

# Creating Change: The Online Journal of Zines about Social Movements

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Volume 5 *Undergraduate Social Work Students*

Article 1

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2023

**From the Editor: Cynthia George**

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## Recommended Citation

(2023) "From the Editor: Cynthia George," *Creating Change: The Online Journal of Zines about Social Movements*: Vol. 5, Article 1.

Available at: [https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/creating\\_change/vol5/iss1/1](https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/creating_change/vol5/iss1/1)

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## From the Editor

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I am so happy to publish Volume V of the *Creating Change Journal*! [Creating Change: The Online Journal of Zines about Social Movements](#) is an online open access journal of student-created zines about social movements published in Digital Scholarship @ Tennessee State University (TSU) in collaborative partnership with the Department of Social Work and Urban Studies and the TSU Library. For this journal, TSU graduate social work students take work they complete each Fall in their Foundation level SOWK 6030: Social Welfare Policy and Services course where they analyze social movements, and then they get support during the Spring through their SOWK 6130: Foundation Practicum IA course to participate in structured support activities to help them prepare their papers for publication in the *Creating Change* journal. If you review Volumes I-IV, you will see a series of mini-zines created by both undergraduate and graduate students at TSU. Volumes I-III are undergraduate students and Volumes IV and V are graduate students. Spring 2023's Volume V features fourteen mini-zines. This year we are also very excited to add a Student Editor to the team and to publish two student papers that accompany their zines. We are also including a video recording of students presenting their social movement analysis projects as a panel in a public forum.

For the policy course assignment, each student is asked to choose a social movement to analyze in relation to how the movement has and/or continues to influence public policy. This bottom-up approach to change serves as the basis of the foundation level policy course in TSU's program. Concentration policy students study top-down approaches to understand legislative advocacy and both direct and grassroots lobbying and how these activities impact public policy. To learn about social movements, foundation students are connected to an Open Education Resource (OER) that presents core information about social theories informing the

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basis of human understanding of social movements (Lumen, 2023). Students are also instructed to use a short piece about Blumer's classic model for understanding how a social movement evolves; examining how the movement emerges, coalesces, formalizes or bureaucratizes, and then moves through various stages of decline and resurgence until either the movement is successful in becoming aligned with the mainstream or ceases to function (Christensen, 2009). Students are also asked to analyze the movement through the lens of the National Association on Social Workers (NASW) Social Work Code of Ethics in regards to whether or not the movement is aligned with the core values of the social work profession including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (NASW, 2021). Students spend the entire semester studying the movement and are encouraged to watch documentaries about the movement, review related social media, and engage in a comprehensive research process to study the movement and its impacts. In the end, students are asked to prepare a five minute PowerPoint-guided oral presentation, a ten to twelve page paper, and a one to two page mini-zine (The Oregonian, 2016) that articulate the evolution and importance of the movement.

I teach this course this way because social movements and zines come naturally to me since I am a Riot Grrrl that makes zines and writes punk songs for social movements all the time as one of my primary forms of self-care (Graduates Rise, 2023). Riot Grrrl is a girl punk band –centered social movement that started in the late 1980s-1990s when punk music and punk art spaces in general were very male dominated and girls did not feel safe or included (Hunt, 2019). Zines were a big part of expression and communication in the Riot Grrrl movement from the start (G90videos, 2012). While the internet has created many ways to self-publish digitally, zines remain a means of tangible, radical free press that is typically cheap and easy enough for individuals to make DIY (Do It Yourself) style (Primordial Creative, 2020). I use Riot Grrrl not only to inspire zines, but also as an example of a social movement as I am

explaining the analysis model for the course. The Riot Grrrl movement emerged because grrrls wanted to rock but there was no safe space for them to do this in. They began to act out, demanding space during shows at music venues. Things soon coalesced around artist Kathleen Hannah and a handful of bands operating primarily out of Olympia, Washington including Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Babes in Toyland (Feliciano, 2013). They made zines and shared their ideas alongside their music at gigs and through the mail. While this was before the internet, the movement still managed to formalize and distribute an agenda through publication of the Riot Grrrl Manifesto in the BIKINI KILL ZINE 2 (Hannah, 1991). I also talk about how the movement has faced co-optation and repression over the years and has largely declined in the US. But there has been a recent resurgence of the Riot Grrrl ethos with films such as Netflix's *Moxie* (Poehler, 2021) and new international tours by Kathleen Hannah's band Bikini Kill (Bikini Kill, 2023). The primary policies Riot Grrrl advocates for to this day are ones that protect women's rights to bodily autonomy, prevent domestic violence and sexual assault, prevent wars and state violence of any kind, protect children and vulnerable individuals, are anti-racist and gender inclusive, and ensure Riot Grrrls of all types have safe spaces to engage in artistic and creative expression.

