

MATT GRIMES

FROM PROTEST TO RESISTANCE

BRITISH ANARCHO-PUNK ZINES (1980- 1984) AS SITES OF RESISTANCE AND SYMBOLS OF DEFIANCE

THIS CHAPTER FOCUSES on the role that alternative publications played in the cultural, political, and ideological practices of the British anarcho-punk movement between 1980 and 1984. I explore the way these zines¹ disseminated the central ideas of anarcho-punk and the

1 In this chapter I use the term zine rather than 'fanzine'. Although it is recognised that the term zine is a shortened term of the term 'fanzine' or magazine, the prefix 'fan' could imply that one is a 'fan' of a particular form of music, art, or culture. Many punks don't necessarily perceive themselves to be fans of punk rock but rather members of a subculture, scene, or movement that for many is a lived experience (way of life). The term 'fan' is, for many punks, associated with pop music and the commodified, mainstream music industry and is often explicitly rejected. See Matt Worley, "'While the World was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?' Punk, Politics and British (fan) zines 1976-84." *History Workshop Journal* 79/1 (2015), 76-106

way that the editors mediated a shifting notion of anarcho-punk. In doing so I seek to move beyond the simpler notion that zines acted simply as channels of communication, but to the idea that discourses of resistance and defiance are constructed and reinforced through the embodiment and undertaking of ideological work of zine editors as 'organic intellectuals'² and thus represent cultural work. This raises some interesting questions about the role of zine editors/producers as key agents in articulating the perceived central tenets of a subcultural movement. Previous studies on zines have alluded to the role of editors but little emphasis has been placed on the way that these zine authors take on leadership roles.

As punk emerged in the 1970s zines soon became one of the central methods of communicating the developing ideologies, practices, and values within this new musical and subcultural movement as they have historically been regarded as an alternative to mainstream publishing and being independently representative of the 'underground'. Early protagonists of anarcho-punk, such as Crass, sought to reinforce the personal politic of being responsible for one's own authority and actions, and the political agenda of anarcho-punk came to embrace notions of anarchism, peace, libertarianism, animal rights, feminism, anti-capitalism and anti-globalization. The analysis explores how these discourses of political position were mediated and the sense of an anarcho-punk movement that they constructed.

Firstly, I interrogate some of the key studies of punk zines in order to try to contextualise their role and importance within punk music culture. Secondly, I consider the role of zine editors as contemporary examples of what Gramsci termed 'organic intellectuals'. I draw on the work of Gramsci (1929-35), Lipsitz (1990), and Abrams (1995) to explore how these editors, through their publications, presented themselves as organic intellectuals, and in doing so, forged a link between the members of the scene and its construction. Thirdly, I draw on examples of the visual and textual discourses from of a selection of British anarcho-punk zines and examine how discourses of counter

2 I derive this term from Antonio Gramsci as intellectual leaders who emerge from a group, although I take it in terms wider than those discussed by Gramsci himself in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans., Geoffrey N. Smith and Quintin. Hoare (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

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hegemony and community are constructed. Finally, drawing on the work of Thornton (1995) and Duncombe (1997), I investigate how these 'organic intellectuals' discursively constructed notions of authority and identity through the articulation of specific and at times oppositional ideological positions, and how this contributed to the construction of the musical, cultural, and political boundaries of the British anarcho-punk movement.

ZINES ARE PUNK³

Within punk music culture, zines, along with the variant emerging music styles of punk rock, are generally credited with being one of the main means that this new emerging subculture constructed and represented its style and ethos. The developing DIY culture of punk was embodied in the production and distribution of zines, which were seen to provide an alternative to mainstream publishing and therefore more representative of punk's underground and independent subculture, which both produced and consumed them. It is widely recognised that the first UK produced punk zine was *Sniffin' Glue* produced by Mark Perry in 1976⁴ which, given its full title *Sniffin' Glue and Other Rock 'n' Roll Habits*, it could be argued positioned itself as having an intentionally challenging contentious and antagonistic stance in its editorial, toward the hegemonic culture. The strong link between the emerging punk culture and the zines that followed *Sniffin' Glue* was apparent by the amount of British punk zines being produced with, as Laing suggests, as many as fifty in 1977-78.⁵ It could be argued however that Laing underestimated the number of zines which were in circulation in that period. Matt Worley's insightful work on the contextualisation of the political content of British punk zines from the 1970s into the 1980s also presents us with a comprehensive historiography of the rapid development and production of punk zines during this period and into the 1980s.⁶

3 Declaration by the editor of US fanzine *Hippycore* as quoted in Paul Rutherford, *Fanzine Culture* (Oldham: Springhead Books, 1995), 3.

4 Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979), 111. Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), 15.

5 Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, 14.

