

It's your world too, you can do what you want": the role of subcultural activism in stop the city protests (1983-1984) and its implications for political protest in Britain'

[Rebecca Binns](#)

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of subcultural activism in the Stop the City Protests (STC), 1983-1984. It shows how protestors broke with the consensual approach of overarching political organisations, chiefly the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), using direct action tactics to shut down the City of London, which was emerging as a strategic centre for globalised capitalism. STC is shown to be on a continuum with the radicalism of the preceding decades, with bands, including Crass and Poison Girls bridging the gap to anarcho-punk. This article innovates by combining official evidence, in the form of police briefing notes, with 'ground-up' activist materials and fanzines, to evaluate the approach and ideology of the protestors and the police, thereby tracing the increasingly intolerant policing methods that were adopted during key political battles of the 1980s, including The Miners' Strike and The Battle of the Beanfield. Questioning the extent to which Thatcherism was the hegemonic project of the 1980s, it demonstrates how STC was at odds with the contemporaneous corporatisation of political activism, and thereby provided a model for the road protests and Reclaim the Streets movement of the 1990s, and fed into the anti-globalisation and environmental movements of the 21st century.

KEYWORDS:

- [Stop the City](#)
- [protest](#)
- [anarcho-punk](#)
- [Thatcherism](#)
- [policing methods](#)

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This article explores the role of subcultural activism in the Stop the City Protests (STC), 1983 and 1984, and its connection to the radical social changes of the 1960s-70s. It highlights the significance of STC in the

history of political protest in the UK, exploring both its influences and legacy, while demonstrating the shifting State response to protest and direct action in the 1980s.

The STC protests were initiated by the anarchist, anti-militarist and environmentalist collective London Greenpeace (which predated the international Greenpeace organisation) as well as other anarchist and peace groups and young, unaffiliated punks who shared a common, largely pacifist, outlook. Evolving from the direct action strand of activism within the peace movement, the protests were organised outside the overarching body of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), who in turn advised their members to have nothing to do with the protests.¹ While associated actions took place across the country,² this article focuses on the protests that took place on Sept 29th 29 March 1983th 31 May 1984st 1984 and 27 September 1984 in the City of London. The actions at the second, and most effective, STC led to an estimated £100 million in losses overnight.³ The protests ostensibly formed a ‘Carnival against War, Oppression and Destruction’, but they also specifically targeted capitalism through the use of direct action tactics to close down London’s financial centre.

One key intervention this article makes is to show how the STC protests provide a testing ground for the State’s approach to protest and cultural difference during the Thatcher era. Over the course of the protests, the police response shifted from tolerance to the stringent curtailment of the protestors’ rights and liberties through mass, at times violent, arrest. This provided a model for new, more brutal forms of policing, which accompanied the concerted strategy to destroy the striking miners and peace convoy in the ensuing years.⁴

Key to the source material is a series of documents released by London Greenpeace for a Conference Against Police Repression held in Haringey in September 1985. These documents included a confidential Police Briefing report issued to officers in the run-up to STC2 that had been obtained by activists. The documents were compiled by Dave Morris, who would later receive national attention as one of the defendants in the ‘McLibel’ case. Alongside eyewitness and police reports, research of a substantial collection of anarcho-punk fanzines and record graphics (1983–84), as well as newsletters, leaflets and other ephemera, is used to evidence the values and beliefs held within the social milieu of many of the protestors. The research uses a ‘ground up’ approach to develop understanding of the relationship between formal protest and subcultures. In this respect, it builds on a growing body of work by scholars who use ephemeral sources to develop understanding of grassroots movements.⁵

This article builds on recent work that contests the notion that Thatcherism/neoliberalism was the grand narrative behind all social and cultural change in the 1980s. While acknowledging that Thatcherism constituted a ‘crisis’ for the left, recent work has also examined how social change during the 1980s was a product of the radicalism and left wing politics of the preceding decades, the latter of which had shifted from class to other areas of interest.⁶ This process began in the late 1980s, when Stuart Hall began re-evaluating his earlier assertion that Thatcherism had become all-determining in a negative sense.⁷ His renowned New Times essay collection (published in *Marxism Today*, 1988, co-edited by Martin Jacques) provided an attempt from Marxist perspectives to de-centre Thatcherism as *the* hegemonic neo-liberal project of the era, instead relating it to wider social, economic and political trajectories. Stephen Brooke’s article ‘Living in “New Times”’, (2014) built on this, warning historians against an overreliance on the politics of Thatcher and her government in writing on the 1980s, instead advocating they explore wider trajectories and developments away from parliamentary politics. The collection of papers in *New Times Revisited: Britain in the 1980s*, in the academic journal, *Contemporary British History* (Volume 31/Issue 2, 2017) used the New Times essays as the basis for re-examining the history of this era beyond the icon of Thatcher and the neo-liberal project. The STC protests provide an ideal case study for investigating the vital yet overlooked role of subcultures in this endeavour.

Continuity and change in the history of protest

The STC protestors continued a lineage of spontaneous and direct action protest that had emerged within certain, youthful demographics, during the post-war decades. The central tenets of their countercultural and early punk predecessors, chiefly that rationalism and dogmatic religious and political beliefs and allegiances led to the horrors of the Second World War, was reiterated through the rhetoric of the protestors. The

protests took place in the context of the resurgence of Cold War animosity between the US and the Soviet Union, with the UK playing a supporting role. There was also the revival of militarism, patriotism, and State authoritarianism under the Thatcher administration. However, unlike this earlier radicalism that was facilitated by a situation of relative affluence⁸ and the post-war settlement, the perspectives of many of the young protestors at STC were to some extent symptomatic of the erosion of these supports through the programmes of the New Right government.

While movements such as the counterculture and punk are often read or presumed to be liberal and affiliated with left wing politics, the reality was less easily defined. The counterculture had sexist and misogynist aspects, whereas the politics of punk is more complex than is claimed by the left wing, progressive narrative engendered by bands such as The Clash and movements such as Rock Against Racism (RAR), which was closely affiliated with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).⁹ Punk fragmented into various subgenres following the perceived death of its first wave (1976–78). The sub-genre of anarcho-punk, initiated by the band Crass (1978–84), sought to revive the grassroots potential of punk, allied with a politicised anarchistic philosophy. While the anarcho-punk protestors at STC were blatantly opposed to the Thatcher government, they also rejected an association with far-left organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), as this scathing excerpt from the fanzine, *Children of the Revolution*, Anti-Apathy, Issue 6, 1984, shows,

DEMOCRACY IS A FARCE! THE SNAKE CRAWLS UP ITS OWN ARSE

Pogo on a Nazi-join the SWP- 'Rock Against Racism'-yeah, right-Black and white, unite and fight! Yeah, we'll show them now that we've got the SWP to tell us what to do. Punks 'n' Teds, Natty Dreads, smash the front and join the Reds! Ha, ha, but with a bitter bite ... Some of us went to quite a few meetings, bought quite a few rags and then saw through the patronizing crap to the real motives: increasing the following to their pathetic and irrelevant little party.

Many of the protestors also defined themselves in opposition to the mainstream, progressive left, as embodied in CND. The 1980s saw CND receive a new lease of life in the context of the re-emergence of the Cold War under Reagan and Thatcher, but the youthful subcultural participants in STC wanted to pursue a more direct and spontaneous form of protest. The antipathy they reflected was not new, however, but stretched back to the inception of the movement. As Jodi Burkett shows in 'Direct Action and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 1958–62', 2009, while CND emerged with the message that mass public pressure was the way to make the British government adopt unilateral nuclear disarmament, contemporaneous groups, such as The Direct Action Committee (DAC) [1957–61] and the Committee of 100 (C100) [1960], believed they had to be forced into it by more direct means.

