

**Oxford Brookes University Popular Music Research Unit  
in association with the Punk Scholars Network presents**



**No Sir, I Won't:  
Reconsidering the Legacy  
of Crass and Anarcho-punk**

**11:00-18:00 Friday 28th June 2013**

**Room W/01 Willow Building, Headington Campus,  
Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, OX3 0BP**

**FREE**



Name THATCHER, Margaret, Hilda. Interviewed: Date: ... By: ...  
 True Name Margaret Thatcher  
 Alias: The Iron Lady  
 Date of Birth: 13th Oct 1925 Age: 57  
 Race: White  
 Nativity: Grantham  
 Citizenship: Great Britain  
 Marital Status: Married  
 Residence (Legal): 10 Downing St, London  
 Co-Defendants: HESELTINE, Michael, PYMM, Francis

Offense: Murder on the high sea, Murder, GBH in N. Ireland & Brixton, Toxteth etc, Innumerable crimes of theft from the public, Various crimes of deception, etc  
 Admitted: ...  
 Min. Exp. ... Max. Exp. ...  
 Status: NOT AS YET DETAINED.

PREVIOUS CRIMINAL HISTORY:  
 This woman, having been personally responsible for the deaths of several hundred young men aboard the Argentinian ship 'General Belgrano', now appears to be suffering from severe 'GUILT PSYCHOSIS', 'PARANOIA' and 'MEGALOMANIA'. It is evident however that, although in milder forms, these conditions existed prior to her act of MASS MURDER. Murderers will, to appease their consciences and to justify to themselves the rationality of their actions, use force far in excess to that required simply to kill. They are also invariably motivated by their sense of guilt to commit further murders. Taking this into account, it is almost certain that given the opportunity this woman will kill again. Her obsession with a 'Russian Threat' indicates classic symptoms of 'PARANOIA'. She firmly believes that 'THEY' are out to 'GET HER'. This condition makes her bellicose, volatile and exceedingly dangerous, as does her 'CHURCHILLIAN MEGALOMANIA'. She is known to quote Churchill at times of stress in much the way that the 'Yorkshire Ripper' quoted GOD. She appears to be suffering delusions of grandeur concerning both herself and her 'nation'. She is surrounded by a GROUP of PERSONS known to be suffering from similar complaints and who have shown themselves WILLING TO COMMIT SIMILAR CRIMES. SHE IS HEAVILY ARMED AT ALL TIMES and will strike out under the slightest pressure. She is desperately in NEED OF HELP and MUST BE STOPPED before she becomes RESPONSIBLE for a GROSS CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY that by her own PUBLIC CONFESSION she is both capable of and willing to commit.... THE DEATH OF MILLIONS.

FILE IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL  
 FORM 99/479

**Anarcho Punk** emerged partly as a reaction to the political polarisation of the growing UK punk movement, with a direct connection to the underground counter-culture of the 1960s and early 1970s. Often employing explicit visual and verbal attacks on the power of the state and authority figures, together with strong anti-war and / or animal rights sentiments alongside an austere, monochrome, deliberately lo-tech and raw design approach, Anarcho Punk records tended to follow certain unspoken aesthetic rules, often directly influenced by the output of scene leaders Crass, an anarchist collective based just outside London in Epping forest. In the late 1970s, the members of this loose-knit, strongly ideological group formed a punk band to relay their politicised vision of punk following the networks established by **Rock Against Racism** and a wide base of support for **CND**, the Campaign for

Nuclear Disarmament. Their media interruptions - incorporating records, books, films, events, concerts, printed publications and posters - employed a distinctive visual style and an overt anarchist rhetoric, and paved the way for an entire sub-genre of Anarcho Punk bands to follow.

Crass also had a strong influence on the new age traveller movement, having had direct connections to the earlier free festivals at Stonehenge, and their utopian visions of the future coupled with an aggressive refusal to cooperate with the mainstream saw them frequently in direct confrontation with authority. A viral campaign based on word-of-mouth communications within the underground scene born out of the early punk networks saw the band's name and graphic identity stencilled on walls across the country and widespread recognition in fanzines

and punk media channels, despite the fact that their records were blacklisted by many major record retailers. Utilising a strategy of (low) maximum price details on the sleeves, visual devices centred on a heavy black circle, the anarchist symbol, and fold-out posters, the group's graphic output was designed to communicate strong political messages along with a sense of authority, directness and a lack of what the group saw as superfluous decorative or stylistic gestures.

Crass's visual work was self-produced, with art direction credits going to Crass and G Sus (Gee Vaucher). Drummer Penny Rimbaud had experience as a graphic designer, while Vaucher was an accomplished commercial illustrator, most recently for the New York Times magazine and Rolling Stone. The group's circular visual identity was originally designed for the frontispiece