6 Worley "While the world was dying, did you wonder why?" 76-106

As I have discussed elsewhere⁷, the existing literature on zines tends to emphasise the way that zines served as a medium for communication and propagation. Indeed for O’Hara the ideas which define ‘punk culture and philosophy’: anarchy, gender politics, community, environmental philosophies, and the politics of DIY punk business and entrepreneurship are still propagated in the zine which, he suggests, is the primary form of communication amongst twenty-first century punks.⁸ This notion of zines serving as vehicles for cultural and subcultural communication is shared by Teal Triggs in her analysis of the visual design of zines. She asserts this position when she states that “fanzines became vehicles of subcultural communication and played a fundamental role in the construction of punk identity,”⁹ whilst simultaneously “establishing and reinforcing shared values, philosophy and opinions.”¹⁰

However, Triggs’s analysis echoes the approach of many analyses of punk zines in that they tend to focus on the way that punk was symbolised through the visual language of these publications. The use of cut-and-paste, roughly and almost intentionally poorly typed or hand written narrative that was interspersed with swear words and misspellings that combined a mixture of music and art with personal and political ideology¹¹. For Hebdige this signified the immediacy of a publication that was produced in haste from whatever limited resources were at hand¹².

Arguably Hebdige’s seemingly overly deterministic and fundamentally structuralist approach, together with the subcultural discipline from which it emerged, tends to place accent on the meanings which

7 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. Matt Worley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 287-303.

8 Craig O’Hara, *The Philosophy of Punk: More Than Noise* (Edinburgh: AK Press 1999), 62-69.

9 Teal Triggs, ‘Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY aesthetic’ *Journal of Design History* 19/1 (2006): 70.

10 Teal Triggs, “Generation Terrorists: Fanzines and Communication,” in *Communicating Design: Essays in Visual Communication*, ed. T. Triggs (London: B.T. Batsford, 1995), 34.

11 see, for instance, Phil Stoneman, *Fanzines: Their Production, Culture and Future*, (University of Stirling: MPhil dissertation, 2001).

12 Hebdige, *Subculture*, 111.

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are anchored within the style, rather than the discursive practices of punk. Whilst I recognise the importance of the repertoires of visual design, political philosophy, and textual meanings that zine editors encode in their work, I want to accentuate the discursive practices of the zine editors in my analytical approach to examining zines. Indeed, Barker points out that discursive theory can be especially advantageous in pinpointing the ‘micro processes by which people make claims about themselves’¹³— it also leads us out of various arguments surrounding the discourses of popular music culture to focussing on how they are actually manifest in varying texts and practices.

Laing’s broader reading of punk as discursive practice arguably offers a much wider framework for investigating punk zines, though has been less often used as a foundation for such analyses¹⁴. Therein Laing locates, what he suggests as the productive power of the DIY culture that punk utilised, in a longer history and broader set of DIY practices. Similarly George McKay, in his cultural history of British counterculture since the 1960s, suggests that punk and its zines owe much of their oppositional idealism and DIY practices to the 1970s hippy counterculture and underground independent press such as *Frendz*, *OZ*, and *International Times*. McKay’s hypothesis suggests that there has been a historical and cultural progression and connection between youth cultures of resistance since the 1960s.¹⁵ He cites Stewart Home who points out, “in retrospect, punk also appears as a very straightforward progression from the sixties, whereas at the time it was perceived as a break.”¹⁶ In many of the traditional popular music histories punk becomes assimilated into the mainstream of the popular music industry but the significance of the punk critique is sustained through its DIY practices and ideologies¹⁷ and a more self-conscious politic through the anarcho-punk movement.

Anarcho-punk as a subgenre and scene has a pivotal place within punk politics and music culture and anarcho-punk zines operated at

13 Chris Barker, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. (London: Sage, 2004), 55.

14 Laing, *One Chord Wonders*:

15 George McKay, introduction to *Senseless acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* by George McKay (London: Verso, 1996), i-ix.

16 McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty*, 5.

17 Michelle Liptrot, “Beyond the Lifespan of a Scab: The Longevity of DiY Punk in Britain” (PhD diss., University of Bolton, 2011).

the juncture of DIY music criticism and political activism and therefore provides a useful way to think through zines as sites of resistance and symbols of defiance. I suggest that these zines helped establish an evolving philosophy of the musical, cultural, and political ideologies that were incipient within the nascent British anarcho-punk scene. Many British anarcho-punk artists proclaimed themselves to be the true voice of punk, taking The Sex Pistols sloganeering of 'Anarchy in the UK' towards its logical progression/conclusion. These artists pursued a DIY music ethos, allied themselves to different strands of anarchist philosophy, more self-consciously political positions, and a commitment to different forms of direct action.¹⁸ Within these zines I also suggest that idealised notions of politics, music, and community were being constructed; that these zines and their editorials, inspired by the lyrical content of punk music, ordered the way in which readers and contributors became more politically and ideologically informed.

It could be argued then, that the role of anarcho-punk zines was central to the dissemination and reinforcement of these political and ideological positions. However I would suggest that many previous investigations of zines have tended to ignore or downplay the importance of the editors/producers of the zines in propagating and promoting those ideologies and in offering alternatives to the popular media's representations of punk. This is a position I wish to explore in the following parts of this chapter.

