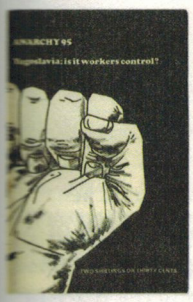
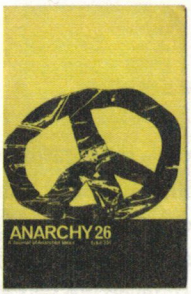
Richard Hollis

# *Anarchy* and the 1960s

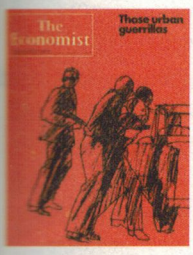



Conventional signs of solidarity and protest: the worker's raised clenched fist and the symbol of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), on *Anarchy* covers

The face of the Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, at first adopted to identify the anti-American Left, became a fashionable icon. Without it no student bedsit was fully furnished. Che appeared twice on *Anarchy* covers (issues 90 and 96) in 1968 and 1969

The satire in *Private Eye* magazine, launched in 1961, encouraged scepticism about public life. The technique of adding speech-bubbles to agency photographs had no followers in Britain

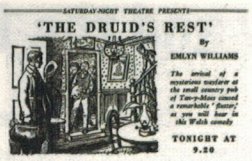


The *Economist* commissioned a team of young designers for its covers. The illustration, *left*, by Dennis Bailey was livelier in style than was common. Expressive typography was made easier by phototypesetting

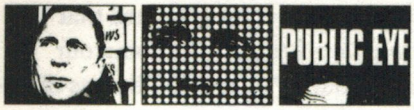
The time 'between the end of the "Chatterley" ban / and the Beatles' first LP' was, according to the poet Philip Larkin, the time when 'sexual intercourse began'. The years 1960–3 were also when graphic design began, at least in England. The first annual exhibition of the new Designers & Art Directors Association took place (1963), covers of Penguin books were in the course of a modernist makeover (under Germano Facetti, from 1960), and *The Sunday Times Magazine* was launched (in 1962, with Lord Snowdon as design adviser). Design was fashionable, it was lifestyle.

When the novelist Colin MacInnes claimed that *Anarchy* was 'revealing more information about our country than any other journal I know of', he was thinking of the established weeklies, *New Statesman*, *Listener*, *The Economist*, and *Spectator*, or heavy-weight journals such as *Encounter* or *New Left Review*. The front covers of *Anarchy* feature the same subjects that these other magazines dealt with – mainly contemporary politics and society – but *Anarchy* often devoted a single issue to one theme, perhaps historical or theoretical. The topics are still topical: planning, prison reform, nuclear disarmament, education, housing and homelessness, the policing of protest, crime, sexual politics, the law, trades' unions, foreign policy, transport policy, popular arts, racism, drugs, technology, the theatre, workers' control, poverty, students. *Anarchy* had to find the graphic means to represent these subjects. For some, graphic design had already provided a shorthand, such as the CND symbol, or the worker's raised fist. *Anarchy* covers took advantage of these conventions, and invented others.

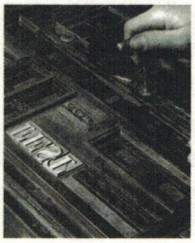
If anarchism is an idea far removed from style, *Anarchy* covers are none the less recognizably of their period. Indeed, it would be impossible for the work of a designer, especially one working in London, not to reflect something of the graphic methods of his professional colleagues. *Anarchy*'s designer, Rufus Segar, worked in London for the Economist Intelligence Unit. Covers of *The Economist*, by some of a new generation of designers, won awards. Segar could not have failed to feel their influence, any more than he would have



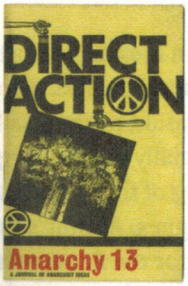
The kind of drawn illustration that survived in *Radio Times* for many years was the natural medium for early *Anarchy* covers




In the 1960s, photographic images, made in high contrast, were replacing drawn illustration. TV programme titles and trailers brought graphic design to the domestic fireside



Designers made layouts as guides to the printer by tracing from type specimen sheets. The printer assembled type and blocks and locked them up for printing. This imposed a horizontal–vertical, rectangular basis for design. When this was replaced by rub-down lettering and phototypesetting, a new freedom became possible




Rub-down lettering: the Compacta typeface appeared frequently on *Anarchy* covers. The cover of *Anarchy* 13 assembles several different media

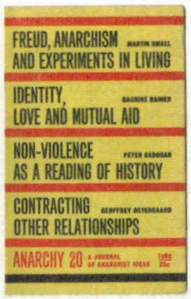
felt the effects of the everyday but inventive graphics of television trailers or the black-and-white illustration in the *Radio Times* with which he had grown up.

