

“Jungle Rhythm and Juvenile Delinquency”: London *Times* Coverage of Youth Subcultures and Rock and Roll , 1955-1960

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During the mid 1950s, post-war England went from rationing to a new, more material lifestyle. From the laboring poor to the aristocracy, the British became conspicuous consumers. Included were the young people of England, who after schooling, went into the work force and began to create a new class of Englishmen, known as teenagers. Teenagers consumed fashion, music, and cinema, at times passively, but more often shaping these cultural influences to create their own subculture(s) within Britain. These subcultures have been analyzed by cultural critics such as Dick Hebdige, Stuart Hall, and Colin MacInnes, but the definition of these subcultures was not only created by the young people but also by the public, or at least the media. Young people shocked their elders, at least according to the newspapers, radio, and television. Before the sixties, youth were revolting: rioting, racism, and raucous music seemed to excite them.

A view has developed that young people had previously been quiescent, much like the golden age of the fifties is often contrasted with the wild, violent sixties. This paper seeks to discover, first, how did British media view young people, focusing on the London *Times*, 1955-60. Particularly, how did journalists and editors frame discussion of violence, disturbances, and riots in which teenagers took part? Who or what was the villain? Second, how is the consumer culture of the fifties—music, cinema, fashion, clothing styles—related to this youth revolt? Finally, this paper looks tentatively at the relationship between the media and the young people themselves. Did the journalists (the elders) shape the young people’s view of themselves (at least those young people who were seen as part of the disturbances)? With stiff opposition by the government and the public through the newspaper, the teenagers were constantly challenged to become the respectful and loyal citizens of their counterparts. The music began to let them imagine a world that they wanted to live in; where the older British leaders could not touch them. Teenagers sought to break away from what was “square” and forge their own world for the future. They did commit crimes and riots during the years stretching from 1950-1960, but the paper argues that the connection between the popular culture and the rioting were rooted into their everyday lives that many believed were very tame. The formation of the various subcultures also helped to paint the picture that the children saw themselves as completely different from their parents, teachers, and bosses, and they did not want to follow the

same existence as their rivals. These various subcultures also sprung up from the working-class neighborhoods, and the children would become the new voice of these people all across England.

If there was a British teenage culture in the 1950s, it centered on music, and yet, that music was not uni- but was rather multi-dimensional. Indeed, the media had difficulty reporting on teenagers because they tended to divide themselves into different subcultures, identify with different fashions, movies, and music, but also they made the issues worse among the teens by reporting strongly against them. With the emergence of Rock and Roll, jazz (modern and also trad jazz movements), and popular music, teenagers embraced many more forms of expression through song, and although many of them did enjoy the classical music of their parents age, there were some who connected deeply with the lyrics and beat of more contemporary compositions. Figures like Bill Haley, Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, and Lonnie Donegan (who came out of the home grown Skiffle scene based on folk/blues of the United States) had solidified themselves as the main attractions.

Not only Rock and Roll, but jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Joe "King" Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and England's own Humphrey Littleton emerged in the trad jazz scene. This new resurgence of Jazz was greatly admired by Colin MacInnes in his novel *Absolute Beginners*. The novel tells the story about teens growing up in the Soho area of London¹. Spawning directly from the same scene were modern jazz musicians such as Miles Davis, John Coltrane and others, who challenged the old ideas that jazz (trad or mod) could be as popular as the innovation of electric music. The most conservative of all music in the 1950s was traditional pop. Artists such as Perry Como, Frankie Lane, Vera Lynn, Doris Day, and Frank Sinatra were very popular in the UK and would chart in the Top 20 for oncoming years. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will remain on Rock and Roll because the most aggression and public outcry came from its inception into British culture. Not only were the Teddy Boys and Rockers² becoming disobedient to the norms of society, but the emergence of

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¹ His characters mirrored the typical Jazzers, Teddy Boys, and later Mods of the era.

² Name adopted by youths during the 1950s, often associated with rock music.

female rioters also shocked the country. Although some argue Rock and Roll was a subculture based around poor, working-class, male youths, females were also getting involved in the disturbances. As one Article in the London Times stressed, "If decadence be taken to represent a physical state as well as an attitude of mind, then it can confidently be asserted that 'Rock and Roll' is not decadent—the exercises its devotees go in for are violent and acrobatic in the extreme."³ Notably, this came out before any of the major violence in Notting Hill the following September. Though this early news reported that the dancing and singing of teenagers was "violent," they had yet to see their worst fears realized until that warm August day at the Notting Hill festival of 1958.

