

Creating Change: The Online Journal of Zines about Social Movements

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From the Student Editor: James Ker

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From the Student Editor

James Ker, Graduate Student, Social Work Program
Tennessee State University, College of Public Service, Department of Social Work & Urban Studies

This journal showcases the work of students who have diligently reflected on social work's integral part in the social change process. Dr. Cynthia George kindly invited me to be a student editor after I expressed interest in exploring my role in the academic space. Like many students, I chose social work after experiencing firsthand the power and importance of solid social safety structures. Over time, my identity as a social worker has coalesced, and I am continually reminded that passion and academic inquiry can reshape our social landscape. The authors within this journal showcase that passion, brilliance, and dedication.

In an increasingly polarized society, cultivating good policies and removing bad policies is particularly important for the autonomy and ability of people to prosper within their communities. Social work's unique ability to work on all levels of practice allows for engagement with social change in all areas. The creators of this journal explore the complexity of social movements and how they are cultivated through strife and collective struggle. Each activity within this journal brings a unique perspective on social change. Through written thought and artistic expression, these students open a window into the unendingly complicated world of social change. I am honored to have been given this opportunity to learn from their perspectives.

In 2019, Dr. George asked our class to create mini-zines for our chosen social movement. I did not recognize my value as a social worker at that time. Despite this, I still saw life from a social justice perspective and believed I had an important role to play. Inspired by the music and poetry of the civil rights movement, The focus of my

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zine was on the abolition of the prison industrial complex. Dr. George felt it was a good project, but it wasn't until 2022 that I saw my true potential. Now, I understand how important it is to address systemic harm with diverse tactics. Each person brings the capacity to engage creatively with the change process. The works within this journal exemplify that ideal, showing how research, action, and an uncompromising dedication to social justice can shape our world.

Zines provide a unique template for creative expression. Traditional art forms can carry institutionalized rigidity or harbor expectations for what is right or wrong. Social movements arise in response to disparate societal norms, and radical movements require radical art. Inside this journal, you will see that black lives matter, that black guns matter, that bullying and child neglect break our spirit, that free love and body positivity propel us forward, that autonomy of labor and access to healthcare protect the people, that if left alone, AIDS and overdose hang heavy over our heads, and that white supremacy and patriarchy must be dismantled. Each student's work shines a light on the immediacy of social movements and that, as social workers, we are tasked with engaging in that change process.

Marian Evan's zine on the Stop Bullying Movement depicts in bright colors the complexities of bullying prevention and a comprehensive list of the negative impacts of bullying. Kristen Jenkin's Prevent Child Abuse movement includes photographs and written commentary showing the history and relevance of preventing child abuse. Bonita Southard's piece is an engaging examination of the Free Love Movement, including a whole page dedicated to the history and mission, at the end asking us to reflect on how this movement shapes our lives today. Kyle Washington Scott's zine on the Labor Union

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Movement uses expressive illustration to convey the complex relationship between access to labor and people's autonomy. LaDaja Martin's work on the Civil Rights Movement displays the history, process, and impact of the Civil Rights Movement. Paul Bryant, Tichina Garner, and Jasmine Jones made a zine on the Black Guns Matter movement, showing how state violence perpetuates cycles of inequality and oppression and the imperative of community self-protection. Thomasina Liggins's zine offers insight into the Recovery Advocacy Movement, highlighting how we can change stigmatizing narratives through education, access to equitable healthcare, promoting person-centered policy, and decriminalizing substance use. Christopher Rippy and Chaylia Salandy offer complimentary reflections on the Black Lives Matter Movement. Both depict the epidemic of police violence and state that true social justice is eradicating violence against Black people, particularly violence perpetrated by whites. Aurora Rainbolt and Jessica Paiva de Oliveira's zines focus on Fat Acceptance and Body Positivity movements, showcasing how all bodies deserve respect and dismantling society's unrealistic ideas of beauty will lead to freedom. Victor Sorrell's zine uses text and imagery to explore the importance of raising awareness around HIV/AIDS. Monica Dalton's zine on the Women's Suffrage Movement praises the hard-won victory of granting voting rights to women. Demetrius Lewis' zine on Title IV celebrates the movement for gender equity in our country. Each student's zine offers an expert and deeply personal journey through their chosen social movement. I humbly thank each of them for allowing me to participate in their process. Please enjoy and take the contents of this journal to heart, as they represent the future of our profession and society.

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