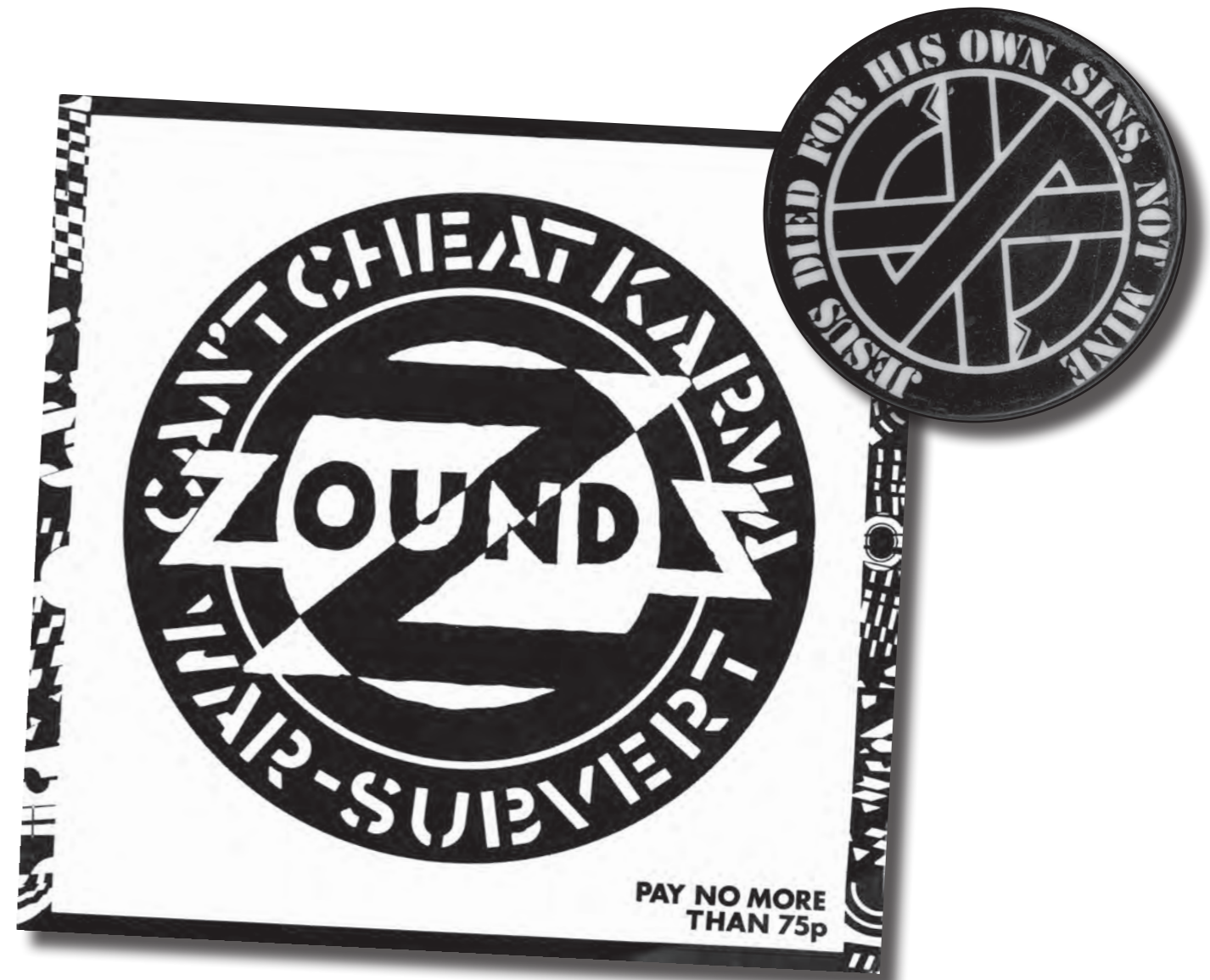
cor blimey gunner in the bigun the local so i can't get a b  
cop an eyeful of this muscular r/at the dancehall i chivvied  
arm/doling out pain is my kind le cut from ear to ear/but the  
of fun/get my drift? i mean re bastard never got the joke.  
al harm/ i like the sound of c once i had a bird but i put he  
racking bones/ at the sight of r up the spout/so i told her w  
blood i thrill/ i like to list here she could get off/she cri  
go in for the kill ed a bit, said i was a lout/bu  
tribal wars are raging/there's t if you're a man you've gotta  
a battlefield in the street/th i used to go down the cafe for  
ere's games to play and hell t tea/ but i put me boot through  
the rival tribal re i used to go down the cafe for  
o pay when the rival tribal re i used to go down the cafe for  
bels meet anybody limb from limb k on the streets like before.  
i'd rip any/ skivvy and chivvy k on the streets like before.  
you'll see/ i'll simply do any ces are standing tall/ but the  
em through/ who's like me/ ne t truth of the matter if you cut  
bastard what why or who/ i ain't out the patter/ is that pride  
ing purpose and i don't give comes before a fall  
i never asked for re s with their violence and thei  
you're looking for re r hate/ stand there and feater  
out of luck/ i'll till they've left it too late  
point with my knu at they've put there on the sp  
og/no-ones at they've put there on the sp  
the gang of/cos they've wasted everyon  
be an and only life they've got  
ee just acting out bad parts/  
there big man take a look a  
burself/it's in the mirror  
at the real war starts.  
free as a flexi disc  
tributed by rough trade



of a self-published book by Rimbaud entitled **Christ's Reality Asylum**, some time before the formation of the group. Designed by Dave King, the symbol "...represented the various forms of oppression that I'd discussed in the book: family, church and state. Heraldic in quality, part national flag, part cross, part swastika, the circular design broke on its edges into two serpents' heads, suggesting that the power it represented was about to consume itself" according to Rimbaud. The symbol featured on the cover of the first Crass single, also entitled **Reality Asylum**. The first pressing of the record featured the design silkscreen printed by the group themselves onto folded card covers with two-colour inlays, but subsequently it was professionally litho printed in black on a white newsprint background, in was to widely become a graphic convention for the Anarcho Punk movement as a whole.