The idea that the teens had forged their own subculture(s) has been debated for years by scholars and newspapers alike. Was it out of rational fear that the teens beat blacks in Notting Hill, or was it the emergence of a new attitude of "group mindedness?"⁴ Also, were these newly formed subcultures responsible for the teens that acted out during the first showing of "Rock Around the Clock?" Scholars like Dick Hebdige support the idea of many different subcultures amongst teens, while writers like Hoggart do not believe that young people did anything to progress the teenage culture and newly found independence being celebrated with money. These two cultural critics (and others) help us analyze the *Times* and other publications that represented the various groups and whether or not music influenced rioting and disturbances.

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige argues style and material culture helped to forge a new type of teenager and create a new type of subculture in England. He has also written on the emergence of punk rock and other well-known teenage crazes of the 20th century, which follow similar guidelines. Written in the first pages of the introduction, Hebdige uses the phrase "the idea of style as a form of refusal" to argue that the newly found styles and material culture helped create a group of teenagers who tried to first rebel with their clothing.⁵ Teenagers used these styles as an ideal form of refusal for the "square" culture around them. This can be seen heavily in the Teddy Boy lifestyle and the choice to wear Edwardian coats. Hebdige goes on to defend his ideas about subculture and style as a form of rebellion. The Teddy Boys are also lumped into this group because they had become fashion minded in the 1950s. The Edwardian suit became their most prized possession

³ *Times* [London], Tuesday, January 15th, 1957. "More Rock and Roll On The Screen."

⁴ Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990), pg. 82.

⁵ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style (New Accents)*, New Ed. ed. (London: Routledge, 1981), 2.

and Teddys wanted to dress as nicely as possible. Some argue that this may be attributed to the fact they had come from poor areas and wanted to use the streets as a workingman's catwalk. This is reinforced by, the "Lambeth Boy's" (1958) film stated that having a suit for six months is acceptable, but then they need to buy another to keep up with the style of Teddy Boy life.⁶ Hebdige says the "nature of cultural phenomena, to uncover the latent meaning of an everyday life which, to all intents and purposes, was perfectly natural" to teenagers.⁷ For teenagers, it had become very natural within their various subcultures that the working class attitudes and ideology became the normal day-to-day activity. Although Hebdige does not directly attribute this to the teenagers of the time, clearly he believes that in order for cultural phenomena to occur, the groups must believe their ideals and act on them in everyday fashion. The Teddy Boys became very territorial and were willing to defend their communities from influence that they did not see fit. The "culture extends beyond the library, the opera-house and the theatre to encompass the whole of everyday life," and was very much believed by the teenagers that they were using rational choices to defend their claims to be a new force in British culture.⁸

The Jazzers of the 1950s also formed their own subculture during the period and support the Hebdige argument for a multiple subculture structure amongst the English teens. When the jazz scene remerged in England, there were many who became fearful of black men influencing the culture. Because there had been blacks in England since the early 1600s, they must have imparted culture in one way or another to the British.⁹ The influence on teenagers was very striking to the media and mostly to the older leaders of the nation, who did not understand why their children were celebrating solidarity with the blacks and jazz music.

The *Times* commented on a situation¹⁰ where black males were asked to bring their own partners to dance halls because "friction is caused where there are large numbers of colored men asking white girls for dances, many of them refuse" and this led to fights between the white males trying to get the blacks to leave.¹¹ The reaction when young white girls had said yes to the black males remains unknown, but due to the outcry from refusals, it can be safe to assume that violence would have been possible. These black men found a home with the new Jazzers, as

⁶"We Are The Lambeth Boys," taken from vocal track.

⁷Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, 8.

⁸Ibid., 9.

⁹ After the Second World War with full employment, West Indians began to arrive in England seeking jobs from their mother country.

¹⁰ This was written just a few weeks before the Notting Hill Race Riots and may have influenced the white males at the fair to strike out against blacks males.

¹¹ *Times* [London,] July, 1st, 1958. Coloured Men Told Of Dance Rule.

they were more willing to accept anyone at their dance halls. For the most part, these were the teenagers who refrained from participating in the Notting Hill race riots after being exposed to heavy black influence in their neighborhoods. Most of the teens that were associating with the blacks were art school and college students.