Volume V of the 2023 issue of *Creating Change* starts with two papers that explore the historicity of major movements seeking to improve the child welfare system, the child abuse prevention movement (Kristen Jenkins) and the bullying prevention movement (Marian Evans). Both of these papers also have accompanying mini-zines and both students participated in the April 14, 2023 TSU College of Public Service (CPS) Research Series Panel as archived with the video footage added to this year's journal. Kristen's paper serves to remind us all that animals had more protections in place than children did in early America. The reasoning behind the early formation of the Department of Children's Services (DCS) needs to be understood by today's social workers and policy makers. This is necessary if we are to be explicitly critical in

making sure that DCS services are continually improved so that the well being of children continues to improve. Equally important is bullying prevention. Marian also explores the long history of this movement to reveal that much of what is practiced today for bullying prevention is in the image of one white, male researcher from Norway, Dr. Olweus who created the Olweus Prevention Program. Despite the narrow viewpoint and lack of diversity in systemic planning, we should still be thankful for Dr. Olweus because without him bullying prevention might not have gotten any attention at all. Marian does a great job of articulating how social work needs to pick up the good work of Dr. Olweus and address bullying systematically through best practices and well-funded initiatives that integrate restorative practices and focus on healing the impacts of individual and system trauma. New efforts must also recognize the changing dynamics of our population and attend to the needs of vulnerable students including those with disabilities, those that may not speak English as their first language, members of the LGBTQ community, and those coming from a different race, culture, or ethnic background than the mainstream US. The bullies also need attention, especially given that the impact of society focusing on the diversity of needs of minorities appears to have made some among the majority feel a relative sense of deprivation and that they are being left out or shunned. This may be causing them to engage in school and community violence.

As you review the mini-zines, you will find fourteen excellent examples of student work. You will see there are eleven that are print and foldable, which means they were created to align with the traditional method for turning one sheet of copy paper into a folded booklet or mini-zine (The Oregonian 2016). The first few years I taught this course, I had an actual professional zine maker come to my class and we held a hands-on zine-making workshop. I was able to help all the students ensure they had the folding technique mastered. Once COVID happened, I pivoted to teaching online with recorded lectures. I also used widely available programs like PowerPoint and Word to create templates to guide students to create the images they needed to make a digital mini-zine. Not all students got the formatting correct. But I am not

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one to critique a person's art, so I decided to publish any zines during this time period nonetheless. Thus you will see some in Volumes III and IV that do not fit the standard print and fold format. You will know the format is print and foldable because one row of images will be upside down when you view it as a PDF. Volume V contains eleven print and foldable mini-zines on important social movements including Bullying Prevention, the Recovery Advocacy Movement, Women's Rights in Sports, the Civil Rights Movement, the Fat Acceptance Movement, the Labor Union Movement, Black Lives Matter, rights and safety for black gun owners, HIV awareness and prevention, and the Free Love Movement. There are three that are not foldable but still make beautiful digital zines about the Prevent Child Abuse Movement, the Body Positivity Movement, and the Women's Suffrage Movement.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the team that helped me to create this journal including Dr. Glenda Alvin, Director of TSU Libraries who first came to me and asked me to turn my students' work into a journal. I could also not do this without the support of the TSU Libraries' Head of Technology, Assessment, and Systems, Xuemei (Sherry) Ge who has been incredibly supportive as we worked out the formatting for our journal. We also added embedded learning supports this semester through the support of Dr. James Scholz. He added Librarian Julie Huskey and Writing Tutor Lori Danley to the team of folks supporting students to prepare their papers for publication. I also want to thank Vice President for Academic Affairs Provost Robbie Melton and Assistant Vice President Dr. Erik Schmeller for making funds available that I was able to use to provide incentives for participating students through the Faculty Classroom Engagement Grant program. Students were appreciative of the support that helped them engage in the above-and-beyond work of making their papers publishable. With these funds, students received office and technology supplies to help them in their studies and to support them to write more publishable content in the future. I also must thank Dr. Meg Streams in the Public Administration program. She consistently supports students by managing the CPS

Research Series. She comes to my students' presentations each year and always listens so attentively and asks them such wonderful and probing questions to help us all better understand the importance of social movements.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of my very first Student Editor for the *Creating Change Journal*, James Ker. James has been my student since 2018, during his undergraduate social work degree for policy and research courses and again for his graduate level policy course. I am very proud of how he has grown throughout this process and how his work has progressed over the years. I have no doubt that he will make an excellent social work professional and I cannot wait to see how he continues to develop! But I also still value his early work, which you can check out his mini-zine from Volume I about the prison abolition movement (Ker, 2019). He felt insecure at the time, but I reassured him that I loved his zine, and I truly did, and that his ideas were meaningful and worth sharing with the world. Artistic expression is a critical component of learning as it connects all the things that give human life meaning - love, joy, sadness - the range of human emotions. James embraced this in 2019 and I am proud of him for now helping others to embrace this by editing this journal with me. There is power in being able to harness thoughts and emotions and use them for social change. This is the essence of social movements and it is both an art form and a learned skill. This is among my greatest honors as a teacher, to help my students understand how to use their thoughts and feelings in relation to social facts to shape the complex things going on inside their heads into meaningful products that can then be utilized to improve justice in the world. I hope these papers help social work students better understand the history of child protection. And I am so proud of all of these students for demonstrating intellectual courage in being willing to publish their work. I hope that they all will move forward knowing that their ideas are important enough to the world that they should invest the time and energy it takes to get published.

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