Nazi rock" genre which would communicate 'slogans, ideas and emotions to a worldwide audience.'[101] In the late-twentieth-century, a proliferation of international "skinzines" and music-magazines would promote explicit neo-fascist and neo-Nazi politics that were closely tied to music and youth culture.[102]

In her investigation of the Polish far-right in the late-twentieth-century, Kaja Marczewska argues that the very limitations of zines made them a powerful tool for radicalisation. Through co-creation and limited circulation – as well as the employment of Nazi symbols and numerical codes – zines were able to project a homogenous voice, unified against a constructed enemy.[103] These punk-inspired processes of community-formation have had lasting impact on transnational far-right movements. This is seen both in the distribution of underground media, and the way youth culture has translated onto digital platforms in the twenty-first century.

W. Chris Hale has identified a number of ways in which social media is suited to radicalisation, including accessibility, lack of regulation, size of audience, anonymity, multimedia content, communication with like-minded people and the ability to shape mass-media coverage.[104] It's in these parallels to zines that social media is most suited to the far-right cause. Digital communication has adapted similar processes of community-formation to new youth cultures. The use of "meme" humour, for example, has allowed members of far-right movements to contribute to collective and 'easily digestible' forms of propaganda.[105] Where social media platforms have become too restrictive, many groups have transitioned to sites such as *Telegram* – a largely unregulated platform, popular with British, European and

[100] Brown, 'Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics', p. 172.
[101] Worley and Copsey, 'White Youth', pp. 124-126; Ryan Shaffer, 'Introduction', in *Music, Youth and International Links in Post-War British Fascism,* p. 2.
[102] *Blood & Honour*; *White Noise*; *British Oi!.*
[103] Kaja Marczewska, 'Zine Publishing and the Polish Far Right', in *Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right,* ed. by Maik Fielitz and Nick Thurston (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2019), pp. 109-116.
[104] W. Chris Hale, 'Extremism on the World Wide Web: a Research Review', *Criminal Justice Studies,* 25.4 (2012), p.344, doi:10.1080/1478601X.2012.704723.
[105] Julia R. DeCook, 'Memes and Symbolic Violence: #Proudboys and the use of Memes for Propaganda and the Construction of Collective Identity', *Learning Media and Technology,* 43.4 (2018), pp. 485-495, doi:10.1080/17439884.2018.1544149

American fringe groups.[106] The appropriation of punk culture provides an important context for the functioning of subsequent far-right movements. But the very need to communicate through alternative and underground mediums also contributed to fascist narratives of persecution and repression; it entailed that the community was excluded from mainstream discourse. *Bulldog* advertised itself as THE PAPER THEY WANT TO BAN' and material evidence that 'THEY CAN'T STOP THE TRUTH.'[107] Similarly, eluding online censorship 'carries connotation of a struggle against the repression of free speech.'[108] The communication of extremist politics through youth culture, then, not only provides a space for the far-right to exist outside the mainstream; it consolidates a sense of identity and togetherness which is defined by exclusion.

Conclusion

Punk fanzines, in their huge variety of styles, voices and underlying ideologies, provide invaluable insight into the dynamics and interactions that made up youth culture. From the late-1970s, they emerged as a medium which would forgo constant evolution, in both aesthetic and content. This mapped the shifting and fragmenting nature of punk itself. Youth cultural formations are easily discounted as shallow and stylistic trends; framed as the fleeting teenage consumption of fashion and music. But especially within the punk context, this entailed broader observations of society and acts of resistance against convention. These perspectives were legitimate responses to discontent and destabilisation in contemporary Britain. The very creation of a "zine scene" reflects how youth voices were distorted or excluded from mainstream narratives. They now remain a material trace of youth sentiment; a bottom-up and uncensored viewpoint of the past.

But perhaps more important than their role in communicating and recording these cultures, was the way zines shaped and directed them. This was consistently founded in two key aspects. First, in associating an alternative and recreational youth culture with an underlying ideology. Anti-establishment and "DIY" attitudes were consistent undercurrents, but as we have seen, these ideologies could also become more specific and extreme in nature. Secondly, the emphasis on individual voice and reader participation broke down typical

[106] Alexandre Bovet and Peter Grindrod, 'Organization and Evolution of the UK Far-Right Network on Telegram', *Applied Science Network*, 7 (2022), pp. 1-4, doi:10.1007/s41109-022-00513-8.
[107] *Bulldog*, 38 (1984), "SA".
[108] Marczewska, 'Zine Publishing and the Polish Far Right', p. 118.

categorisations between creator and consumer. This fostered a constant state of dialogue within youth culture. In their notions of nonconformity that were accessible and malleable, zines were particularly effective in forming and consolidating communities. Existing within and beyond regional spaces and in-person relationships, simultaneously personal and communal, self-published media magnified youth identity into a far-reaching point of connection.

This distinct form of cultural-ideological community – proliferated and epitomised by zines – was capable of mobilising youth action, as is apparent in anarcho-punk and fascist-skinhead subcultures. Whilst the structures of feeling expressed in "apolitical" fanzines mustn't be overlooked, the medium took on new meaning when used to provoke more specific attitudes and activities.[109] Particularly in the far-right's appropriation of zines, the harnessing of youth culture had longer repercussions. Encouragement of youth membership through the development of a "scene" is crucial to understanding transnational neo-fascism in the late-twentieth-century. That these community dynamics have persisted and adapted into the digital age speaks to their ongoing effectiveness and potential as a political tool.