Several high profile anarchists were instrumental to these break away branches, which carried out various non-violent, direct action protests. These included Nicholas Hardy Walter (1934–2000), who together with his wife Ruth Hardy, and other C100 members formed the covert, anti-war, direct action cell, Spies for Peace.¹⁰ Similarly, the anarchist and pacifist Alex Comfort (1920–2000), best known for his progressive sex manual, *The Joy of Sex* (1972), was a member of the DAC. Anarchists, who had a considerable impact within the peace movement (despite being small in numbers), reconceptualised direct action as non-violent, as part of a wider pacifist reorientation of protest during the 1950s-60s.¹¹

The birth of CND coincided with the emergence of the New Left, and the attendant radical shift in left wing thinking, in the wake of the Hungarian revolution and revelations about the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. Frank Parkin's book, *Middle Class Radicalism* (1968) showed how the intellectual currents within the New Left were instrumental to shaping CND. However, Burkett argues that the direct action activism that characterised the radical left (indebted to these same ideas) was fundamentally at odds with the rigid hierarchical structure and emphasis on creating a mass movement that characterised CND.¹² Indeed, the counterculture and radical political groups of the 1960s-70s were littered with disaffected ex members of CND looking for a more libertarian social milieu. Prominent examples include Jeff Nuttall (self-published *My Own Mag* and helped to found *International Times*), David Widgery (writer/editor on *Oz*), Barry Miles (editor of *International Times* and co-owner of Indica Gallery), John 'Hoppy' Hopkins (*International Times* co-founder), David Zane Mairowitz (founding editor of *International Times*) and Tom McGrath (editor of

Peace News and *International Times*). Nuttall argued that the ineffectiveness of CND, indicated by the political establishment's lack of response to the vast Aldermaston marches (in 1958, 1959 and 1963, which drew 10,000, 20,000 and 100,000 marchers respectively), was a decisive factor in how protest would change in subsequent decades.¹³

There were also tensions regarding the role of women within CND, something that was also reflected in the counterculture.¹⁴ Despite the high number of women in prominent roles in peace campaigns during the 1950s, they were subsequently sidelined within the CND hierarchy.¹⁵ Feminism provided a more viable outlet for women who were disaffected with various progressive, left political movements and the counterculture.¹⁶

In the late 1970s a strand developed within the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) that was of particular relevance to STC. Anarcha-feminism voiced opposition to the movement's mainstream direction, both in terms of the state sanctioned equality sought by socialist-feminists, and the individualistic goal of attaining positions of power within a capitalist hierarchy. Instead, the aim for anarcha-feminists was radical autonomy. They sought a return to the grassroots, leaderless structures and devolved organisation which they believed had characterised the early manifestation of second wave feminism.¹⁷ It was developed in the wake of the well-documented acrimony that characterised the 1978 WLM National Conference, which was presented as signalling the fragmentation of the movement.¹⁸

It should be noted, however, that recent scholarship has questioned the supposed egalitarian composition of early second wave feminism. In Britain, the dominance and construction of the movement's narrative by white, middle-class women with a socialist underpinning, has been argued to have had a silencing effect on divergent voices. Eva Setch and Jeska Rees have demonstrated how socialist feminism was privileged over radical/revolutionary feminism within the movement and in available literature,¹⁹ while Natalie Thomlinson has shown that while the WLM engaged with and supported anti-racist and anti-imperialist causes, it also inadvertently re-inscribed white dominance/power.²⁰ However naïve the anarcha-feminist position was in this sense, it would have a substantial impact on the peace movement through its manifestation at Greenham Common.²¹

The late 1970s had seen a large, decentralised movement with a strong commitment to non-violent direct action grow up in opposition to nuclear power, and in particular the construction of a new power station at Torness in Scotland.²² The Greenham Common protest followed this; but was specifically pitted against the Thatcher government's decision in 1981 to allow the United States to station missiles in Britain. The women who marched from Wales to the site in Berkshire and set up a camp (which became women only) organised their anti-nuclear campaign independently from the overall body of CND. They deployed improvised and courageous direct action tactics without recourse to any hierarchical body, building on the trend seen in political protest during the preceding decade. By the early 1980s, the feminist ideas and praxis at Greenham Common and the independent, DIY culture and aggression of punk had been incorporated into the direct action strand of the peace movement, and this symbiosis found its ultimate expression at STC.

As well as having a lineage with anarcha-feminism and the direct action strand of the anti-nuclear and peace movements, the anarcho-punk protestors at STC were also connected to their countercultural predecessors through the free festivals movement, which gathered pace during the 1970s. George McKay (1996) has observed that free festivals provided the link from the counterculture to punk and the peace convoy in Britain, noting this provided a continuum with 'cultures of resistance' during this period. While the peace convoy (which came about when a group of travellers went from Stonehenge to the protests at Greenham Common) opted for life on the road, living in mobile homes and vehicles, or makeshift structures such as benders and tipis and establishing sites in largely rural locations, their counterpart in the cities—termed anarchist, peace or Crass punks at the time, or anarcho-punks retrospectively—often lived in squats, which likewise enabled them to live communally and to fuse their life choices with their politics.²³ Life choices that featured prominently in both social milieus included the rejection of conventional work, political parties and organised religion (there were some esoteric, neopagan and new age spiritual elements), setting up co-operatives for work/social/political reasons,²⁴ vegetarianism/veganism and a wider concern with animal rights.

Penny Rimbaud, the drummer and co-founder of Crass, was involved in founding and organising the Stonehenge Festival (1974–75). Gee Vaucher, who later provided the distinct visual aesthetic for Crass, designed flyers for the event, which was organised from their Essex commune, Dial House. Older members of Crass including Rimbaud, Vaucher and singer/songwriter Eve Libertine (aka Bronwyn Lloyd Jones) introduced the positive life choices associated with the counterculture into the more aggressive milieu of punk. Along similar lines, Poison Girls' lyricist, singer and front woman, Vi Subversa, and drummer, Lance d'Boyle, who worked extensively with Crass during their early years, were grounded in the radicalism of the previous decades, and brought their feminist, anarchist and pacifist leanings into their output.²⁵ There is also an anarchist lineage between the proponents of free festivals, including Mick Farren (Phun City), Ubi Dwyer (Windsor Free) and Wally Hope (Stonehenge), and this later manifestation of anarchism.

Crass and the bands that comprised the anarcho-punk genre produced records, fanzines and publications independently, as this allowed them to express themselves without compromise, while it was also promoted in a political sense as resistance to the capitalist mode of production. This stood in stark contrast, and partly in response to, the dominant cultural changes of the era, which entailed a shift away from the radicalism of the 1970s with its emphasis on culture created by and for 'the people' towards the domination of culture by corporations.²⁶ This shift coincided with CND vastly increasing their national membership again, from a low of 4,267 in 1979 to 90,000 by 1984, while their demonstration in 1981 drew over 250,000 people. This was in part achieved by a deliberate appeal to a young demographic, through alliances with high profile and credible bands and performers including Paul Weller, Billy Bragg, the Pop Group, Killing Joke and Madness. CND further extended its reach through collaborating with the Glastonbury Festival. In many ways the story of Glastonbury, which charged entry for the first time in 1979, mirrors that of CND in its headlong charge towards the mainstream. Glastonbury became a vast, lucrative enterprise in the ensuing decades, prompting many within anarcho-punk and peace convoy circles to perceive it to have 'sold out' on its original, free festival principles.

This change was mirrored in the relationship of anarcho-punk to CND. In the early 1980s, participants in the youth subculture still supported and engaged with CND. Anarcho-punk bands took part in tours organised by CND, and Crass handed out CND leaflets at their gigs. Indeed, early anarcho-punk record releases and fanzines were littered with CND symbols alongside ones signifying anarchy and peace, while opposition to war, the arms race and nuclear weapons featured prominently in lyrics. However, while anarcho-punk bands and fanzines were broadly supportive of the aims of CND, they often contested its hierarchical structure, tactics and philosophical underpinnings.²⁷ As with their countercultural predecessors, scene participants increasingly questioned CND's strategy of trying to change governmental policy, believing government itself to be inherently violent. In stark contrast to CND's continued faith in democratic processes, anarcho-punk expressed both fear and futility in the face of mainstream politics. Steve Lake from Zounds recounts, 'I learnt how the State kept people in check through a combination of tacit consent and fear, mostly fear. Fear of war, fear of terrorism, fear of the lights going out, fear of "the other"'.²⁸

While anarcho-punk shared a critique of war and the arms race with CND, its tone was more vehement, directed against the power structures, above all government, that fostered it. Crass played a key role in promoting this critique, through their music and the visual and written material accompanying their record releases. Powerful tracks by other bands that resonated with their audiences included No Doves Fly Here by The Mob (7", Crass Records, 1981) and Fear by Zounds (on the album, Curse of Zounds, Rough Trade, 1981). Crass gigs featured film footage and installations by Gee Vaucher and Mike Duffield that communicated the horror of war and the nuclear threat visually, alongside their live performances.²⁹ This anti-war preoccupation was reiterated in the vehement, anti-Thatcher rhetoric that flourished in anarcho-punk culture via music, design language and fanzine discourse (see [Figure 1](#)).³⁰

Figure 1. Acts of Defiance, #6, 1983, 31.

