

THE SUBCULTURES NETWORK

FIGHT BACK

**PUNK, POLITICS
AND RESISTANCE**

FOREWORD BY STEVE IGNORANT

***Fight back* examines the different ways by which punk – as a youth/subculture – continues to provide space for political expression and action. Bringing together scholars from a range of academic disciplines (history, sociology, cultural studies, politics, English and music), it showcases innovative research into the diverse ways in which punk has been used and interpreted.**

The essays contained within *Fight back* are divided into three overarching themes: identity, locality and communication. These, in turn, cover subjects relating to questions of class, age and gender; the relationship between punk and national/local socio-political contexts; and the ways in which punk's meaning has been expressed from within the subculture and, simultaneously, reflected by the media. The book's objective is to advance general and scholarly understanding of punk and youth culture more broadly. It seeks to reveal the importance of youth culture as a site of political expression and to stimulate scholarly interest in the relationship between subcultures, popular music and social change.

Among its contributors are Professor Hilary Pilkington (University of Manchester), Professor Bill Osgerby (London Metropolitan University), Matthew Worley (University of Reading) and Jon Savage, whose book *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock (1991)* remains the definitive account of punk's emergence.

The Subcultures Network is the interdisciplinary network for the study of subcultures, popular music and social change, hosted by the University of Reading

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Manchester

Fight back

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and resistance

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Fight back

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But after the gig ...

Contributors

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The Subcultures Network

The Subcultures Network formed as the Interdisciplinary Network for the Study of Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change in 2011. Its inaugural conference was held that year at London Metropolitan University, and since then the Network has organised various panels, seminars and workshops around the UK, in Europe and the United States. In 2013, the Network received an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant to develop its activities, which are shaped around five key aims: to promote and facilitate research exploring the ways in which subcultures and popular music serve as mediums for social change; to encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of subcultures, popular music and social change; to initiate and sustain a dialogue between scholars whose work focuses on subjects relating to subcultures, popular music and social change by way of regular workshops, symposia and conferences; to provide support and opportunities for peer-review towards funding proposals related to the study of subcultures, popular music and social change; to instigate and amass a significant body of scholarly work examining the relationship between subcultures, popular music and social change.

The Network is open to all and directed by a steering committee that in 2011–13 comprised:

Jon Garland (University of Surrey)
Keith Gildart (University of Wolverhampton)
Anna Gough-Yates (University of West London)
Paul Hodgkinson (University of Surrey)
Sian Lincoln (Liverpool John Moores University)
Bill Osgerby (London Metropolitan University)
Lucy Robinson (University of Sussex)
John Street (University of East Anglia)
Peter Webb (Cambridge University)
Matthew Worley (University of Reading)

Information about the Network can be found at:
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Foreword

Steve Ignorant

If you were in it, you didn't just wear it, you were it. A catchy name created by a journalist tried to describe it, but how could it? Punk was never a London radical chic, it was and is an attitude that stirred the hearts and minds of like-minded misfits to question, question, question; to no longer blindly accept; to push the boundaries.

From all over came a tidal wave of bands, making their own music, shouting their own words of discontent – no more dippy dreamy pop slush, this was real, this was life – battle cries screaming for a light in the darkness of the tyrannical government's nightmare. And not only bands: poets, artists, playwrights and film-makers also made their marks; in yer face images and statements describing the anger and despair of disillusioned people, a glorious twos-up to anything and everything that had gone before. Racism got a good kicking, sexism a good confronting, the class system a good hammering; from the meat industry to the arms trade, it all came under scrutiny and came up short; it was all a load of old flannel and it wasn't wanted any more.

Over the years many people have tried to write the definitive article on punk. It'll never be done, it's too myriad and diverse: from the terrace-born chants of the Cockney Rejects to the anti-political rages of Crass; from the feminist melodies of the Posion Girls to the surrealism of the Cravats (to name but a few) – all with a different take on what punk was but all eventually saying the same thing: we want change and we ain't asking, we're telling.

Journos tried to soften it, the music biz tried to absorb it, the fashion industry purloined it, the establishment tried to crush it. Yet punk survived the onslaught, battered and with a few casualties, and remains to this day a thorn in the side of society, rude, crude and full of attitude. It'll never die, the contributions in this book prove it; it's no longer a lonely scream from a grotty back-room of a pub, it's global, it's massive and it's here to stay. We're proud to be punk and don't you forget it, because we never will.

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