Crass had a strong influence on a number of other bands, and countless young groups formed in their wake who shared their concerns about the threat of nuclear war and the exploitation inherent within the capitalist system, though they sometimes expressed this in less than convincing terms, both lyrically and graphically. Many of the Crass collective were from an older, and more educated, background than their followers, and the inclusion of substantial anarchist texts on their record sleeves was mirrored by some (often rather inarticulate and unsophisticated) copycat pieces by younger bands. Crass were well known to support underground Anarcho Punk networks - gigs were set up by local activists in small venues across the country, often outside of the regular live music circuit. Many of these events raised funds for a

range of political causes, from **GND** to the **Animal Liberation Front (ALF)**, as well as smaller local campaigns. Book and record stalls at venues provided access to the underground and anarchist media, and gigs were sometimes scheduled for afternoons without a bar licence in order to give admittance a younger audience - a theme echoed in newly developing Anarcho Punk and Hardcore scenes in the USA and beyond. The **Crass Records** label also released a series of budget-priced compilation albums, entitled **Bullshit Detector**, showcasing demo tapes sent in by largely unknown bands sympathetic to the cause. It is possible to trace various lineages within the development of Anarcho Punk between the late 1970s and early 1990s, a series of evolutionary threads from the liberal anarchism and peaceful protest of Crass to the direct action



promoted by Conflict, and from Hardcore scene leaders Discharge's initially confrontational and aggressive musical direction to the brutal noise structures of the 80s Thrash groups such as Extreme Noise Terror and Sore Throat. As noted by punk musicologist Mike Dines, the lyrical introspection and more overtly personal politics of songwriter Dick Lucas of the Subhumans also emerged as a distinct theme in the development of Anarcho Punk from the mid 1980s onwards. A strong graphic identity, centred on Nick Lant's dramatic illustrations, also played a part in establishing a powerful image for the group and led to the development of parallel visual themes by others in the scene.

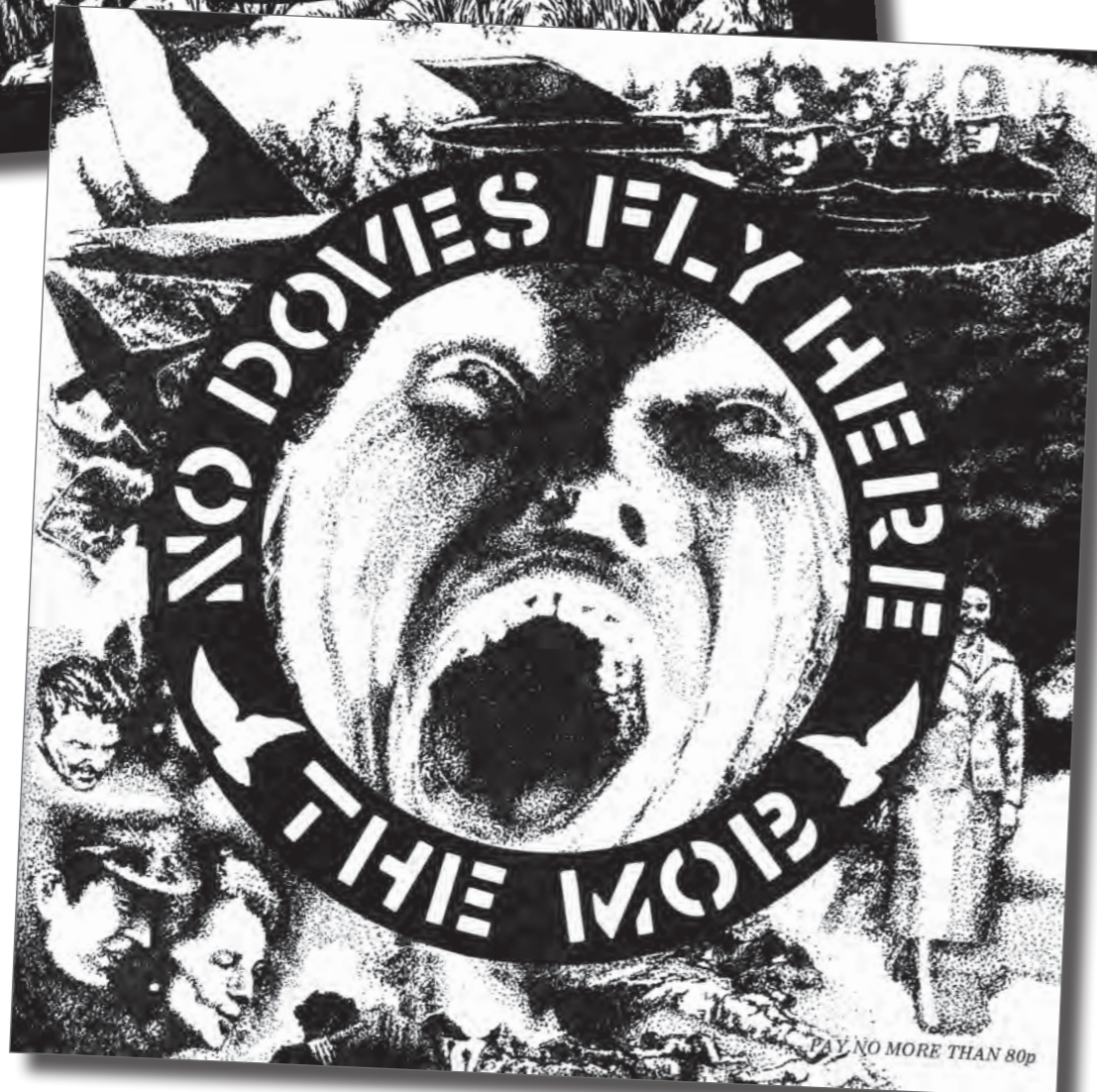
The Anarcho Punk sub-genre evolved as both a literal interpretation of the anarchist message of first wave punk, and as a protest against what the