The stop the city protests

The build up to the first Stop the City protest saw mass unemployment and rising social disenfranchisement among the young. Unemployment topped three million (one in seven people) in 1982—a figure not seen in Britain since the depression of the 1930s.³¹ A Thatcherite individualist ethos stigmatised unemployed people as inadequate, rather than a by-product of circumstances that were largely created by government strategists and policy makers, and which disproportionately affected the young and the working class.³² These factors, combined with racism and unjust policing, were considered to have instigated the inner city riots in Brixton and Toxteth (1981), which then sparked uprisings throughout the UK.³³ There was also a resurgence of patriotism and militarism, leading to what some saw as the unnecessary loss of life during the Falklands War (1982). Thatcher was re-elected in June, 1983, on the back of this popular war, with the Conservatives winning a landslide victory, significantly increasing their majority from 1979.³⁴ This was spun as a crushing rejection of Labour's leftist and anti-nuclear stance under Michael Foot (one of the founders of CND). However, opinion polls from the time showed that a majority of British people were against nuclear weapons and the siting of nuclear bases in Britain.³⁵ A poll conducted by the Opinion Research Centre in 1982, for instance, showed that 63% of people objected to the government's decision to purchase Trident II, while 53% thought Polaris should be abandoned.³⁶ It is also worth noting that the Conservatives' percentage of the vote had fallen slightly (by 700,000 votes overall). The opposition vote had been split between Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance, whose combined vote was substantially higher than the Tories.³⁷ However, in view of Labour's resounding lead in the polls in 1982, the result was a blow to those in favour of leftist progressive politics, and it led to disillusion with the idea that change could come through mainstream channels.

Prior to the election, in February 1983, members of London Greenpeace had called for blockades in the City of London to oppose war and its enablers. London Greenpeace members were drawn from the more overtly anarchist end of the spectrum of protestors. They were inspired by the impromptu and audacious direct action tactics seen at Greenham Common. Indeed, their efforts began with distributing 2,000 'Occupy the City' leaflets at peace camps such as Greenham Common and Upper Heyford. The leaflets called for complementary protests to be carried out in urban centres, targeting corporations that facilitated the arms trade. These initially met with little response, but as plans developed, groups from across the spectrum of anarchist and anti-military groupings began to engage. As STC participant and member of London Greenpeace, Dave Morris, noted in his account of the protests,

When the idea to stop the City of London (one of the major financial decision-making areas of the world and the real seat of power in this country) was proposed, nearly everyone said 'it can't be done,' 'they'll never allow it,' 'you'll be smashed,' etc. However, people involved with peace movement protests at military bases and elsewhere had a great deal of experience and confidence in organising independently and refusing to be intimidated. Hence, they were the backbone of the first STC.³⁸

A series of open planning meetings were called, to which a range of campaign groups were invited to help shape the event. Despite a police raid on one of the protestors' organisational premises in the early morning, the first STC protest went ahead on Sept 29th, 1983.³⁹ It drew 1,500 protestors and led to 203 arrests. It was organised along non-hierarchical lines, without the overarching support or control of any political organisation or union. Mutual aid was promoted through sharing maps, briefings, ideas and information on legal support among the disparate range of groups, while messengers were used to disseminate information. The protestors formed in separate groups, and met at multiple meeting points, in a deliberate attempt to confound police expectations.⁴⁰ The police seemed ill-equipped to respond to the protest, which was at odds with orthodox mass demonstrations organised under the auspices of state authority.⁴¹ In his authoritative study 'Stop the City showed another possibility', Rich Cross notes that '... facing an event "without leaders", and without an agreed structure, police officers from the Metropolitan and City forces were at a loss as to how to police the demonstration'.⁴² The protestors deemed the day a success in so far as they communicated their aims to the workers, disrupted the functioning of the city and generated belief in their movement through the festival atmosphere.⁴³ The extent to which the protestors succeeded in influencing any of the workers they engaged with, however, is open to question. Rimbaud described city worker responses as 'confused, bemused and bewildered'.⁴⁴ An onlooker, quoted in *The Evening Standard* (29

September 1983), claimed their actions were a waste of time and would not sway a single worker, while their attire meant they wouldn't be taken seriously.⁴⁵ Certainly, press reports encouraged this view, through focusing on the protestors' appearance in a bid to undermine the protests.⁴⁶

While the police response to the first protest was relatively restrained, there were instances of unprovoked police violence. A high profile example featured Sergeant Brian Weedon gripping the throat of the seventeen year old demonstrator, Kieran Moylett (who, using the name Mower, was lead singer of punk band Chaos UK). This was captured in a memorable photograph taken by the photojournalist David Hoffman and used as evidence in Moylett's defence in court.⁴⁷ Despite the photo showing the young protestor in pain and/or distress, it appeared in *The Evening Standard* report with the subtitle '100 held as police face the fancy-dress mob', with the caption, 'Gripping Moment: one shaken demonstrator comes up against the firm hand of the law outside the Bank of England', tacitly condoning the violence of the police action.

The second STC saw the police attempt a more robust response; yet they were still outmanoeuvred by the protestors from the start.⁴⁸ Over 3,000 people attended this event on March 29th, 1984. This time, the stated aim of the protestors to occupy and disrupt London's financial centre was directed more widely at exploitative and oppressive practices, as well as the City's collusion with war, arms manufacture and financiers. Within the narrow streets and confined areas of the city, the protests had a considerable impact. Strategies discussed before the event included uncoordinated group actions to bring the city to a standstill and overstraining the system through mass arrests. Specific methods of non-co-operation throughout the arrest procedure were also advocated, including 'going limp, offering no resistance, but not co-operating with them either'.⁴⁹ Another suggestion involved multiple protestors all giving the same name, a tactic that had been used effectively at nuclear protests in Australia. The protestors were advised, 'This isn't a tactic which has been tried on a large scale in this country, but it is being used on a small scale and is proving effective'.⁵⁰ This approach did also have a home-grown lineage in the free festivals movement, where attendees at the Windsor Free Festival (1973) all adopted the name Wally (in memory of a dog that had gone missing at the Isle of Wight Festival) to hinder identification.⁵¹ These strategies, suggested by London Greenpeace and other groups, were communicated to a host of unaffiliated young punk protestors and radical peace activists via leaflets, in radical peace and anarchist publications such as *Peace News* and *Freedom* respectively, in fanzines and by word of mouth. However, once again there was no overarching organising committee, and as such the protestors acted largely on their own initiative.

This reflected the emphasis within the anarcho-punk subculture on autonomy and personal accountability, a sentiment enshrined in Crass' most iconic slogan, 'There is No Authority but Yourself'. Similarly, the protestors at STC stressed that political action should constitute resistance to the oppression that occurred in people's daily lives, thereby evoking the ideas of the libertarian Marxist organisation, the Situationist International (1957–72). These alluded to the power of the imagination and the revolution of everyday life, which had been evident in the events of Paris '68.⁵² Indeed, Rimbaud acknowledges the continuity between the STC protests and the radicalism of Paris '68 in his introduction to *Last of the Hippies: An Hysterical Romance* (2015).

The much-vaunted connection between Situationism and punk meant that the radicalism of this earlier organisation continued to influence youth culture in the late 1970s,⁵³ and their ideas can be detected in this reflection on the event by a protestor.