ZINE EDITORS AS 'ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS' AND 'CULTURAL AGENTS'

A useful way of investigating the role and practices of zine editors/ producers is through the Gramscian concept of the 'organic intellectual.' Antonio Gramsci, writer, Marxist politician and philosopher, argued

18 For authors who articulate or explore this idea see, for instance, Rich Cross, "The Hippies Now Wear Black: Crass and the Anarcho-Punk Movement, 1977–84." *Socialist History* 26 (2004): 25-44; Rich Cross "'There Is No Authority But Yourself": The Individual and the Collective in British Anarcho-Punk'. *Music and Politics* 4/2 (2010): 1-20; O'Hara, *The Philosophy of Punk*, 92-3; Ian Glasper, *The Day the Country Died* (London: Cherry Red, 2006), 8 and 104-9; George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), 87; George Berger, *The Story of Crass*. (London: Omnibus Press, 2006), 109-11.

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that every social class forms its own group of intellectuals whose role is to develop and maintain a model or pattern of ideological thoughts, that functions as a means of directing and giving purpose to that class. He further posited that what emerges from society are two types or groups of intellectuals. The first are 'traditional' intellectuals such as teachers, priests, politicians; people who are bound to the institutions of the hegemonic order and serve to legitimate that current system or order. Although at times they articulate the voice of dissent, by asking probing questions of the existing hegemony and its functions, they can never lead the revolutionary class, for them there is no power for revolutionary change. The second type is the 'organic intellectuals', those individuals whom naturally emerge from a social group, or whom that social group extemporaneously creates, in order to advance its own self-awareness and to ensure the interconnectivity and cohesive unity within that social group. The 'organic intellectual' must break with the traditional intellectuals of the current hegemonic society and, in doing so, must form his or her own hypotheses to fulfil his or her purpose in providing a revolutionary ideology to that movement. For Gramsci then the 'organic intellectuals' are those individuals who

...took a collective character within a working-class social formation in which the role of theory was organically linked to the ebb and flow of daily proletarian life.... where ideological functions and intellectual tasks werecentered within the proletarian milieu (factories, community life, and culture). In this respect intellectuals would be organic to that milieu only if they were fully immersed in its culture and language. Intellectuals therefore carried out universal functions that situated social activity within local and specific class struggles and in the defence of class interests.¹⁹

Although Gramsci is mostly concerned with the notion of the 'organic intellectual' in relation to class struggle, labour, and capital, Gramsci's

19 Gustavo.E Fischman and Peter McLaren, 'Rethinking Critical Pedagogy and the Gramscian and Freirean Legacies: From Organic to Committed Intellectuals or Critical Pedagogy, Commitment, and Praxis'. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 5/4 (2005): 433

concept has been successfully applied, in broader terms, to popular music communities. In his work on collective memory and American popular culture, George Lipsitz likens Chicano rock musicians in Los Angeles to Gramsci's 'organic intellectuals.'²⁰ In doing so Lipsitz develops a model of analysis that draws on some of Gramsci's concepts to demonstrate how those Chicano rock musicians functioned as 'organic intellectuals'. He discusses how those musicians are involved in the generation and circulation of subversive and counter-hegemonic ideas that reflect the needs of the community which they are part of.²¹ Through that process, of generating and circulating those ideas, they present texts and images that are subversive of the existing power relations and attempts to challenge the ideological and cultural hegemony of that society. This is supported through the process of connecting other oppositional cultures to create what Gramsci refers to as a 'historical bloc'²², a collection of groups that are in some way connected to, or united around, those counter-hegemonic or subversive images and texts.

Lipsitz's application of Gramsci's concept is further utilised by Nathan Abrams²³ in his insightful analysis of US hardcore rap, where Abrams identifies

four salient features that characterize these organic intellectuals. That they are members of an aggrieved community; that they reflect the needs of that community; that they attempt to construct a counter-hegemony through the dissemination of subversive ideas; and that they strive to construct a historical bloc – a coalition of oppositional groups united around these subversive or counter-hegemonic images²⁴

Using Abrams's framework I want to draw on those features of the 'organic intellectual' and apply them to zine editors of a small

20 George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 133-160.

21 Lipsitz, *Time Passages*, 152.

22 Ibid

23 Nathan D. Abrams, "Antonio's B-Boys: Rap, Rappers, and Gramsci's Intellectuals." *Popular Music and Society* 19/4 (1995), 1-19.

24 Abrams *Antonio's B-Boys*, 2.

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selection of anarcho-punk zines from the early 1980s as a means to explore, through their editorials and visual content, their role as ‘organic intellectuals’ within the 1980s anarcho-punk movement. I seek to examine how the discourses of these zine editors construct and reinforce discourses of resistance and defiance through the embodiment and undertaking of ideological work. Therefore to deal with both the broader orders of discourse and the singular moments of representation I will use Norman Fairclough’s approach to discourse.²⁵ So whilst Fairclough focuses on the discursive practices of the community in which texts are produced he furthermore suggests that attention should also be paid to the production practices and conventions of the producers of those texts, as being representational forms, which generate relationships and identities.