punk movement had become. Later developments saw a further reflection and critique of the way that Anarcho Punk, in itself, had become stylised and had established invisible rules and codes of conduct among its followers. Some second generation groups such as Hagar the Womb and Rubella Ballet deliberately introduced colour into the visual mix as a reaction against the graphic conventions of their forebears.

While Crass continued to offer a subversive critique of the British government's involvement in the Falklands War and the threat of global nuclear conflict, others such as Flux Of Pink Indians and Conflict took on radical positions regarding animal testing and the meat industry. Conflict also encouraged a more proactive form of resistance (and direct action) than the peaceful protest put forward by the Crass camp, with strong links to

underground anarchist groups such as **Class War** and activists within the **Animal Liberation Front**. The **Stop The City** campaign, which involved mass rallies in central London to bring the city to a halt, also had close ties to a number of interlinked anarchist groups, and running battles with the authorities were commonplace.

During the early 1980s, a rift also developed between those groups who identified themselves with Anarcho Punk and the New Punk and Oi! bands championed by Garry Bushell in Sounds. Crass had included a song entitled **Punk Is Dead** on their debut release, **The Feeding of the Five Thousand**, in 1979, and Bushell had taken it upon himself to criticise the group regularly within his reviews. The debut album by the Exploited, **Punk's Not Dead** (Secret 1981), bears a direct relationship to the Crass



title, and the group became standard-bearers for what was to be called the New Punk movement. The war of words between New Punk groups and the Anarcho Punk bands even went so far as the trading of insults on vinyl: Crass released a free flexidisc entitled **Rival Tribal Rebel Revel**, mimicking the stylised Cockney accent adopted by many Oi! groups, and exchanged words with Bushell in the music press and fanzine interviews.

A grey area also exists in the distinction between Anarcho Punk and a number of groups who were more commonly labelled Hardcore, in particular Discharge, Chaos UK and a number of others on Stoke's **Clay** and Bristol's **Riot City** labels. Much of Discharge's early output between 1980-84 was concerned with the threat of nuclear war and included strong anti-militarist statements. Songs such

as **Realities Of War**, **War's No Fairy Tale**, **State Violence State Control**, **Two Monstrous Nuclear Stock Piles** and **Protest And Survive** provided a central manifesto for the group, and their lyrical and musical concerns were adopted by a number of like-minded groups including the Varukers, the Skeptix and Broken Bones.

Discharge's participation in the **Apocalypse Now** tour of 1981, alongside the Exploited, Anti Nowhere League, Anti Pasti and Chron Gen, saw them gain some level of critical and commercial success, but also placed them firmly in the New Punk camp by association. Whereas Anarcho Punk groups including Crass, Conflict, Poison Girls, Flux of Pink Indians, the Mob and the Subhumans deliberately operated outside of the music press and standard performance venues, and were prepared to vary their musical

and lyrical styles to encompass a broad range of influences (including poetry, literature and spoken-word performance), Hardcore groups tended to retain the visual and verbal rhetoric of 'anarchy' allied to a brutal, monotonous sound assault.

Distinctions between these punk sub-genres weakened as what was to be generally called Hardcore evolved worldwide - in the USA, scenes in California, Washington DC and Boston acknowledged the influence of Anarcho Punk alongside Oi! and New Punk among other antecedents. A broadly anarchist and libertarian political vision ensued, with Anarcho Punk cited as a key influence on the political, if not musical, direction of the subculture in the 1990s and beyond.

Russ Bestley  
[www.hitsvilleuk.com](http://www.hitsvilleuk.com)