The Stop the 'City' demonstration is a small yet significant step in a developing process of awakening and of real opposition. We are learning as we take part. Many more people have to become involved, not only in large scale protests, but also in everyday activities, overcoming isolation and gaining confidence. Changing society is not only about collective opposition. It is also about people creating and extending mutual aid, solidarity and libertarian relationships amongst themselves-neighbours, workmates and wherever people meet. If the Stop 'The City' idea contributes to that, and to the creation of diverse local initiative and resistance, it will be worthwhile.⁵⁴

As with the first STC, a key objective of the protestors at STC2 was to get the workers onside. As Morris noted, ‘Dozens of groups distributed up to 40,000 of their own leaflets to workers. Many responded fairly positively, and most watched fascinated ... this again gave us strength. Because there were no leaders, people communicated and took initiatives themselves’.⁵⁵ Interviews that feature in the film, *Stop The City 83–84*, made by Crass (the band’s guitarist Andy Palmer as presenter, vocalist Joy De Vivre as sound engineer and filmmaker Mike Duffield as camera operator), paint a slightly different picture. Workers and bystanders appear to look on more with incredulity than admiration, while the novel and extreme form the protests took was alienating for many. While some interviewees sympathised with the aims of the protestors, most believed their tactics to be futile. The most positive response was from an interviewee who agreed with their ideals, but also said that he couldn’t support the protests because of the demands of raising a family, observing, ‘If these people can change society so we don’t have to work, then great you know. But I have. I’ve got no way out of it. Know what I mean?’⁵⁶ Such observations do, however, indicate the subversive value of the protests. Embracing Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque, they offered a glimpse of a world where the usual order of things is reversed.

This second event aimed to close down the city on the last day of the financial year, when profits were calculated. The devolved nature of STC2 ensured it had a considerable impact, despite its marginality.⁵⁷ To the protestors, it felt as though the police were still unsure how to deal with their tactics.⁵⁸ Participants daubed slogans on walls, released smoke bombs and glued locks. The windows of Barclays bank were targeted and smashed by protestors because of their support for South Africa and therefore apartheid. This was all carried out with the intention of causing maximum disruption to the functioning of the city’s financial centre. One blockade was credited in *The Times* newspaper with causing a shortfall of £100 million in one day.⁵⁹ While the news reports often presented the punk protestors’ actions as antisocial and mindless, the *Stop the City 83–84* film provides a contrasting story. The protestors interviewed give thoughtful and intelligent responses from a pacifist standpoint, undermining any accusations along these lines.⁶⁰ This seeming duality reflects the situation on the ground, in which a wide array of different agendas and commitment levels abounded. Alongside more serious activists and anarcho-punks steeped in pacifism, there were wider groupings of punks who had no discernible commitment to political anarchism.

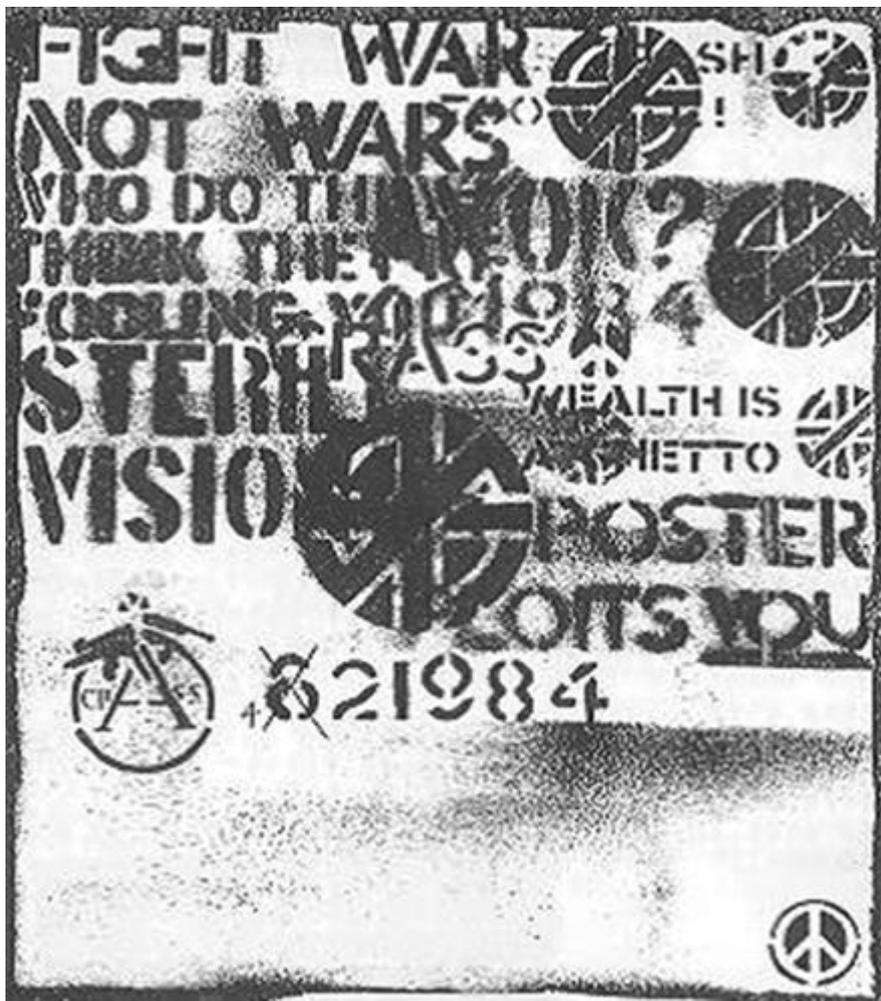
Despite this, anarcho-punk was the most clearly manifest strand of punk involved in the protests. Anarcho-punk bands, including Crass, The Mob, Subhumans, Flux, The Alternative and a host of others attended, and were actively involved in supporting the protests.⁶¹ The names of anarcho-punk bands were emblazoned across protestors’ jackets, while Crass’ iconography and anarchist-pacifist imagery, created by Gee Vaucher, appeared on flyers and posters. This included her powerful photomontage, *Your Country Needs You*, which featured the withered hand of a war casualty skewered on a barbed wire fence (see [Figure 2](#)).⁶²

Figure 2. Crass, Poster Insert to Crass Album, *The Feeding of the 5000 (The Second Sitting)*, Crass Records, 1981.

[Display full size](#)

The protestors chanted the slogan *Fight War, Not Wars*, taken from the track of the same name by Crass that featured on the album *Feeding of the Five Thousand* (1978). Other slogans included 1-2-3-4, We don’t want your fucking war and 9–10-11-12, Margaret Thatcher go to hell!⁶³ Banners featured slogans declaring ‘love, peace and anarchy’ and ‘stop the clock’ (see [Figure 3](#)).

Figure 3. Crass, Poster Insert to Crass Album, *The Feeding of the 5000 (The Second Sitting)*, Crass Records, 1981.



[Display full size](#)

Despite the perceived success of the strategies the protestors employed at STC 2, the policing at the protests from this point on mirrored the contemporaneous move towards its para-militarisation as a force.⁶⁴ The police were aware that their attempts to contain STC 1 had been inadequate, and they planned methodically for the second protest. Significant manpower was dedicated to policing it, which included cancelling leave for all officers. The briefing notes issued to forces policing STC 2 acknowledged the task ahead of them, noting that ‘the last “day of action” ... was the first demonstration of its kind in the country ... [the demonstrators] appear to have learned some lessons therefrom, as have the police’.⁶⁵ The authorities had gathered significant intelligence on the protestors, including their meeting points and the diverse range of interests they held. They clearly took the protests seriously, having mounted officers on standby and deploying covert tactics, including the use of undercover police.⁶⁶

The authorities enacted old legislation (City of London Police Act, 1839) in their attempts to prevent people from gathering in the city and the police were instructed not to recognise the protests as legitimate. On the protestors they were advised, ‘All are anti-establishment, un-cooperative with police, and in the case of some extremists, potentially violent’.⁶⁷ Therefore, the police were granted licence to criminalise them on this basis from the start. The 1839 Act meant that protestors could potentially be arrested, without having committed a crime, just by virtue of being there. This differed markedly to the situation with organised and state sanctioned protests, where permission had been granted and police manoeuvres could be co-ordinated with the plans of the organisers. The City of London commissioner’s briefing document shows their expectation that there would be mass arrests, while the follow-up briefing order notes how they had developed a fast-track logging system for arrests ‘in order that arresting officers spend as little time as possible “off the street”’. In one telling note they stress the need for sufficient female officers to be on duty ‘to deal with the large number of female prisoners expected’.⁶⁸ While this testifies to the sizeable number of female activists that were involved in the protests, it also offers insight into the protestors’ take on pacifism. The influence of anarcho-feminism on anarcho-punk reiterated the view articulated by anarchist-feminist

Emma Goldman in 1910, and further voiced within second wave feminism, that misogyny was inextricably linked with war and militarism.⁶⁹ As such, pacifism was of particular significance to women and a prime feminist concern.