DISCOURSES OF ZINE EDITORS AS ‘ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS’

Other contributors to this book offer detailed discussion on the emergence and continuation of anarcho-punk both locally and globally. British anarcho-punk emerged as a DIY music culture and subcultural scene during the late 1970s in a period that witnessed political upheaval/dissent and the marginalisation and repression of many cultural and political groups in British society. Matt Worley states that “Punk, by late 1976, was seen to reflect a breakdown in the post-war ‘consensus’; it was typically portrayed as a product of crises that in its music, rhetoric, attitude, and style embodied Britain’s deteriorating economic and moral standing”.²⁶ This was eclipsed in 1979 with the election of a Conservative government, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, whose “strict monetarist agenda required significant cuts in government spending and the withdrawal of state subsidies, which triggered a sharp rise in unemployment. The Thatcher administration also directed additional funding (as well as assigning additional powers) to the police and law and order agencies”.²⁷

In 1983, on the back of a military victory, against the Argentinians in the Falkland’s war, Thatcher’s Conservative government was

25 Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Arnold, 1995)

26 Matt Worley ‘Shot By Both Sides: Punk, Politics and the End of ‘Consensus’ *Contemporary British History* 26/3 (2012), 1-22

27 Cross ‘There Is No Authority But Yourself,’ 1-2

re-elected on a draconian anti-union, pro-nuclear, and pro-state platform that sought to expand its power both domestically and internationally. Demonstrations against wage cuts, rising unemployment, and numerous public and private sector strikes followed, riots took place in inner city communities across the UK as “youth reacted against police harassment, endemic racism, and worsening living conditions. The political atmosphere was one of overwhelming confrontation, polarization, and uncertainty”.²⁸

So to enable me to explore the Gramscian concept of the ‘organic intellectual’, through Lipsitz’s and Abrams’s frameworks I will use selections of the editorial content from a number of examples of anarcho-punk zines. *Pigs for Slaughter* (1981-82), was produced and edited by Ian (Slaughter) Rawes and other contributors who were associated with the Anarchist Youth Federation and Autonomy Centre in Wapping, London. Its content regularly advocated direct action and revolutionary violence, which challenged the attitudes of the otherwise pacifist anarcho-punk scene at that time. *Intensive Care* (1980-81) was also a London based zine which was produced and edited by Kevin and Cram. *Toxic Graffiti* (Graffiti/Graffiti/Graffiti/Graffiti), the spelling of the title changing with every issue, (1979-82) was one of the more thought provoking zines to come out of London. It was produced and edited by Mike Diboll who had previously produced and edited *No Real Reason* zine which developed into *TG. Essentielles Pour La Bonne* (1982), which also came out of London and *Cobalt Hate* (1979-80) produced and edited by Timbo in Stevenage followed a similar approach as TG in that they contained more politically focussed essays and articles.

Similarly *Acts of Defiance* (1981-83), which was produced and edited by Raf, Russ, and Mike in Sunderland, increasingly gave over more space to politics than music with each issue, whilst reflecting the local punk scene in the North East of England and was associated with The Bunker, a music venue and social centre in Sunderland. *Anathema* (1982), emerging from Stockton-On-Tees and produced and edited by Lee, also reflected the scene in the North East.

For many producers and consumers of zines, music, band interviews, and gig reviews would remain the mainstay of the zines content. However where earlier zines had started to discuss the political

28 Cross ‘There Is No Authority But Yourself,’ 2

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meanings and impact of punk rock, many of the later anarcho-punk zines developed a more focussed political initiative in their content. Partly influenced by seminal anarcho-punk band Crass their instructive fold out record sleeves, pamphleteering at gigs, and the lyrical content of their songs exposed “articulate dissections of religion, geo-politics and social relations...” that “...provided a template for combining visual and textual assaults against ‘the system’”²⁹, zine producers began to explore the notion of anarchism as a political pathway to challenge the established political system and the polarised left and right wing factions.³⁰

In his analysis of rap artists as organic intellectuals, Abrams notes that an important function of Gramsci’s notions of organic intellectuals is to subvert the existing power relations: “Organic intellectuals endeavour to undermine the legitimacy of the dominant ideology that the traditional intellectuals seek to uphold”.³¹ As Gramsci argued, the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class is upheld by the manipulation of that society’s culture, so that the ideology of the ruling class is imposed and accepted as the norm. The dominant hegemonic ideology would be perpetrated and reinforced through societal institutions such as the church, academia, and the mass media where the media served the public as a distraction from the realities of the dominant ideology. Critiques of the machinations of the mass media appeared in a number of anarcho-punk zines, for example;

...most of the shit dished out by the BBC and ITV is designed to brainwash you (the consumer ha ha). Can’t you see they are just using you to make money. They churn out biased bigoted programmes that do nothing to entertain you or give you information...³²

29 Worley, “*While the World was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?*” 94-99.

30 For a more detailed discussion on punks relationship with anarchism See Worley, “*While the world was dying, did you wonder why?*,” 30-36; Jim Donaghey, ‘Bakunin Brand Vodka: An Exploration into Anarchist-Punk and Punk-Anarchism’ *Anarchist Developments in Cultural studies*, 1, (2013).138-70. Cross, ‘The Hippies Now Wear Black,’ 25-44; Cross, ‘There Is No Authority But Yourself,’ 1-20.