### Printing and the designer

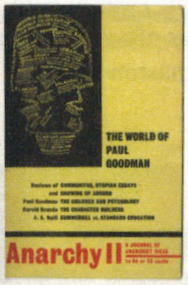
The decade of *Anarchy*'s publication was not only a turning point of political, social, and aesthetic attitudes, but it coincided with revolutions in ways of printing. Letterpress was slowly giving way to offset lithography, phototypesetting was taking the place of metal composition. It is only since the mid-1980s that designers have been able to generate all the elements of a design and assemble them as a digital file ready for the printer. Typesetting, image scanning, retouching are now done by designers. But before the introduction of the personal computer, the production process was divided. On one side was the designer, who gave instructions and specifications. On the other side were the print-trade specialists – typesetter, photo-engraver, and printer. The first *Anarchy* covers clearly show this division of labour. Headings and text are printed directly from the printer's typesetting. This was combined with one or more photo-engraved blocks made from whatever Segar supplied as 'artwork'. In a tight production budget, savings could be made by re-using the typesetting or blocks. For example, the same typeset line 'a journal of anarchist ideas' is used in different locations from one issue to another, just as the Freedom Press block of 'fp' in a rectangle is repeated on early covers.

In order for the printer to set the type, the designer had to provide a specification of the typeface, its size, and the spacing between words and lines. A layout was also needed to show the arrangement of type and blocks. Type on the layout would be traced from printed specimen sheets, the position of the block marked and indications given to show what was to print in colour and what in black. For a two-colour illustration, the second colour would be drawn on a separate translucent sheet overlaid on the 'artwork'. Type and blocks were 'locked up' in a frame for printing. The photo-engraver – and the printer, if there was time – would supply a proof for checking.

The rectangularity of letterpress printing was often




Extremes in the designers' use of two-colour printing. The freely drawn and hand-lettered *Anarchy* 19 was printed from photo-engraved blocks. *Anarchy* 20 was printed entirely from type and rules




Metal type limited the designer. It was possible to put space between letters, but not to close up the spacing (except in very large sizes). The numerals '11' in *Anarchy* 11 have been replaced by capital 'I's, perhaps to avoid the wide spacing of two '1's

In the 1960s the Grant projector, used to size type or images, was transformed into a process camera in some designers' studios. Headlines and images could be made to the final size, prepared as 'camera-ready copy'

Enlarging the half-tone screen of existing images is one of the graphic designers' useful clichés. Left, a poster by F.H.K. Henrion, 1942. The *Lord of the Flies* image is enlarged from the coarse-screen newsprint reproduction of a film still, for *Anarchy* 48

disguised by a much looser arrangement of type and images (for example, in *Anarchy* 13). Large headings were also made as photo-engraved blocks. This was made possible by the availability of transfer (rub-down) lettering, such as Letraset. Phototypesetting also allowed letters to be spaced very tightly together, which was impossible with metal type unless proofs of the type were cut up letter by letter, pasted down, and then photo-engraved. The same closely spaced letters of the title were repeated on four consecutive issues (15–18). The subtitle, 'a journal of anarchist ideas', was repeated from the same typesetting and incorporated in blocks for other layouts. Extreme contrasts in technique are shown in issues 19 and 20: the first has the freedom more natural to offset printing, with almost no typeset lettering; the second is an absolutely straightforward, typically letterpress design, printed from type.

With the move from letterpress to offset, designers still worked at the drawing board to produce layouts, but they could have greater control over production. Type and images were pasted up as 'camera-ready copy', to be photographed to make a litho plate. This procedure bypassed the process-engraver. In designers' studios a common tool was the visualizer, variously known as a Grant projector or Lucigraph, used to enlarge and reduce images or typeset proofs for tracing to the final size on layouts. It could be used as a process camera to make line or screened half-tone prints. Although not used for *Anarchy*, this brought a new freedom that made possible the visual extravagances of the underground press, in such titles as *Oz* and *International Times*.

Drawn illustration had been the most common medium for images. In the 1960s drawing was largely replaced by photography, particularly in advertising. Fashion illustration, for example, disappeared. Collage or distortion techniques made photographs more expressive. One common effect was to remove the grey half-tones to make a purely black-and-white image (sometimes known as 'posterization'). Enlarging the half-tone screen of a printed photograph was a familiar method that not only gave a rich texture but also suggested a connection to the newspaper press and therefore to topicality.