Despite the protesters being predominantly pacifist and advocating non-violent tactics towards people, including police, a small minority were prepared to countenance violence.⁷⁰ Some were affiliated with groups such as Class War (founded in 1983 by Ian Bone) who generally adopted a more confrontational approach to political activism. A debate had started within anarcho-punk circles a year earlier, when Ian Slaughter (of the fanzine, *Pigs for Slaughter*) distributed a provocative leaflet advocating a more confrontational approach to the authorities. This reflected the growth of an 'anarcho-militant' strand within the scene, but at the time it was still very much on the margins, with Crass' 'anarchy, peace and freedom' message continuing to dominate. Fanzine writer Graham Burnett summed up the general response to the leaflet in issue 7 of *New Crimes* (1983, 6–9) where he expressed alarm at the 'aggressiveness and dare I say machismo' of this subset within anarcho-punk.⁷¹

Where 'violence' did manifest at STC2, it was almost universally in the form of criminal damage to corporate property and infrastructure, which most participants did not characterise as violence. The success of the protests in disrupting the workings of the city, however, prompted the police to bring in mass reinforcements, including mounted police. They deployed kettling and used military vehicles to block streets. This led to well-documented instances of police violence, including the use of punches, kicks, and strangleholds, in unprovoked attacks on protestors.⁷² A Thames News report also showed the widespread use of excessive force by police officers, and featured a witness who reported arbitrary mass arrests that involved the police rounding protestors up to fill van space. The witness is then seen being threatened with arrest, following which the news reporter was also told to move on or face arrest.⁷³ The police violence went largely unreported in the newspapers and music press, but was covered through reports and photographs published in fanzines. In his incisive and polemical article for *Punk Lives*, Rimbaud noted,

'Stop the City' was a massive success, the best gig of the year, but the music press never reported it because it's the City that finances them and because, like EMI, who are one of the biggest arms manufacturers in this country, they would like everyone to think that punk is dead ... there's no profit in protest. The daily papers kept quiet for different reasons. In their capacity as propagandists of State control they have almost certainly been told by the government not to report events like this; they're scared that copy-cat events will follow, but it makes no difference if they report it or not because there will be more.'⁷⁴

Officers who had been granted the power of arrest for anyone refusing to comply with their directions made 450 arrests (more than one in seven protestors) on this basis.⁷⁵ However, despite the preparations and considerable resources deployed, the police had been on the back foot all day and failed to contain the majority of the actions. One arrestee reported overhearing from his cell police officers lamenting how they had struggled to keep up with proceedings, and how the protestors were 'calling the tune'.⁷⁶ This was to change, however, with STC 3.

The third action, carried out on May 13th, 1984, was deliberately disorganised and given very little publicity (with the next major action already planned for Sept 27th). It drew only 500–600 uncoordinated protestors who were met by police who searched them, confiscated their leaflets and equipment and instructed them to 'fuck off out of the City' or be arrested. Subsequently 170 people who had committed practically no actions at all were reported to have been arrested.⁷⁷ By this time the Miners' Strike (1984–5) was two months in, and the government was locked in battles with various sectors of society. Indeed, the week after STC 3 saw the concerted and orchestrated police violence against pickets at Orgreave, on a day that featured one of the most violent confrontations in the history of the Trade Union Movement.⁷⁸ Taken together, these events evidence a State which was at a turning point in how it would treat political opposition and the alternative culture associated with the radicalism of the 1960s–70s. A rising tide of repression and police violence towards protestors had been evident from the late 1970s, notably in the treatment of protestors at the Grunwick Strike and anti-racist protestors at Lewisham (1977) and Southall (1979), the latter of which resulted in the tragic death of Blair Peach after it seems he was dealt a fatal blow by an unauthorised weapon used by the Special Patrol Group (SPG).⁷⁹ At that time, the Conservatives, still in opposition, had created

plans for a more hostile force to prevent successful strike action, such as that seen at the mass picketing at Saltley (1972).⁸⁰ The experience of inner city rioting (1981) and Thatcher's harsh treatment of the Hunger Strikers at the Maze Prison in Belfast (1981), which formed a precursor to a spate of IRA bombs in London, all reflected the more hostile and polarised environment during her first term. It wasn't until 1984, however, that the police became an actively hostile force, employed in a concerted attempt to undermine legitimate protest. This was mirrored by a change within anarcho-punk itself, with even Crass, whose output became increasingly bitter and confrontational in the aftermath of the Falklands, disseminating material advocating a confrontational approach in the run up to STC 4.⁸¹

None of this deterred the various groups planning for another attempt to prevent the daily workings of the City of London, and by the time of the fourth Stop the City protest on September 27th, 1984, the movement had begun to attract a broader coalition of interested parties, including the unemployed and some striking miners, and there were high hopes for the event amongst its key advocates. STC activists (including members of London Greenpeace) had made a conscious effort to engage with mining communities and encourage them to take part. In the summer of 1984, for example, STC activists occupied Electricity Generating Board offices in London, unfurling a huge banner from upstairs windows saying, 'Miners Power Not Nuclear Power'. A photo of this was used on publicity leaflets distributed to some of the Miners' Strike pickets and protests.⁸² By contrast with STC 3, this one was highly organised and well publicised, with a day consisting of lots of small, independent actions planned. Mutual aid among protestors was strongly advocated,⁸³ while support in the form of crèche facilities, free food, first aid and legal advice was provided.⁸⁴ The protestors were encouraged to, 'Communicate constantly, support and respect each other. Don't just stick with your friends-link up with others, encourage passers-by and workers to join in. Let's do our best to make a successful human challenge to the machinery of oppression'.⁸⁵

All this optimism, however, did not result in the event many were hoping for. The carnival atmosphere that prevailed at earlier STCs was gone, and instead the protest was more serious, but also less effective, while the turnout was disappointingly low, with around 2,000 protestors attending.⁸⁶ Simultaneously, as Morris attests in his Conference notes, 'There was a new attitude amongst us regarding the police. Many people, having experienced the repression/courts had become angry and more determined to fight back next time'.⁸⁷

For their part, the police built on the strategies used during STC 3, providing a heavy-handed response.⁸⁸ They set out their stall from the outset, shutting off vast sections of the city to deny protestors access to designated meeting points. Again, the 1839 Act was evoked, but this time with more unequivocal implementation. Morris observed that individuals and groups were repelled through threat of arrest if they tried to enter the City, while anyone who looked like a punk was particularly targeted. One attendee noted that the police 'broke up and moved on ... any gathering of larger than three people', making it impossible to orchestrate any successful actions.⁸⁹ The methods the police had used with limited success at STC 2 were scaled up, and four hundred and seventy protestors were arrested and held without charge.⁹⁰ The protestors deployed tactics of non-cooperation in an attempt to slow down police operations and put a strain on resources, while the police had a counter strategy to free up arresting officers to get back on the streets by having paperwork taken over in-house at the police station. 300–400 protestors did manage to gain access to the centre two or three times to carry out occupations, smashing the windows of banks and graffitiing, but generally the zero tolerance policing approach rendered the tactics ineffective.⁹¹