31 Abrams, ‘*Antonio’s B-Boys*’, 3.

32 *Intensive Care* #1, 7.

we are attacked continually, the violence doesn't just come Police or the army, but also from the spineless degrading 'culture' forced daily down our throats by the media.³³

Indeed, as Worley suggests, the mass media were "recognised as forces of control that reinforced social moralities, stifled dissent and distracted from the iniquities of everyday life."³⁴ What zines offered was an independent and DIY /self-produced alternative to those forms of media³⁵ wherein a space for the exploration, development, and dissemination of counter hegemonic ideas could take place. Many of the anarcho-punk zines would include short statements, poems, and at times extended essays as well as visual attacks against, and critiques of, what was perceived to be the ruling classes domination over the individual through a number of institutions and hegemonic ideologies that were often referred to as 'the system'.

The ruling classes have had it their way for too long, its time to take back what's ours. Its our world not theirs, there is enough for us all to live, there is no need for people to be denied of what they need. The Rolls Royces and the sick fur coats are symbols of our oppression, symbols of a system which places money before people. It's time to fight back.³⁶

Other common motifs and points of critique, in many anarcho-punk zines and their editorials, included government and the political system coupled with the imbalance of wealth and power in society, where the state forces of oppression, such as the police and military, were employed to protect and defend both the owners of the capital and the politicians and institutions that supported them. "The law is for the rich, for the elite...for property."³⁷ and "the police

33 *Pigs For Slaughter* #1, 3.

34 Worley, "While the World Was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?" 88.

35 Stephen Duncombe, *Notes From The Underground. Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*. (London: Verso, 1997).

36 *Fight Back* #1, 1.

37 *Toxic Graffiti* #3, 11.

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protect money and property, fuck human beings, the filth only look after the rich, money is your passport to protexion (sic).”³⁸ The relationship between the government and the police is similarly expressed in the editorial of *Cobalt Hate* #3;

The government and the police run our country and they run it wrong....the methods that Thatcher and her gang are approving for the police to use are getting more violent and oppressive... The government have their own morals and if we don't like em they got the police force to beat us into submission or their institutes (sic) to fuck our minds.³⁹

Similarly marriage and the role of ‘the family’ was challenged both visually and textually, as it was perceived to exist “as a site of conditioning through which gender roles, patriarchy, and hegemonic values were imposed and further reinforced via the education system....”⁴⁰ and similarly via the mass media in its commodification and objectification of those gender roles. Visual representations of happy couples in domestic family settings juxtaposed with images of pornography and/or bondage were accompanied by caustic treatises on the illusion of marriage and lifelong happiness, domestic slavery, patriarchy, misogyny, and gender stereotyping. “Daddy goes out to earn the bread. Mummy does the cleaning – is the man’s slave. Likewise Jill finds out how she should look after the kids and spend a life of drudgery slaving for her husband.”⁴¹

The church and religion in general, was also understood to be part of ‘the system’, an institution that demonstrated oppressive powers by controlling and subjugating people through religious and moral indoctrination. Often the hypocrisy of the church would be revealed and challenged over its role in the 3rd world and its support of ‘just’ conflicts, past and present.

The church is the ultimate structure working for, with and part of the ultimate system, they co operate

38 *Toxic Graffiti* #3, 2.

39 *Cobalt Hate* #3, 21.

40 Worley, “While the World Was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?” 98.

41 *Precautions Essentielles Pour la Bonne* #1, 9.

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to keep control... The church is built upon corruption, the pope does not divide his wealth among the victims of year zero, the starving babies(sic) swollen with severe malnutrition, the famine struck nations... Religion has been used for wars too long. Your pope and your white christ are as much to blame as the oppressive governments.⁴²

Many other anarcho-punk zines included extended essays on religion and exposing its complicity in perpetuating the ideologies of the hegemonic culture. For example *Acts of Defiance* #3 dedicated two pages to the subject titled "This is religion"⁴³ where the editor verbally dissects a number of religious dogmas and describes what he sees as the failings and contradictions of religion, including patriarchal oppression, the wealth of the church and its response to poverty and famine underpinned by an agenda of oppression through fear, employed by many faiths.

The education system was also perceived as part of the state apparatus of control and conformity of the masses, which divided a society in which private education was seen as an instrument for the wealthy to be schooled in ways of retaining and maintaining power and wealth.