While *Anarchy* limited itself to two-colour covers, the other significant change in print in the 1960s was

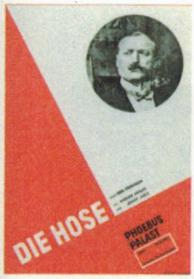
Nuclear disarmament. *Right:* letterpress poster produced by a local jobbing printer in two colours on brown paper, designed by Robin Fior. *Below:* screen-printed poster designed by Ken Garland depends on the recognition of the CND symbol

the widespread use of full-colour. After decades of black-and-white in *Picture Post*, the launch of *The Sunday Times Magazine* in 1962 marked a new era. In 1967 an issue on the 50th anniversary of the Russian revolution introduced readers, almost by chance, to a 'revolutionary style' of graphics. Working on the magazine as an assistant designer was David King. In the 1970s King developed a way of working on posters and books for left-wing organizations which extended Soviet agitprop graphic means into a mannerism – red, black, stars and heavy black lines – which signalled anti-establishment messages. For posters, letterpress direct from poster type (such as Robin Fior's 'Call to action!') was uncommon; silkscreen printing, suited to areas of solid colour – the medium for Ken Garland's Aldermaston march poster – was more typical.

*The Sunday Times Magazine* in November 1967, *right*, illustrated methods of revolutionary Russian propaganda. Small uncaptioned images show two pieces without words – the satirical cartoon (Viktor Deni), the abstract print (El Lissitzky). At the foot is the traditional poster with illustration and slogan. The large poster promoting books combines abstract design with photography (Rodchenko).

*The Sunday Times Magazine* article was designed by David King. Rodchenko's methods, with and without photographs, were the basis for dozens of political posters designed by King, *above*, which became a stereotype of radical propaganda in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s

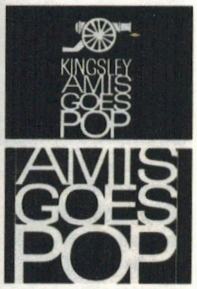
Allusions to modernism appear with *Anarchy* 55, and more obviously in *Anarchy* 66, an issue on the Dutch Provo movement, symbolised by the white bicycle with the code to its lock clearly painted. If there was a stereotype of political graphics late in the period it was the Atelier Populaire posters of the French student uprising of May 1968. Although *Anarchy* 89 used a photograph of a celebrated poster, the students' method of simple silhouette and pithy slogan had little influence, either on *Anarchy* covers or on other anti-Establishment publications. The useful cliché of the clenched fist at last found its way to *Anarchy* with issue 95. In Britain a do-it-yourself vernacular also emerged in posters by activists and community groups. *Anarchy* adopted the style for issue 86.



Awareness of modern design arrived late in Britain. In the 1950s and 1960s the journal *Typographica* published a series on some of the pioneers. Jan Tschichold's cinema poster of 1928 has much in common with the cover of *Anarchy* 66 devoted to the Dutch provo movement, which supported the idea of free white-painted bicycles

Handwritten messages provide a more direct expression than the formality of words in printed type. *Anarchy* 86 exploited this. In the 1960s small offset printing gave community groups access to a cheap medium for propaganda

## Graphic language

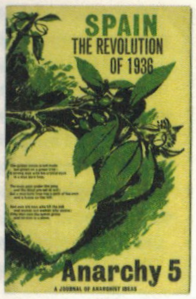


Closely spaced type, stacked together, was a popular way to turn type into an image. Other than both designs being contemporary, there is no accounting for the similarity of this titling piece and the *Anarchy* cover

Image and alphabet, picture and text on a background, are the designer's raw material. For the first half of *Anarchy*'s life, covers were printed on yellow paper. With varied and unpredictable graphics, this colour gave some unity and recognizable identity to the magazine. Where line illustration was used the yellow was simply a background. In a few rare cases it becomes part of the graphics, as in the cover of *Anarchy* 5, designed by Philip Sansom, and *Anarchy* 19, the theatre issue, with a cover drawn by Colin Munro. Similarly, *Anarchy* 17, which looks more like modern 'graphic design', employs the yellow as a positive element. Sansom's design for issue 5 is one of the few not to use red as the second colour. The next to use green was *Anarchy* 36; David Boyd's drawing of a judge is printed arbitrarily in green, without the colour reinforcing the image, as it does when it represents an unploughed field in the issue on the land (*Anarchy* 41). This uses the second colour as part of the drawing, as do several others of this period (for example, 69, 70, 72, 74).

Almost 40 per cent of covers (46 issues) use one black printing only. These are issues 9, 18, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 49, 53, 59, 68, 71, 73, 79, 80, 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 96, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 117.