In the aftermath, the thing that caused considerable soul searching among the protestors was the low turnout. They were expecting numbers to be much larger than STC2, but this hadn't materialised. The reasons for this included divisions between protestors, particularly between those who were or weren't prepared to countenance violence, with the latter put off by the increasingly confrontational approach of the former, while fears of the consequences of re-arrest were also prevalent.⁹² It also emerged that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had discussed supporting STC at a National Executive Committee meeting, but it had been rejected, on grounds including that six months into the strike NUM hardship funds for travel costs were limited and STC was not a core priority.⁹³ The difficulty in reaching beyond a largely subcultural demographic to build a mass movement was cited to be a major drawback, while the protestors acknowledged that the police were effective in their intention to prevent their occupation of the city centre.⁹⁴

The upshot of the fourth STC was that the protestors were left feeling somewhat disillusioned.⁹⁵ They acknowledged that they had underestimated the determination of the State, and that tens of thousands of people would be required for effective action in The City. Some identified their inability to attract groups that still held faith with the democratic system as a key flaw.⁹⁶ In the aftermath many protestors moved on to more localised campaigns, new ideas such as Stop Business as Usual, or returned to single issue campaigning. They remained positive about the form of resistance they had practiced at STC, citing the need to applaud it and make the world become a 'no-go area for our oppressors'.⁹⁷

Aftermath

The hostility of the police response to STC, which was symptomatic of wider changes to policing at the time, became endemic in the intolerance shown towards political protest and alternative culture in the ensuing years, most viciously demonstrated through the police assault on travellers at the Battle of the Beanfield (1985).⁹⁸ In the aftermath, the Conservative government's agenda would be enshrined in legislation. The Public Order Act of 1986 was in part a fulfilment of the 1970s blueprint for future policing the Conservatives in opposition had drawn up, and in part a response to events during their time in power, most significantly the inner city riots, Miners' Strike and the advent of New Age Travellers. Large sections of the Act are focused on the control of demonstrations, and Section 12 allows the police to impose conditions on any protest or procession if one of three criteria is met; namely if there is a threat of serious public disorder, disruption to the 'normal' life of the community, or if coercion is likely to occur. As East, Power and Thomas have noted, while the first and third criteria are primarily aimed at pickets, the second appears to be a direct response to the new form of protest trialled at Stop the City.⁹⁹ Arguably, the influence of STC runs deeper than this. During STC, it was an archaic Act of Parliament that only applied to the City of London that allowed the police to pre-emptively arrest protestors. By giving them powers to control the route of demonstrations (Section 11) and powers to ban protests if they would disrupt 'normal workings' (Section 12), the Public Order Act effectively transferred these conditions to the whole of the country.

In the aftermath of STC and the Battle of the Beanfield, the nature of protest forged by alternative youth culture took on more concealed characteristics as a direct response to the repressive climate. This form of protest showed a marked divergence from the alliance of political activism with mainstream interests, which simultaneously gathered pace throughout the 1980s. Instead of major industrial relations disputes, which were so prominent during the 1970s, movements for gay and women's liberation entered the mainstream, while identity politics permeated the left. Similarly to the development of CND, NGOs and the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), which changed its name to Liberty in 1989, also took on a more corporate structure and mode of functioning.¹⁰⁰

The anarchistic, DiY ethos, the intention to reclaim public space as an act of resistance to globalised capitalism, and the deployment of more covert strategies and tactics were continued through the road protest movement and Reclaim the Streets (RTS) during the 1990s.¹⁰¹ The literature produced during the STC protests is littered with exhortations to 'Reclaim the City' and 'Reclaim our Streets',¹⁰² but the connection is deeper than that, as Reclaim the Streets events can be seen as a return the carnivalesque atmosphere that was missing from STCs 3 and 4. Reclaim the Streets also reasserted the principle of non-violence that had characterised the early, more successful STC events. Around the time of the first Reclaim the Streets action, anarchist visionary Hakim Bey wrote his influential book TAZ (Temporary Autonomous Zones), which advocated the creation of spaces that were exempt from the normal rules of social control. While it was conceptually the least developed strand of STC, the protests can be seen as a pre-emptive attempt to create a Temporary Autonomous Zone, although ultimately the direct confrontations with authority implicit in focusing the actions on the City of London compromised this from the start. Reclaim the Streets deliberately chose locations in which the creation of a Temporary Autonomous Zone became the end in itself, away from the distraction of a specific target. Interestingly, as the RTS project developed, organisers became increasingly disillusioned by the limitations of this approach. By the late 1990s they were once again deliberately targeting centres of capitalism, and in 1999 the Carnival Against Capital once again took aim at the City of London. The Carnival Against Capital had been organised to coincide with the G8 summit being held in Cologne, and through this association the influence of STC made its way into the international anti-globalisation movement. The RTS events were larger than STC (with an estimated 5,000 attending the

Carnival Against Capitalism), but a decade later, Occupy, alongside other anti-globalisation initiatives, mobilised mass, albeit still unsanctioned, protests that built on STCs core intention of attacking centres of global capital, targeting Wall Street and the City of London again. The legacy of STC can still be seen today, most notably in the non-violent civil disobedience employed by the global environmental movement, Extinction Rebellion (formed in 2018). The strategies of uncoordinated small group actions, straining the system through mass arrest and non-co-operation with police, backed by widely-distributed bust cards and support for those arrested, are all approaches trialled at STC.

Conclusion

The approach and tactics used by many of the protestors at STC built on a lineage of autonomous and direct action activism, seen particularly in the women's and peace movements during the 1960s-70s, and through the actions of the women at Greenham Common, who also had a presence at STC. These were successful in no small part due to the autonomy of the participants.

Anarchism was a lesser known, but decisive strand within the peace movement and counterculture, the latter of which featured a number of anarchist former members of CND. The free festivals movement bridged the cultures of hippy and punk. Anarchism was present in punk, not just symbolically, as in its first wave incarnation, but in a more serious and political sense through anarcho-punk. As the fanzine research has shown, anarcho-punk created space for political beliefs and values to be articulated and for alternate life practices to develop that informed the activism at STC. Removing fanzines from their subcultural confines and reading them alongside the police and eyewitness reports has facilitated understanding of how the nature of political protest, manifested in anarcho-punk, evolved in tandem with an increasingly repressive police response. By contrast with mass protests of the past, which became bitter and futile in the face of Thatcher's determination to destroy their legitimacy (as seen in the concurrent Miners' Strike), the protestors were not supported or managed by any overarching political body.

Instead, the protestors acted on their own initiative, deploying tactics such as blockading and vandalism to corporate property to undermine the functioning of the city's finance centre and protest at its embroilment with the arms industry and other powerful global financial institutions. Their approach and tactics—in particular the protestors' effectiveness in shutting down and occupying the city during STC2—undermined the image of the financial centre as invulnerable, providing an alternative model for the realisation of the protestors' ideals. This can be seen to fulfil the aim of radical utopians, including the Situationists, to realise a different world, albeit temporarily. The STC protests provide a microcosm for the changing nature of protest and youth culture that manifested a markedly radical and autonomous strand at odds with the wider trend towards corporatisation that characterised the 1980s. As such, STC provides an alternative to the model of hegemonic neo-liberalism, whereby culture merely reflects the values of the dominant political-economic framework. While at the time it was perceived as marginal both in impact and impetus, it set the agenda by which protestors would confront the new status quo in the post Thatcher/Reagan era.