The educational system is the largest instrument in the modern state for telling people what to do... Contemporary critics of the alliance between national government and national education would agree and would argue that it is in the nature of public authorities to make stronger social inequality and to brainwash the young into the acceptance of their particular slot in the organised system.⁴⁴

Abrams also identifies, in Lipsitz analysis of Chicano rock musicians, that the organic intellectual is someone who reflects the needs of its community and attempts to build a "historical-bloc" with other

42 *Anathema* #1, 19.

43 *Acts of Defiance* #3, 15-16

44 *Acts of Defiance* #5, 23.

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oppositional groups united around counter-hegemonic ideas.⁴⁵ The construction of these counter-hegemonic alliances is formulated by the appeal of common points of reference and similarities of experiences between the groups. As the political debates within the editorial content of anarcho-punk zines were further unpacked and explored, so issues around war and violence, state oppression, squatting, vivisection, animal rights, drug use, veganism/vegetarianism, consumerism, Third World poverty, and gender politics started to appear regularly within the zines both textually and visually.

Anarcho-punk's relationship with national movements, such as CND and similar pacifist anti-war organisations, Hunt Saboteurs Association, and the Animal Liberation Front, also became a common component of the cultural and editorial language of anarcho-punk zines. This included articles giving advice to readers on how to deal with the police when stopped and searched, how to set up squats, produce fanzines, organise events and protests, sexual health, direct action and political activism, animal liberation and anti-vivisection, among a multitude of DIY practices deemed important to the developing scene. It could be argued that the sharing of information about, and from, other groups, who were also challenging the hegemonic culture, warranted inclusion into the zines by the editors as a way to coalesce these oppositional groups into a historical-bloc, united around counter-hegemonic images and texts of subversion. Indeed some groups that reflected the needs of the anarcho-punk community developed out of and/or were supported by some of the zine editors/producers.⁴⁶

45 Abrams, *Antonio's B-Boys*, 2.

46 For example, some members of the Kill Your Pet Puppy (KYPP) collective, who produced the zine *KYPP*, were active supporters of, and participants in, the Black Sheep Housing Co-op based in Islington, London which continued to operate as a housing co-op until 2002. http://greengalloway.blogspot.co.uk/2014_02_01_archive.html (accessed 5/13/2014). Other zines such as *Pigs For Slaughter*, *Book of Revelations*, *Enigma*, *Paroxysm of Fear*, *Scum and Precautions Essentielles Pour La Bonne* whose editors/producers gathered in and around the Centro Iberico (1982-84), an anarchist squat and social centre in Westbourne Park, West London and the short lived Autonomy Centre (1981-82) in Wapping, East London. The Sunderland based 'zine *Acts of Defiance* were aligned with, and involved in, The Bunker in Sunderland, a venue for live music

DISCOURSES OF ZINE EDITORS AS AUTHORITATIVE REPRESENTATIVES

These 'needs' of the community are also reinforced by the notion of authority that is at times embodied within the discourses of the zine editors/producers. To demonstrate this I will draw on the editorial content from four fanzines. *Incendiary* was a London based fanzine produced and edited by John Slam in 1984. The three further examples I utilise, *Acts of Defiance*, *Cobalt Hate*, and *Pigs for Slaughter*, I have contextualised in the previous section of this chapter. As I stated earlier Hebdige's focus on 'style' and the seeming 'immediacy' of their production seems to discount the effort and time involved in the cut and paste techniques of zine production. This commitment to production and the clearly articulated positions of the editors, I would suggest, represents cultural work and that the editors were key agents in defining what anarcho-punk was or should be. Because of the passion and commitment that is necessary for zine production, I suggest that the editors, through this cultural work, stake a claim in warranting, the authority to assert specific ideological positions.

Sarah Thornton suggests that media is instrumental in defining and circulating cultural knowledge and authenticating cultural practices through a process of 'enculturation' where these practices are considered integral or essential to that subculture⁴⁷. When attempting to understand the cultural practices of zine producers/editors one has to consider notions of authority. In the process of selecting, presenting, and displaying a set of knowledge or opinions to define and speak for a group, belief or value, the zine producer/editor simultaneously fashions their own identity and the identity of the group that they see themselves as representing 'out of the experiences and values of the subcultures of which they are part.'⁴⁸

and a meeting place for political and community groups. Worley, "*While the World Was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?*" 96 and 98. *Knee Deep in Shit (KDIS)* began as a zine for Bradford's 1 in 12 club, a social space and members club and collective based on anarchist principles and values. The 'producers of *KDIS* went on to form the 1in 12 Publication Collective. <http://www.1in12.com/publications/mail/about.htm>