Zines themselves have been utilised by numerous subsequent communities and subcultures. This is perhaps most visible in the "girl" zines – and more specifically, feminist *Riot Grrrl* zines – of the 1990s. Ranging from personal and 'confessional' to more explicitly feminist, this "scene" established 'far-flung, loosely structured networks' of women.[110] Despite broader transitions into online media, zines have persisted into the twenty-first-century. This has partly been through the development of digital "e-zines," but physical zines have also shown surprising longevity. In part, this has taken the form of commercialisation: luxury streetwear brand *Supreme* and band *The Last Dinner Party* have used the medium as easily-producible merchandise.[111] But the preservation and creation of amateur zines – the "authentic" examples of the "DIY" ethos – have predominantly been sustained by alternative and non-profit organisations. In the UK, *Queer Zine Library* is a volunteer-run, travelling collection, and *Grrrl Zine Fair* offers a queer and feminist zine library which anyone can

[109] Williams, 'Towards a Sociology of Culture', pp. 27-29.
[110] Janice Radway, 'Zine, Half-Lives and Afterlives: On the Temporalities of Social and Political Change', *PMLA,* 126 (2011), p. 148; Julie Chu,, 'Navigating the Media Environment: How Youth Claim a Place Through Zines', *Social Justice,* 24.3 (1997), p. 74.
[111]'Akari for Supreme', *Supreme*, <https://supreme.com/news/650/images/#10> [accessed 18 April 2024]; 'Prelude to Ecstasy: CD Zine', *The Last Dinner Party* <https://shop.thelastdinnerparty.co.uk/products/prelude-to-ecstasy-cd-zine> [accessed 28 March 2024].

contribute to.[112] Meanwhile, *Papercut Zine Library* and *KEKE* are examples of transnational, digital spaces for the publishing and reading of zines.[113] These libraries demonstrate how, since the 1990s, zines have remained an important space for feminist and queer activism. More broadly, they show that although (non-profit) zines may easily go unacknowledged, they continue to exist in communities working outside the mainstream, in a way that closely replicates their punk origins.

Beyond the ongoing vitality of a "zine scene," punk processes of community-formation also remain relevant in their parallels to youth culture in the twenty-first century. In both overtly political and "apolitical" contexts, zines can be seen as 'prototypes' to cultural interactions in digital spaces.[114] Social media allows for a similar form of creative communication that is arguably even more accessible and far-reaching. Online content is simultaneously critiqued, created and consumed in an "echo chamber" that is comparable to the underground, closed networks of zine distribution. This hasn't fully replaced the 'handmade, holdable, shareable' pull of physical media, but does illustrate another modern application for studying the cultural-communities of the punk movement.[115]

Recent scholarship has been crucial in legitimising zines as a voice of youth culture. This has also extended to more popular representations, such as the inclusion of an interactive fanzine wall at the *Punk: Rage and Revolution* exhibit in Northampton.[116] This dissertation has expanded on new appreciation for the importance of punk zines, by examining how they formed dynamic communities that were founded in ideologically-infused youth culture. The effectiveness of zines in fostering youth connection has seen them utilised in a huge variety of contexts, and the translation of their processes onto new mediums. An investigation of British punk is a crucial, yet small subsection of the history of zine-communities. The relationship between self-published media and youth culture can – and should – be framed within a huge variety of spaces, ranging from personal to international.

[112] *Queer Zine Library*, <https://www.queerzinelibrary.com/collection-development> [accessed 18 April 2024]; *Grrrl Zine Fair,* <https://www.grrrlzinefair.com/library> [accessed 18 April 2024].
[113] *Papercut Zine Library,* <https://www.papercutzinelibrary.com/aboutt> [accessed 18 April 2024]; 'Zine Library', *KEKE*, <https://www.kekemagazine.com/zine-library/> [accessed 18 April 2024].
[114] Grimes and Wall, 'Punk zines: 'symbols of defiance' from the print to the digital age', p. 297.
[115] Robinson, 'Zines and History, p. 40.
[116] 'Punk: Rage and Revolution 2', *Northampton Museum & Art Gallery*, 16 September 2023–3 March 2024.

Through processes of cultural communication, zines have proven a fruitful site for youth-driven ideologies and "DIY" action. Inherently positioned against and outside of publishing conventions, they allow social historians to look beyond institutionalised narratives. In a sense, this is where zines started, as an "alternative" to the mainstream press. But in their potent sense of youth community, fanzines became a format that was entirely distinctive. Through accessible cultural discourse, "DIY" attitudes, and an overall sense of untethered "fun," punk fostered a feeling of youth solidarity that existed in a constant state of contention and evolution. Deviant and provocative youth culture escalated into a variety of ideological standpoints, fundamentally connected by their resistance to social conformity. It was in this ability to connect – and the very real consequences of youth togetherness – that zines must be acknowledged as invaluable historical sources.

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