TOTAL EXPOSURE TOUR OCTOBER '81

TOTAL EXPOSURE TOUR TOTAL EXPOSURE TOUR

# POISSONS GIRLS



plus

# TONY ALLEN

and **LOCAL SUPPORT**

## POLEMIC ATTACK

ALEXANDRA HALL

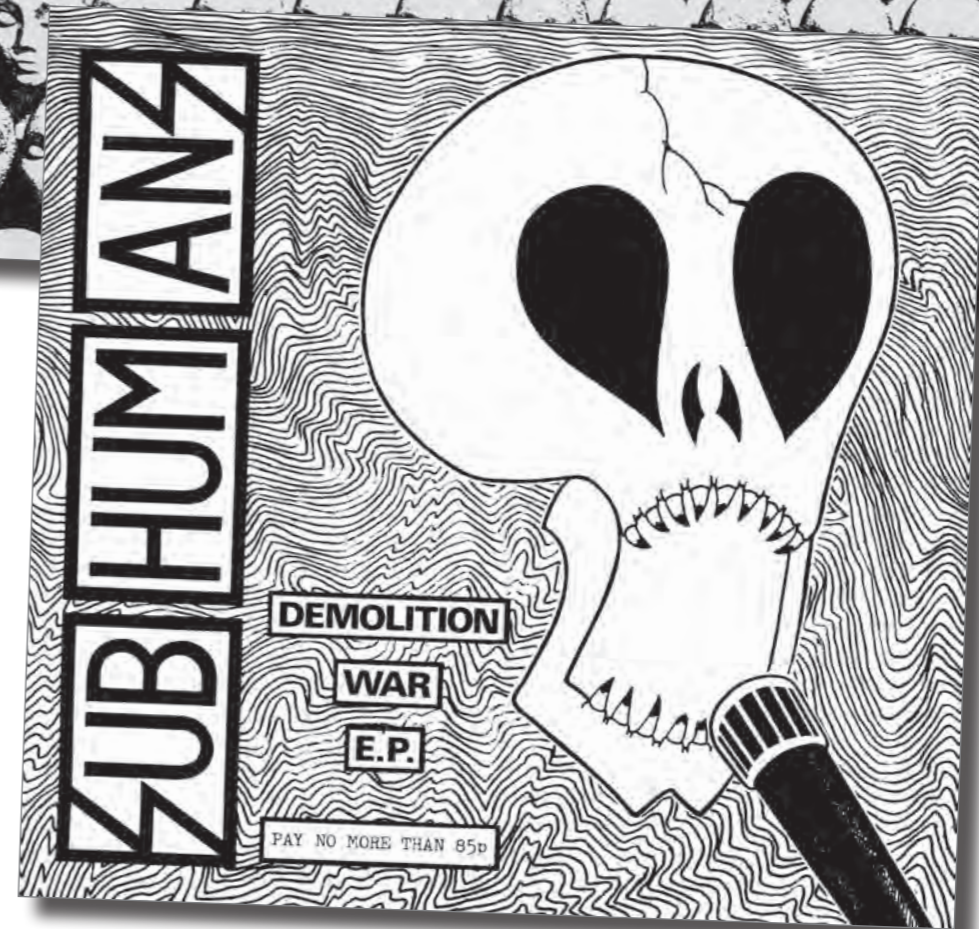
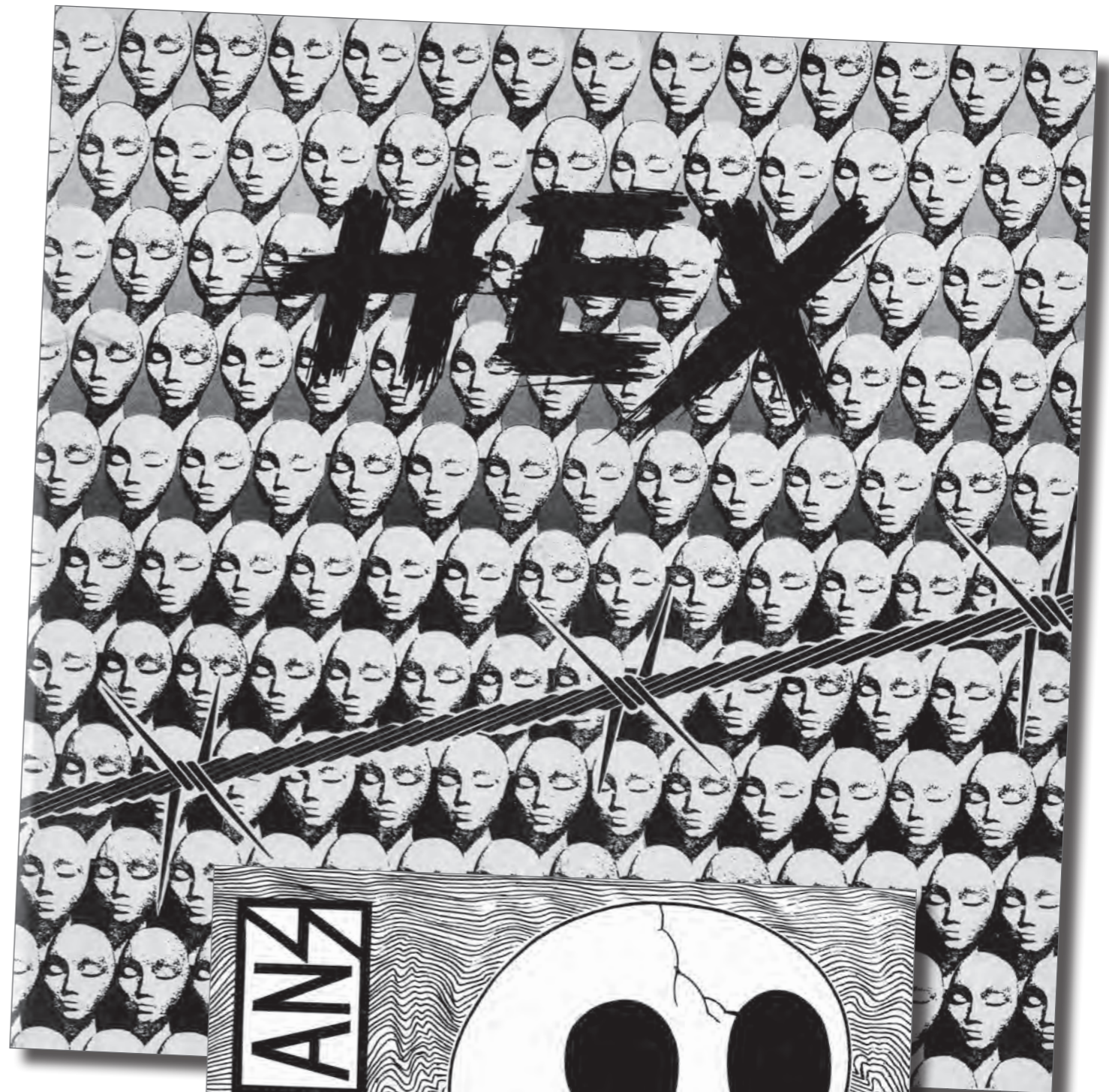
MUSEUM RD, PORTSMOUTH