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Additional information

Notes on contributors

Rebecca Binns

Rebecca Binns is an Associate Lecturer in Contextual and Theoretical Studies at London College of Communication. Her monograph entitled, *Gee Vaucher: Beyond Punk, Feminism and the Avant-Garde* has recently been published (Manchester University Press, 2022)

Notes

1. In an article, “Stop the City: Lawless Britain” in *Vague 15*, 1984, 2, the fanzine’s editor, Tom Vague notes that CND was not officially involved in STC because they thought it would be too violent. In “Stop the City: 1 2 3 4, We’ll be Back Some Day with More” in *Punk Lives*, 1984, 22, Penny Rimbaud reported that CND sent out a circular to its branches saying the protests were ‘undesirable.’ Despite this, Dave Morris (in email conversation, 1 April 2022) of London Greenpeace recalls receiving some support and publicity from some local and regional CND branches. Sam Carroll’s PhD thesis, ‘Fill the jails’ is focused on the Committee of 100 (C100), 1960–1968, which functioned as an independent, direct action wing to CND.
2. Dave, a STC participant and member of London Greenpeace, provides a breakdown of STC protests in various locations throughout the UK, and mentions that four also happened abroad in “Summary,” 2.
3. From a report in *The Times*, referred to in Mike, “PEOPLE AGAINST PROFITS,” 3.
4. See Bunyan, “From Saltley to Orgrave,” 293–303.
5. Significant scholarship in this area includes work by Matthew Worley, Lucy Robinson and various individuals associated with the Subcultures Network. See *Ripped Torn and Cut: Pop, Politics and Punk Fanzines from 1976* (Ed: The Subcultures Network, 2018) and *No Future: Punk, Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976–84* (Matthew Worley, 2017). Work by Russ Bestley and Ana Raposo that utilises ephemeral sources to provide insight into punk graphics and culture is also valuable in this respect; as is Bestley’s book, *The Art of Punk* (co-edited with Alex Ogg, 2012). *The Aesthetic of our Anger: Anarcho-Punk, Politics and Music* (Eds: Mike Dines and Matthew Worley, 2016) likewise features work by a range of scholars who use ephemeral sources as the basis for their investigations. The doctoral study (UAL, 2019) and subsequent work by Rebecca Binns (“The Evolution of an Anarcho-Punk Narrative, 1978–84,” co-written with Russ Bestley, in *Ripped Torn and Cut ...*, and “It’s Up to You: Class, Status and Punk Politics in Rock Against Racism,” in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music and Social Class* (Ed: Ian Peddie, 2020) further contributes to work in this area.
6. See Robinson, “Confronting Thatcher,” 154–85, Wetherall, “Painting the Crisis,” 235–49, Payling, “City limits: sexual politics,” 256–73 and “Schaffer, “Fighting Thatcher with Comedy,” 374–97. In *Promised you a Miracle* (chapter 15: Loonies, 346–373), Beckett attempts to de-centre Thatcher through his analysis of the GLC as a political hub, which provided an alternate to centralised power.
7. In “The Great Moving Right Show” (*Marxism Today*, 1979), Stuart Hall used the term authoritarian populism to describe how the New Right, embodied in Thatcher’s administration, successfully mobilised popular discontent to legitimise the imposition of an authoritarian State. Hall’s essay, “Thatcherism-a new stage?” (*Marxism Today*, 1980) further expanded on these ideas.
8. The North American, anarchist theorist, Murray Bookchin used the term post-scarce society to denote a situation where due to technological development and relative material comfort, young people in the west were able to realise an ecological form of anarchism in practice. Bookchin’s collection of essays, published as a book, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* in 1971 both reflected and influenced the counterculture.
9. RAR (1976–81) arose to oppose racism within the music industry, and evolved to oppose institutional racism as well as far right organisations, such as the National Front (NF) who were making inroads in youth culture at that time.

10. See Walter, N.H. "Protest in an age of optimism: the 60s anarchists who spilled nuclear secrets." *The Guardian- opinion* 13 April 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/13/protest-optimism-anarchists-nuclear-beans> Accessed 14 Feb, 2020.

11. See Walter, "Damned fools in utopia," 56, in *Damned Fools in Utopia, and Other Writings on Anarchism and War Resistance*, edited by David Goodway, Oakland: M Press, 2011, 56, quoted in Pauli, "Pacifism, nonviolence ... anarchist tactics," 86.

12. Burkett, "Direct Action," 21–37.

13. See Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, 50.

14. See Rowe, "Introduction" in Rowe (ed), *Spare Rib Reader* (Middlesex, 1982), 15. Also see an account of male chauvinism at Oz with reference to observations made by David Widgery in Fountain, *Underground: The London Alternative*, 126.

15. Beckett, *Lights Went Out*, 175. Also see Burkett, "Direct Action ...," 21–37, for its exploration of the antipathy felt by C100 activists towards CND's leadership of self-appointed white, well off men, and its' associated structural hierarchy.

16. Prominent feminists with a background in socialism and the counterculture included Marsha Rowe and Rosie Boycott (who formed *Spare Rib*, 1972–93) and Sheila Rowbotham (formerly of *Black Dwarf*). Germaine Greer wrote columns for *Oz* and *Suck*.

17. Lynne Farrow originally coined the term *Feminism as Anarchism* in her influential essay of the same name (1974). Carol Ehrlich's "Socialism, Anarchism and Feminism" (1977) challenged the idea that feminism could exist within the hierarchical structures that were coming to dominate the movement, especially in its socialist and post-Marxist manifestations. This, and other influential American essays, such as Peggy Kornegger's "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection," had an impact in the UK when they were published in *Reinventing Anarchy: What Anarchists are Thinking These Days* (London: Routledge and Kegan & Paul, 1979).

18. See Rees, "Look Back at Anger," 337–56.

See Bunyan, "From Saltley to Orgrave," 293–303, on the para-militarisation of the police in Britain during the 1980s.

19. See Setch, "Face of Metropolitan Feminism," 171–90; and Rees, "Look Back at Anger," 337–56.

20. Thomlinson, "The Colour of Feminism," 453–75.

21. See Robinson, "Anarcho-feminism and Greenham," 50.

22. Dave Morris (in email conversation, 1 April 2022) attests to the involvement of London Greenpeace in these protests against nuclear power.

23. The term anarcho-punk has been retrospectively applied to describe this subgenre and subculture. During the first wave of anarcho-punk (1978–84) the terms anarchist or Crass punk and then peace punk were commonly applied (as evidenced by their widespread use in fanzines and the music press). The word 'anarcho' was in circulation from at least 1980, but used intermittently. See "Breakin' thru in 82," tips' in *Sounds* (2, January, 1982, 7), a fanzine review in *Acts of Defiance* 4 (20 October 1982), a letter to *Sounds* (26, June, 1982, 46) by Ian Bone who founded Class War and Tony D's review, "Singles" in *Punk Lives*, No 8, 1983, 8.

24. One well-known example was the anarchist centre known as the Autonomy Centre (1981–82), in Wapping (London) that was initially funded by sales of a single, “Bloody Revolutions/Persons Unknown” by Crass/Poison Girls. See Livingstone’s personal recollection of the Autonomy Centre, in “Everyone was an anarchist.”
25. Vi Subversa and Lance d’ Boyle were involved with the British anarchist movement, while Subversa was also involved with the DAC in the 1950s, and the women’s movement in the 1970s.
26. See Walker, *Left Shift* for an insightful account of the radical movement of artists and collectives, who created art outside the gallery system and intended for social change during the 1970s. Triggs specifically highlighted the radicalism of Gee Vaucher’s designs for Crass (1977–84) by contrast with the corporate takeover of the visual sphere at her time of writing in 2000, in “Bullshit Detector,” 19.
27. See interviews with Flux in *Adventures in Reality*, Issue J, 1982, 3, with Poison Girls in *Anarchy*, Issue 34, ca 1982, 6 and Rob of punk band Faction, in *Infection 4*, 1984, 11.
28. Lake, “Zounds Demystified,” 52.
29. See “CRASS AND FRIENDS (Stop the City Benefit)-Holloway Bingo Hall,” *Artificial Life*, No 8, 1984, 4, which describes Crass appearing in virtual darkness, while five screens ‘showed ‘ ... the realities of the horrible world we live in ... war, death, starvation, fascism (Thatcher and Reagan) etc etc,’ coverage of a Fuck the Falklands gig in *Acts of Defiance*, Issue 3, 1982, 14 and of Mike Duffield’s film, Choosing Death, featured at a Crass gig in “Crass, DIRT, Annie Anxiety, Ferryhill 101 Club, April 30th, 1982,” *Acts of Defiance*, Issue 3, 1982, 14.
30. See Bestley and Binns, “An Anarcho-Punk Narrative,” 140–142.
31. Beckett, *Promised you a Miracle*, 55–56.
32. In *Promised you a Miracle*, 57, Beckett notes the jobless were disproportionately middle aged men and school leavers.
33. See Beckett, *Promised you a Miracle*, 68–78.
34. See Jackson and Saunders, “Introduction: Varieties of Thatcherism,” in *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Jackson and Saunders, 2012), 6–7, for an account of how an economic uplift following the initial years of Thatcher’s premiership, which saw the disastrous effects of monetarist policy, together with The Falklands War being cast as a resounding triumph in the right wing press, combined to boost the Conservatives’ majority in the 1983 vote.
35. Hudson, *CND at 60*, 130.
36. *Hansard* (HL), Deb. Vol 434 cc455-7, 30 July 1982. At <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1982/jul/30/nuclear-weapons-and-public-opinion>.
37. The group, The 61, partially funded by the CIA to undermine the peace movement, also ran a dirty tricks campaign against Foot. This included planting derogatory articles about him in the press. See Hudson, *CND at 60*, 130–132.
38. Dave, “Summary,” 1.
39. *Ibid.*, 2.
40. See note 38 above.