The divide between the Teddy Boys and Jazzers is noted in Colin MacInnes' book *Absolute Beginners*, as the unnamed narrator finds himself in conflict with Ed the Ted in several scenes and comments later that it was most likely Ed's group of friends who started the fights at the Notting Hill festival. The tolerant community who formed around jazz is the exception to the Teds' racist behavior during the Notting Hill race riots. Notably, not all the youth were engaged in rioting and disturbances during the 1950s. Although the Jazzers were responsible for several incidents of riotous behavior after shows, they were mostly harmless fights due to intoxication. Hebdige points out that the majority of teenagers did not involve themselves into subculture groups and were happy to continue life as their parents had before them. Also included in Hebdige's work is a paragraph that supports the claim that the Jazzers were a different group from the Teds completely. "Despite the Giles cartoons which regularly depicted Beats and Teds joining ranks against legions of perpetually flustered bowler-hatted 'gents', there is no evidence of any conspicuous fraternization between the two younger groups."¹²

This split shows that more than one active subculture had emerged during the 1950s amongst the teenage population. As later evidence from the *Times* demonstrates, the teenagers were lumped into one group who were seen as defiant against the whole nation and black community.

There are scholars who believe there was no significant teenage movement in the 1950s, and it did not contribute to a new way of life for the youth in England. Richard Hoggart who is well known for his studies of youth consumer culture and movements believed that the youth movements of the 1950s were not as important as they were made up to be. Unlike Hebdige, Hoggart does not believe that British teenagers were creating a new subculture, but instead believed that the youth had simply been shaped by American cultural influences (rightfully so considering Hollywood and a capitalist consumer culture). They were in essence "zombies" of this outside material culture.¹³ Hoggart did not believe, for example, that the Teddy Boys of northern England were creating their own culture, but rather using the United

¹² Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, 51.

¹³ David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970: From Ivory Tower to Global Movement - A New History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 117.

States model as a form of culture that they adopted as their own.¹⁴ This goes along with Hoggart's ideas of an "Americanized Europe", and the fact that consumerism becomes a subculture within itself in Italy along with England. This type of rejection is exactly what the *Times* would have liked to hear, because they also felt that the teenagers had not been forming new subcultures under the direction of music and consumer culture, but were rather just rebellious due to American influences. Hoggart wrote on the youth consumer class, and appears to believe that the children were just acting out against their elders because of the American influence and did not forge their own structured society. If Hoggart would have read Hebdige later in his life, then he may have gotten a better appreciation for what a subculture actually was. This does not condemn him for all the work on working-class lifestyles, as later in the 1960s he must have realized that youth subcultures were significant. The formation of musical understanding and consumer culture frightened the older generations because they thought the teenagers had gone mad, but the teens were rebelling against the societal norms that did not fit the working-class lifestyle the youth had grown to idolized.

Historians can use the ideas of Hoggart and Hebdige to help make sense of contemporary discussions about teenagers and the music scene. From 1956 to 1960 there were a series of disturbances surrounding Rock and Roll films and the Notting Hill riots. These were all well covered by the *Times* and other media outlets. Teenagers began to challenge the norms of British society that they believed were set in place by the ruling class. Novelists of the time also explained the various forms of teenage entertainment and the lifestyles they led during the period of disturbances and rioting. *Absolute Beginners* (1959) written by Colin MacInnes, was a fictional account of various individuals living in London during the same age this paper addresses. The film *We Are the Lambeth Boys* also provides a great look into what the boys had been spending their money on, and what type of issues actually captivated the youth in Britain during the 1950s.

The narrator in Colin MacInnes' *Absolute Beginners* is one of the "new" youths that had enjoyed the benefits of a working-class lifestyle, and MacInnes noted that the youth was drastically changing in Britain through out the 1950s. In the novel, various aspects of teenage life are addressed. Rejection of the older generation is evident throughout the pages and expressed over and over by the narrator. When he meets with his mother, the narrator thinks she does not understand why he has chosen to live on his own at such a young age. She does not believe that he is old enough to be out on his own and should think about returning home. The neighborhood in which he lives is seen as lower income

¹⁴ Ibid.

housing and he chooses to live there because he believes it is the only place where he can express himself freely without repercussions from his parents (the older generation). Along the way, he meets a series of shady and interesting characters. From the callboy who lives in his apartment complex to his friend he calls the Wizard, various groups are represented. Jazzers, Teds, colored people, and “newer” Mods are represented throughout the pages. By the end of the novel he is so disgusted with the racial violence in Notting Hill that he decides he must flee the country to gain true independence and enjoy his youth (he is turning twenty, and sees that as the cut off between youth and adulthood in England). Following his decision to leave, before getting on the plane he sees a group of immigrants and welcomes them to England, despite the fact that stiff regulations would soon be placed on immigration of West Indians into England.