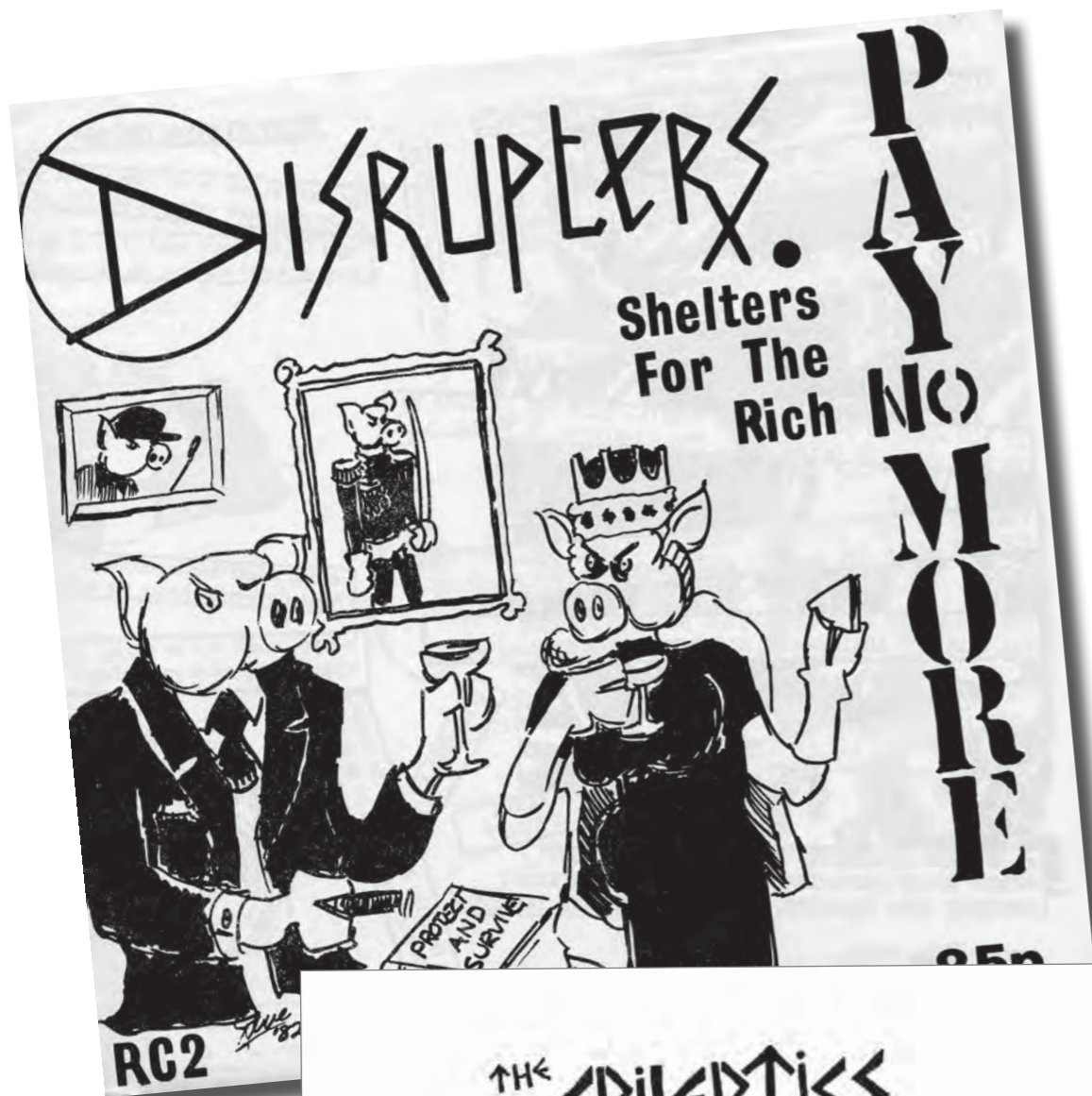


DOORS OPEN 7.30 - BAR - £1.50  
31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER.