47 Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge: Polity. 1995), 29

48 Duncombe, *Notes From The Underground*, 37.

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Duncombe suggests that this creation of identity in the editorial and pages of the zine is both a reflection of the larger world of reality and representation and a search for an authoritative self⁴⁹ where that level/degree of personalization by the zine producers/editors is a way of seizing authority⁵⁰. He further argues that the punk discourse that is often found in zines is a combination of a way of defining oneself as being against society as an individual but simultaneously defining 'yourself as being part of a group, adhering to community standards where the mix of authentic individuality and communal solidarity is a rough one'⁵¹. What Duncombe considers important in the discourses of zines is that the individual and personal narratives are of and by real individuals, where self-expression is what zine producers and consumers consider being authoritative, authentic and where importance is placed on the expressivity of doing rather than the effectiveness of the end result.⁵²

So in this context the verbal language of anarcho-punk zines represent a discursive practice that produces and articulates important notions of what it was to be an 'anarcho-punk,' an anarchist, a pacifist, vegan, et al; what role music, symbolism, and the scene had in its construction and the role that the zine editors had in this activity. Many of the zines allude to a form of opposition, defiance, and activism that is anchored in the title of those zines⁵³. The editorial content attempted to define what it was to be a member of a scene that increasingly constructed a discourse of defiance, anarchism, and anti-authoritarianism. These personal responses are also clearly articulated in the editorials of a number of anarcho-punk zines where a consistent and solid philosophical and ideological discourse is centred on the idea that the fanzine is a site for identity creation, ideological engagement, and action. So for example, the editorial of *Acts of Defiance* #6 critiques perceptions of what being an anarcho-punk constitutes and attempts to define it through the discourse of individual responsibility and anarchism.

49 Ibid., 40.

50 Ibid., 30.

51 Ibid., 62.

52 Ibid., 33-35.

53 For example, *Acts of Defiance*; *Fight Back*; *Raising Hell*; *Subvert*.

MATT GRIMES

Its funny isn't it, how many people who have got anarchy signs all over themselves and claim to know what its all about-peace and love and all that isn't it? And yet despite this how many act as if they actually meant it-not bloody many... People who claim to believe in anarchy but let us down on the most basic thing-trust... they say that anarchy begins with the individual but its still right, you always complain that your mistreated by 'society' but unless you fulfil peoples trust in you your going to remain isolated and unless you can learn to trust fully then we are going nowhere.⁵⁴

This theme continues in the editorial of the following issue of *Acts of Defiance*,

Now its time to become more involved, to really get down to things seriously. So all you 'punks' out there who thought that you were helping the revolution by buying records on Crass label and spraying anarchy signs all over think again. There are loads of things really worth doing... you can always start with yourself (I said this in the last issue and probably the one before and I'll keep saying it until someone listens). If you are going to go around calling yourself an anarchist then at least try and act like you mean it.⁵⁵

What comes through in the discourses of the editorial from these two issues of *Acts of Defiance* is how strong and forcibly the identity of being a 'punk' is articulated. In particular, a distinction is made between those who use the signs of being a punk – critique of the status quo; sporting anarchy signs; and 'buying records on Crass label' – and those who take personal responsibility to act. Here the editors, through their seeming frustration and anger, are using the editorial to remind and reinforce what they think anarcho-punk is about and how it is down to individual responsibility to make it work as an ideological practice. The punk discourse of doing rather than just one of

54 *Acts of Defiance* #6, 2.

55 *Acts of Defiance* #7, 37.

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pretentious posturing is evident in many earlier punk zines, however in some anarcho-punk zines the importance of the notion of personal responsibility for engagement and action seems to become more prominent and the lack of it critiqued more. The editors reinforce, in their minds, what they believe constitutes and defines anarcho-punk and anarcho-punk identity through the discourses of DIY ethics, anarchism and individual responsibility. It could be argued that through this process there is an attempt to elevate their position, within the scene, as more authoritative and superior.

The editorial of *Cobalt Hate* #3 takes a similar stance in its critique of what the editor thinks constitutes anarchy and interestingly what could be seen to be a struggle with the ideological boundaries of anarchy, by putting their own take on who anarchy is for;

yeah sure you want anarchy its good fer (sic) the brain and allows free expression and free enterprise etc, but its so easy and yet so hard to have, but only if you are considering it at face value, its about people its about freedom and the way we relate to one another, its individuality”... “you might say ANARCHY FOR THE UK but why?? do you really want everybody free to do whatever? NO ITS ANARCHY. FOR US. NOT THEM WE LOOK AFTER OURSELVES.THEY DID IT THEIR WAY AND IT DIDN'T WORK SO WE'LL DO IT OUR WAY AND LEAVE THOSE CUNTS ALONE....FOR A WHILE. I could say I got anarchy now well I aint. even poxy things like dole, tinned food, t.v is defying the meaning.⁵⁶

Some of the zine editors expanded on the editorial ‘space’ by producing treatises and ‘manifestos of action,’⁵⁷ ‘declarations of intent’,⁵⁸ and a ‘call to arms’ to challenge the hegemony of society but also to challenge the anarcho-punk scene and what they perceive to be its failures and contradictions⁵⁹;

56 *Cobalt Hate* #3, 3.