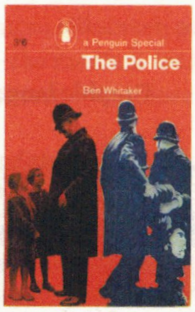
For the most part, the means used were eclectic, and it is hard to discern any consistent patterns in the deployment of drawings or photographs. But it is



Two-colour printing (1): the two colours are separated by the artist, ignoring the possibilities of overprinting colours

Two-colour printing (2): the overlay of images as well as their juxtaposition gives an added dimension not only to the graphics but to their meaning or context. *Anarchy* 78 and book cover by Robin Fior, 1972

'Candid' images of working-class life found an echo in several *Anarchy* covers, including 73, *above right*. Roger Mayne made a celebrated series of photographs of children in the London streets in the 1950s, *above left*

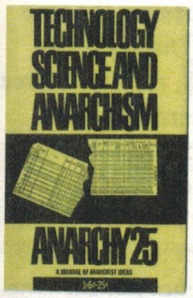


Police behaviour, especially at demonstrations, attracted criticism and itself inspired protest. The Penguin Special cover, *above left*, by Bruce Robertson used the good cop / bad cop juxtaposition

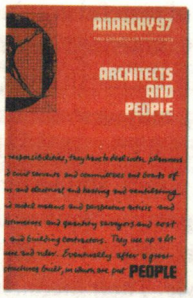
Posters of the events of May 1968, although shown on the cover of *Anarchy* 89, had little influence either on the design of *Anarchy* covers or more generally in graphic design

possible to see that the early issues were fairly conventional in adding type to a given image or set of images. From around *Anarchy* 13, the approach becomes more properly 'graphic design', integrating image and text. Rufus Segar used his own drawings in some of these earlier issues (most obviously issues 22 and 32), and then from *Anarchy* 41 they are a more constant feature of the covers. With *Anarchy* 59 and the change to white paper, the sense of the covers as integrated works of design is heightened. The covers of issues 79 and 91, being partly about their own method of production, have a special place here in telling us something about the processes by which they were produced. The need to work quickly may have been a factor in these designs, as it also looks to have been in the simplest text-only covers.

## Typography




Phototypesetting and rub-down lettering allowed designers scope for turning headings into graphic images by very closely spaced, even overlapping letters – here using Compacta type



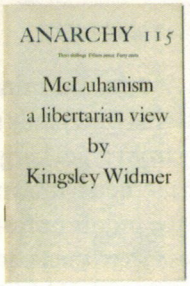

The squareish Futura Display was the default typeface for a few issues towards the end of *Anarchy*'s life

Throughout its run *Anarchy* was printed by letterpress, in which process (at this time) only small-sized text was printed directly from type. Larger lettering was achieved by various methods: drawn letters, photoprints made from type proofs or from rubbed-down transfer letters. These were then converted, as were the images, to photo-engraved blocks. There were two types of block. Lettering and some images would be 'line' – that is, without tone, such as a pen-and-ink drawing – or they would be 'tone'. Tone blocks reproduced a range from light to dark by means of almost invisible dots of various sizes, as used in most printing today, and easily recognized in newspaper photographs.

As to typefaces, *Anarchy* covers rarely used serif type. Early issues, printed directly from type, used the nineteenth-century sanserif typefaces Grotesque no. 9 (Headline Bold) and the condensed Grotesque no. 33. This was a clear and consistent choice until the geometrical and heavy Futura Bold was used for the words 'direct action' on *Anarchy* 13. The next issue, *Anarchy* 14, was the first to use Compacta, a bold condensed typeface recently issued by Letraset. These two covers marked a slight but permanent change. On all subsequent covers (apart from the aberrant issue 36) the title is in capitals. Indeed, one conspicuous aspect of the typography on the covers more generally is the rare use of upper- and lowercase. Compacta then became the type used for the name of the journal for four issues and returned significantly with issue 25, the letters cut and overlapped. After this Compacta was used only intermittently, and was last used in issue 44 in 1964. *Anarchy* 37 introduced so-called Futura Display, a bold condensed type that was used sporadically until the last few issues.

*Anarchy* 14, on civil disobedience, not only brought in the use of Compacta, but used it to make the image. On other covers, Compacta, well-named, had the advantage of taking up little space, and at the same time giving words a strong graphic presence, obliterating the background space (*Anarchy* 25). By contrast, the more open letterforms of other types could integrate image and background (*Anarchy* 53). After this issue, for more than a year between 1966 and 1967, title and headings

Cover titling set in small sizes of Franklin Gothic, and almost disappearing, was used in some later issues




The final *Anarchy* covers, typeset symmetrically in Caslon, are reminiscent of an academic journal

were more restrained, almost to the point of disappearing (*Anarchy* 64). These covers were less anarchic, more in the mainstream of tasteful graphic design, the type in Franklin Gothic Condensed. Futura Display reappeared, and not only for the title (97, 98, 111, 112). Three late covers (114, 115, 118) were almost retro in style, printed in a traditional English typeface, Caslon, and with the text set in upper- and lowercase.

Such a mix of typestyles typifies the magazine's eclectic inclinations. The covers did not introduce an original graphic style. Their inconsistency matches the variety of the content. Seen against a background of an emerging dominance of the image in commercial media and rapid changes in technology, *Anarchy*'s covers stand out as a significant record of the early years of graphic design in Britain.