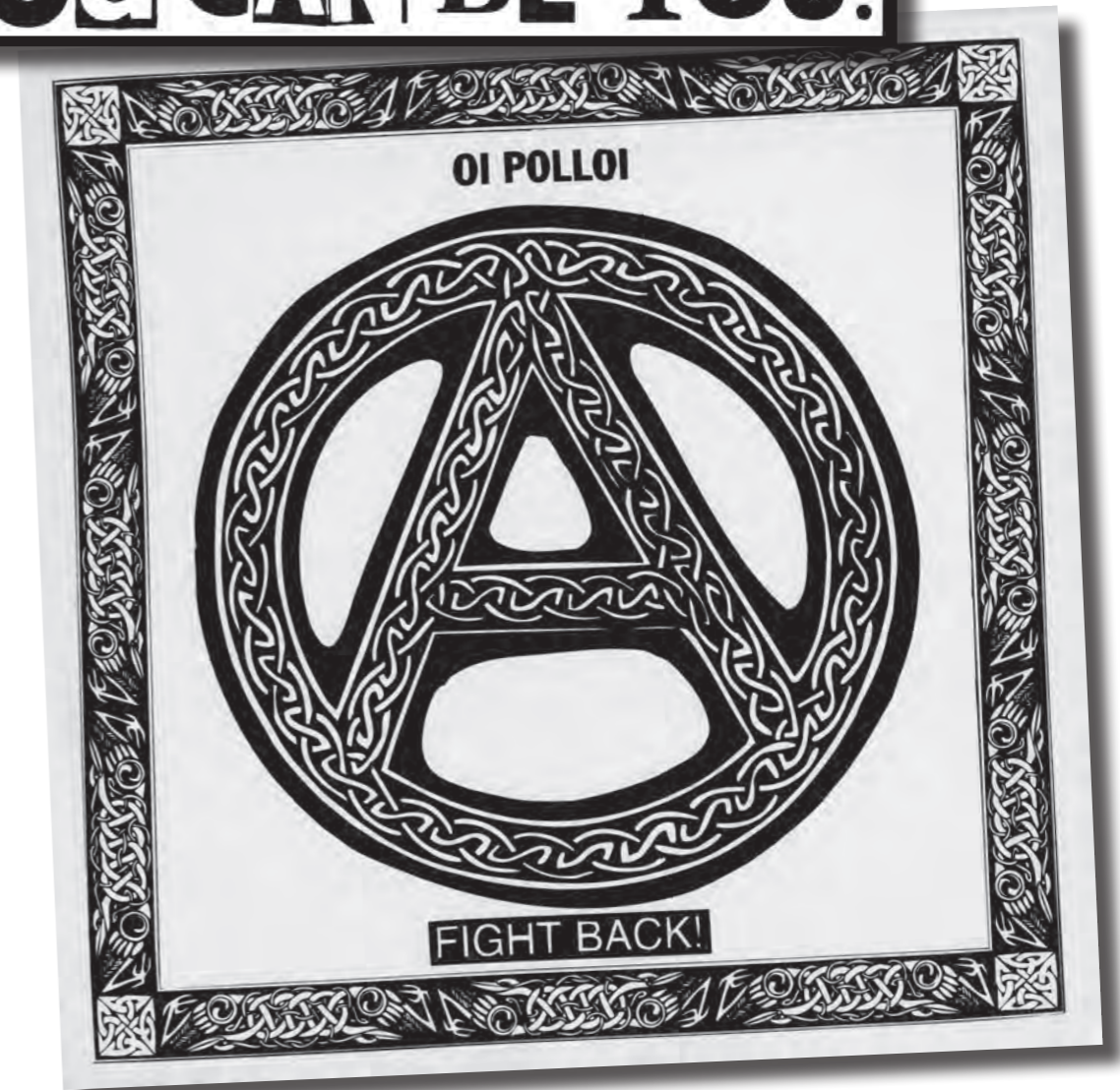
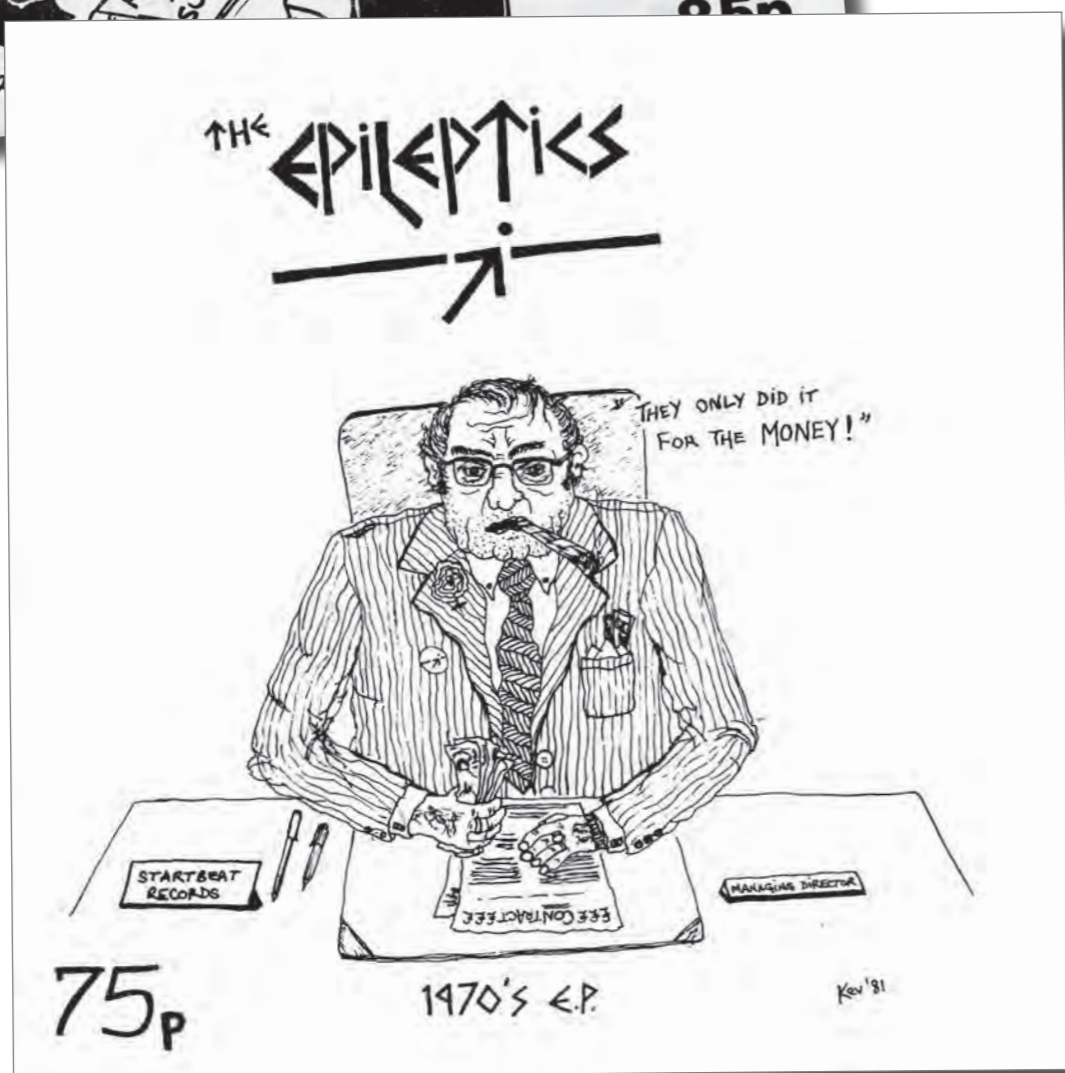
CND DEMONSTRATION OCT 24th LONDON