This is very relevant to the argument presented in this paper, and it proves that not all the violence affected the youth the same way. The narrator is sympathetic of the events in Notting Hill and invites the new immigrants into England with open arms. This was not celebrated the same way by the press, as they began to talk about regulations on the immigrant population. Earlier in the novel, the narrator even goes on to say that “no one in the world under [twenty] is interested in that [nuclear] bomb of yours one little bit”, providing a great example of the time in which the youth grew up.¹⁵ As mentioned earlier in the paper, teenagers were well aware that they live in a time of growing anxiety about the Soviet Union and nuclear arms. With the Cold War well under way, the youth had developed distaste for anything associated with the elder generation and their political agendas. This makes taking the accounts of the *Times* focusing on youth violence as absolute truth unsafe; some teens rejected violence and promoted pacifism as a way to cope with the political climate.

Another great representation of youth can be found in the documentary *We Are The Lambeth Boys*. The film is about a group of young Teddy Boys in England, coping with their new lifestyles as consumers and teenagers. Conversation during the group meetings often focused around the youth clubs, present an accurate portrayal of the new youth culture. The documentary, which dives into various aspects of teenage life during the 1950s, was commissioned by the Ford of Britain group, and shown across England. The boys from the youth club describe their clothing and other important aspects of their daily lives. They go to work during the week and on the weekends they want to go to the youth club to socialize and have a bit of fun with the girls on the dance floors. Interestingly, the club is open to boys and girls, and though they are both represented in the film, it focuses heavily on the

¹⁵Colin MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 35.

boys. Many of them bring up issues like female roles in relationships and how to spend their earnings while living paycheck to paycheck. The various jobs are basic labor for the boys and secretarial jobs for the girls. Most who lived in flats had jobs being postal workers, butchers, and print shop workers, and earned a good living by these trades, while others chose to become apprentice workers and found careers for life. A rejection of the older generation throughout the film is common, and they disliked forfeiting their youth. The film enlightens the viewer about the greater aspects of teenage consumerism and culture, and is an important view for historians attempting to make sense of this era. Although, the film shows that there was not universal rejection from the press, it does not paint the boys in the best way - they are constantly seen howling at girls and poking fun at boys dressed in "square" clothing. Nonetheless, it does show that interest in the youth phenomena had made a clear impact on many in the English media, and a documentary was commissioned.

The last great indicator that people were finally paying attention to Rock and Roll and the youth response was a television show created in 1957 to rival "American Bandstand," "Oh Boy!" It is similar to the future program "Top of the Pops" which would feature many up and coming artists. In the early days of the show, the ratings were not very high but by the sixth week it grew to considerable figures. This meant that the youth and older generations began to watch the show "Oh Boy!" because it was one of the only places outside the youth club dances that they could hear music.¹⁶ The show launched the careers of many notable English musicians, and helped to establish Rock and Roll in the British media. Along with "Oh Boy" the BBC also introduced the "Six-Five" special, and was their pop show that had been created to incorporate a teenage audience. This too was very successful in establishing a teenage following - they wanted to see their idols perform live. Both of these shows had come out before the Notting Hill riots, and the *Times* later reported that Rock and Roll was poison for the children who were involved in the disturbances of the 1950s. Had rock music made the youth violent?

These three examples showcased the way the general public was first being exposed to the Rock and Roll phenomena along with the growing youth culture that had sprung up from the working-class neighborhoods all over Britain. But as there was a positive reaction to the new culture, there was also a negative one. In the early 1950s, newspapers were constantly reporting on disturbances and actions taken by teens. The *Times* helped shape the popular opinion created across England. It was also useful in creating a catalyst and making Rock and

¹⁶ Unless they had purchased the music at a record shop or tuned into the BBC radiobroadcasts.