57 *Incendiary* #1, 2.

58 *Incendiary* #1, 3.

59 *Pigs for Slaughter*, produced by Ian (Slaughter) Rawes, was a more militant

MATT GRIMES

This and every issue of 'Incendiary' is the "we do what we fucking want to" issue. After all, that's the only way to do anything. I don't concern myself with any sort of compromise. UNFORTUNATELY many do, and everything gets diluted"... "We've been accepting this for far too long. Accepting that there are 'correct' ways to do things, accepting there is 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'evil'. Open your mouth for a minute and they will ram their morals down it! And at the other extreme (ie the same place) you get the anarcho gestapo forcing their morals onto you"... "DANCE TO YOUR TUNE ALONE, AND NO OTHER"... "there i go, preaching on. Who am I to tell you what to do? Well im going to regardless because your reactionary values deserve a good hard kicking."⁶⁰

Indeed in the first issue of *Pigs for Slaughter*, where its cover declared it as "AT LAST... A PRACTICAL PAPER FOR THE MILITANT ANARCHIST PUNK!! FAR OUT,"⁶¹ the editorial took a more politically hard line approach to anarchism. Occupying the first three pages, the editorial contained a searing critique of Crass and the anarcho-punk movement that developed in their wake. It highlighted the failures of its pacifist approach, lack of commitment to direct action and confrontation with the system and all its agents. Similar zines⁶² also took a hard-line anarchist approach that promoted and encouraged direct action against the state, the owners of capital, military defence and arms companies, animal laboratories. Thus the editorials became a site not only of authority but one of debate and contestation where, as Worley suggests⁶³, charged disagreements ensued between those who took a pacifist position and those who advocated direct acts of physical confrontation, and similarly those who perceived anarchism as the responsibility of the

anarchist zine that was representative of the Anarchist Youth Federation and produced searing critiques of the anarcho-punk movement, especially the pacifist element who they perceived to be incapable of direct action

60 *Incendiary* #1, 3.

61 *Pigs for Slaughter* #1.

62 For example *Cardboard Theatre*, *Fight Back*, *Paroxysm Fear*, *Enigma* and *Scum*.

63 Worley, "While the World Was Dying, Did You Wonder Why?," 96

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individual and those who perceived it as a collective movement committed to smashing the 'system'.

However, despite these polarities, by the mid 1980s there existed an abundance of anarcho-punk zines each propagating their perceptions of the system and its homogeneous culture. As the anarcho-punk scene developed the music content for many fanzines lessened with available print space taken up by more political and cultural counter-hegemonic discourses. A look through a large selection of those anarcho-punk zines also brings forward a sense of homogeneity in their production practices and editorial discourses, which could be interpreted as being naively idealistic and utopian. This sense of homogeneity is critiqued by the editors of *Acts of Defiance*:

Well there has been an increase in the number of zines knocking about recently, and although this is good from the point of view that at least people are doing it themselves, its really disappointing to see the same old things coming up, the same old interviews, the same old anti bomb, anti religion articles coming up, its all been done so many times before. Where's that originality gone?⁶⁴

As the anarcho-punk scene developed so the visual and textual content of the zines also shifted to accommodate the scenes that were emerging out of the punk milieu that followed in the wake of anarcho-punk⁶⁵. Indeed Liptrot argues, many of the practices of the 1980s British anarcho-punk scene have over the last twenty years been absorbed into a wider contemporary DIY punk and hardcore punk scenes across the world. In these scenes the anarcho-punk DIY ethic is still prominent and the print fanzine still remains one of the key means of ideological communication within the subculture⁶⁶

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have aimed to consider and analyse the role of anarcho-punk zine editors as organic intellectuals and authoritative

64 *Acts of Defiance* #7, 37.

65 D.Beat, Crust punk, Hardcore, Goth and Industrial.

66 Liptrot, "Beyond the lifespan."

representatives who engage in the construction of anarcho-punk as a sub-cultural/political movement. In doing so, I have aimed to encompass the usual emphasis on zines as channels of communication and symbols of wider punk practices, but recognising that it was the zine which was one of the key ways in which anarcho-punk was made meaningful through the discursive practices of their editors. I would argue, then, that simply focusing on the characteristic visual design of the zine, as in previous analytical approaches, limits our understanding of its cultural role and the position of its editors as organic intellectuals. More importantly, perhaps, we need to understand that it is not only in their iconography and symbolism that the zines were relevant and meaningful but also the discursive practices which were employed by the editors. The zines' visual design was an epiphenomenon of the discursive practices of the editors who produced the zines in a manner which indexed their DIY nature, a practice central to the ethos of anarcho-punk, and the investment of time and effort which were attributed to their construction and distribution by the editors. It could be argued then that the time, effort, and commitment involved in aiding and supporting the development and understanding of the scene, positions the editor as organic intellectual and authoritative voice.