TOTAL EXPOSURE TOUR TOTAL EXPOSURE TOUR





DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REALITY & FANTASY? NO YOU. DON'T, COZ YOU'RE STILL BEING INFLUENCED BY STASYSKY AND HUTCH, YOU'RE STILL BUYING THE SEX PISTOLS, YOU'RE STILL TRYING TO BE TOP DOG YOU SAY YOU'RE ANARCHISTS WHEN YOU'RE BEGGING THE SYSTEM FOR HELP AND STANDING ON THE DOLE LINES. YOU WANT TO BE INDEPENDENT, YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY, BUT YOU LIVE A LIFE OF FANTASY. YOU CAN BE FREE, THE REAL YOU. **YOU CAN BE YOU.**







BORN INTO A WORLD OF FEAR  
AND ISOLATION.  
BORN INTO A WORLD AT WAR.  
WE CRY IN THE DARKNESS  
AND CONSUME THE POISON.  
WE FEEL THE PAIN,  
OUR FEAR IS MUTUAL,  
OUR PRISON WITHIN THIS  
SYSTEM. NO LOVE,  
NO FREEDOM  
WITHIN IT'S FRAMEWORK.  
OUR VISION LIES OUTSIDE  
WHERE WE CAN LIVE AND CARE.  
WE SOW THE SEEDS OF PEACE  
AND LEARN TO UNDERSTAND.



WE ARE NOT ALONE  
OUR VOICES WILL NOT FADE  
WE CONFRONT AND QUESTION  
OUR VISION IS ABSOLUTE.



11:00am Registration, coffee and introductions

Russ Bestley Anarcho-punk Graphics Exhibition

**11.30AM PANEL 1: POLITICS AND CULTURE /  
CHAIR: MIKE DINES**

Rich Cross "You'll Never Beat the System by Bombing  
Number 10": Perceptions of the Utility of  
Political Violence in Anarcho-punk, 1977-1987

Jim Donaghey Rudolf (is a Punk) Rocker: Anarchism as  
a Politics of Punk / Punk as a Culture  
of Resistance

12.30-1.30pm Lunch

**1.30PM PANEL 2: DESIGN, STYLE AND  
REPRESENTATION / CHAIR: RICH CROSS**

Matt Grimes Call it Crass but "There is no Authority but  
Yourself": De-canonizing Punk's Underbelly

Ana Raposo Punk is Dead, Long Live Punk! The  
Representation of Politics in Anarcho-punk  
Music Graphics

Pete Dale More Than Music? Confusions of Musical  
Style and Political Attitude in Anarcho-punk  
from Crass Onwards

**3.30PM ROUNDTABLE / CHAIR: PETE DALE**

Penny Rimbaud, George McKay and Sarah McHendry

For further information contact Pete Dale [pdale@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:pdale@brookes.ac.uk)

<http://arts.brookes.ac.uk/research/pmru/index.html>

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