41. Dave, "Summary," 2; Cross, "In the City," 133.
42. Cross, "Stop the City," 133.
43. Mike, "PEOPLE AGAINST PROFITS," 3.
44. Rimbaud, "Stop the City!" 10.
45. Derbyshire and Dobbie, "Peace, punks and a little City anarchy", *The Evening Standard*, 29 September 1983.
46. See Morris, "383 held in City protest," *The Times*, 30 March 1984 and Derbyshire and Dobbie, "Peace, punks and a little City anarchy," *The Evening Standard*, 29 September 1983.
47. See Duncan Campbell in *Children of the Revolution*, Anti Apathy, Issue 6, 1984. The image was then featured on the cover of Chaos UK's 1984 LP, *Short, Sharp Shock*.
48. See note 39 above.
49. Steve Biko, "Non Cooperation," 2.
50. Ibid.
51. See the film, *Everyone's Wally*, directed by Paolo Sedazzari (2015).
52. This language had particular resonance with *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, by Raoul Vaneigem, first translated into English by John Fullerton and Paul Sieveking (Practical Paradise, 1972).
53. See P. Gorman, D. Thorpe and F. Vermorel, *Eyes for Blowing Up Bridges: Joining the Dots from the Situationist International to Malcolm McLaren* (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 2015), F. Vermorel, *Vivienne Westwood: Fashion, Perversity and the 1960s Laid Bare* (New York: Overlook Books, 1996), G. Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Picador, 1997) and Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 2002).
54. Mike, "PEOPLE AGAINST PROFITS", 3.
55. See note 38 above.
56. Interviewee in Duffield and Palmer, *Stop The City 83–84* (11.07).
57. An article, "Police hold 400 in protest violence", in *The Times* (30 March 1984) acknowledged the protest was 'vastly more impressive' than the first one in terms of both scale and impact. Also see Dobbie, "London grinds to halt as thousands march" (*Evening Standard*, 29 March 1984).
58. See note 38 above.
59. From a report in *The Times*, referred to in, Mike, "PEOPLE AGAINST PROFITS" 3.
60. Observations of footage seen in Duffield and Palmer, *Stop The City 83–84*.
61. Skinz, "Stop the City", in *Death on a Summer's Day*, referred to in Cross, "Stop the City," 134.
62. Duffield and Palmer, *Stop The City 83–84*. Your Country Needs You took its title from the famous army recruitment poster for the First World War, which featured Lord Kitchener (the British Secretary of State for

War) pointing at the viewer. This statement was juxtaposed with the iconic photograph taken by Ghislain Bellorget in Vietnam in 1968.

63. Duffield and Palmer, *Stop The City* 83–84. The second chant is taken from the track ‘H Block’ on the EP ‘Bad News’ by Hit Parade, released on Crass Records in 1982, which describes the British government’s treatment of political prisoners at the notorious Maze prison, near Belfast, during Thatcher’s first term.

64. See Bunyan, “From Saltley to Orgrave,” 293–303, on the para-militarisation of the police in Britain during the 1980s.

65. Marshall, “Police Directions to Constables,” 4.

66. Marshall, “Police Directions to Constables,” 2. In “Stop the City,” 143–145, Cross likewise notes that the police became more sophisticated and effective in their use of oppressive tactics at the second STC; also highlighting the more confrontational approach taken by protestors.

67. Moore, “Stop the City Campaign,” 1.

68. *Ibid.*, 1.

69. Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 202.

70. “WHERE NOW FOR STC?”.

71. Burnett, “Anarchy, Violence and Freedom? One “wet arsed pacifist” reflects on their propaganda and tactics,” in *New Crimes*, Issue 7, 1983, 6.

72. Comedian David Baddiel recounts how police beat him in a van following his arrest at a STC protest, in *The Mirror*, 9 April 1997, referred to in “THE ORIGINAL OCCUPY WALL STREET: STOP THE CITY. 1984,” *Dangerous Minds*, 16 October 2011. At https://dangerousminds.net/comments/the_original_occupy_wall_street_stop_the_city_1984

Also see, “Stop The City—News Reports 1983 / 84” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ulVIa4HwkA>.

73. Wadsworth, Thames News.

74. Rimbuad, “Stop the City: 1 2 3 4, We’ll be Back Some Day with More,” in *Punk Lives*, No 10, 1984, 22.

75. See note 38 above.

76. Cliff, *Peace News*, 1984, referred to in Steve Biko, “Non Cooperation,” 1.

77. Dave, “Summary,” 3. Also see Cross, “In the City,” 145–146. A report by Luck, “Punks in anarchy raid on the City” in the *Daily Express* (1 June 1984) confirms that of the few hundred protestors in attendance, 160 were arrested.

78. Bunyan, “From Saltley to Orgreave,” 302.

79. Lewis, Paul. “Blair Peach: After 31 years Met police say “sorry” for their role in his killing.” *The Guardian*, April, 27, 2010. At <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/apr/27/blair-peach-killing-police>.

80. East et al, “Death of Mass Picketing,” 311.

81. Cross, “Stop the City”, 143.

82. Dave Morris in email conversation (1 April 2022).
83. Steve Biko, “Non Cooperation,” 1.
84. “General Briefing ... STC 4.”
85. Ibid.
86. See note 38 above.
87. See note 38 above.
88. Dave, “Summary,” 3. This verdict by the protestors is corroborated by a report, “419 arrests in the City”, in *The Times* (28 September 1984) which states, ‘Eight hundred police officers were deployed in a huge operation, which quashed all attempts to disrupt the heart of the City’.
89. Carter, “Baa Baa Black Sheep?” 190.
90. Dave, ‘Summary,’ 3.
91. Ibid., 2.
92. See note 70 above.
93. Dave Morris, in email conversation (1 April 2022).
94. See note 38 above.
95. See note 70 above.
96. See note 38 above.
97. See note 90 above.
98. See Worthington, *Battle of the Beanfield*.
99. East et al, “Death of Mass Picketing,” 315.
100. See Moores, “The Road to Freedom?” 221–62.
101. Other scholars have drawn comparable parallels. Rich Cross for instance has observed how various initiatives including the road protests and RTS, and Occupy, ‘ ... have evoked more echoes of the activist-centred anarchist punk practice than the orthodox class perspectives of the 1970s’ (Cross, “British anarchism in the era of Thatcherism,” in *Against the Grain* ..., 148). Matthew Worley likewise notes that the anti-globalisation movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s ... ‘was characterised by a lack of centrality and its autonomous nature,’ also observing that ‘anarchists and non-aligned activists formed the basis of the anti-globalisation movement, though the organised left, hesitant at first-responded enthusiastically,’ in “Introduction,” in *Against the Grain* ... 13).
102. See references to reclaiming the city in “Briefing ... STC 4,” Mike, “PEOPLE AGAINST PROFITS,” and “Day of Protests Leaflet,” and to reclaiming the streets in “STOP THE CITY PROTESTS.”

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