Roll out to be a very disturbing brand of musical expression. There are two different riotous acts that must be taken into account before the analysis of the *Times* begins: the disturbances of 1956 and the 1958 Notting Hill riots. The disturbances of 1956 are heavily rooted in the hysteria surrounding the emergence of *Rock Around the Clock*, while the 1958 rioting in Notting Hill is shaped around the Teddy Boy tendency to gravitate towards group-mindedness and racism. It must be separated this way because the media links them in the *Times* as having direct connection. Instead, they are separate incidents created by the working-class youth, and have no ties to one another in terms of the grand scale of youth culture. The appreciation for black rhythm and blues gave early hope to a peaceful existence with the blacks in England, but the Notting Hill riots were carried out as aggressive violence adopted by the working-class Teddy Boys. The shift from Rock and Roll hysteria to the Notting Hill riots will be analyzed through the *Times*, as well as secondary research, and will suggest that the media portrayed teenagers as racist, disobedient children. While the media thought this about the youth, many stories would arise in the paper about the role of immigrants in England, and reporting on the incidents may have escalated violence by exploiting immigration issues in the newspaper.

The first disturbances surrounding the film *Rock Around The Clock* happened in 1956. During these showings across England, the youth wanted to get up and dance to express their interest in the music. Not surprisingly, the elderly population saw this as a disruption during the viewing of the film, and they did not want the teenagers to jump and jive to the music. It was not until youths were ejected from the film that many had taken action in the streets. Many accounts say that the youth were dancing outside the film halls, blocking traffic, and shouting loud lyrics to the popular songs from the film. This was not a violent protest, but it certainly was seen as an unnecessary display of affection for the music. As was previously mentioned, the youth had accepted the music as a rejection of the older generation who they saw as “square” for not wanting to accept Rock and Roll.

On September 5th, 1956 the *Times* reported the rioting happening during screenings of the film *Rock Around The Clock*. It went on to discuss various youths that had been fined by the court for indecent behavior in a public area.¹⁷ Fear that the riots would spread made the paper assure that the rioting had been contained in the London area, and that it had not spread out to the other provinces. Subsequent stories proved this assumption false, but it does not explain why the papers were willing to make such a bold statement. It needs to be stressed that the paper did not want the discourse to spread throughout Britain, but were helpful regardless. By September 12, 1956 the *Times* had given a

¹⁷*Times* [London], September 5, 1956. “Rock and Roll Disturbances.”

more accurate and in depth reporting on the incidents involving the teens. In response, the movie had been taken out of various cinemas because it presented “matter likely to lead to public disorder.”¹⁸

The following day, news that the Rock and Roll “disorders” had spread to the north was reported, and the film was being banned all over England. The containment that the *Times* hoped for was not successful. Rock was treated more as a plague than anything, and the youth were responsible for the spread. The only issues that the media were reporting on were stories of teens getting arrested for merely dancing to the music, and may have spread across the country as a sign of solidarity between the youths. Not until September 21st 1956, when six hundred youths had organized in Oslo, Norway and some were taken in for questioning, did the issue reach continental scale.¹⁹ For a group that large to organize there must have been some communication between the youths participating in dancing and shouting of loud Rock and Roll lyrics; or was the *Times* responsible again for the story reaching other countries? From the small groups who had reacted just two weeks prior, to the very large organization of youth in Oslo, there were clear decisions made by the youths to stick together, and the hysteria was spreading across the continent. The youth seemingly adopted the “you-can’t-take-us-all” mindset in order to combat the police. More importantly the newspaper was depicting the youths action as the worst case of disorder in the modern era. This may have moved the youths to participate in more and more discourse, and the newspapers may have been pushing the youth to rebel. With a concert that was held at Prince of Wales Theatre on September 25th 1956, the older generations found a way to make fun of the youths and their music, driving a deeper wedge between the generations.

Terry Thomas, a comedian during the 1950s, was hosting a comedy show that was attended by upper-class adults and elderly population. Because of the older audience, Thomas used the opportunity to poke fun at the clashes between the business owners and the youths who had attended the showing of *Rock Around The Clock*. When Thomas’ “outrageously square” performance of *Rock Around The Clock* was underway, the audience laughed with him in support of his rendition of the popular song.²⁰ Then out of nowhere, an elderly couple began to dance in the aisle and was asked to leave by the manager. Of course, this was preplanned but it sent the audience into a frenzy of laughter. Whether or not he meant it as a joke against the “square” elderly people in the audience or the youth, the *Times* interpreted it as a joke about the teenagers’ actions. Thomas was well known for performing characters

¹⁸ *Times* [London], September 12, 1956.

¹⁹ *Times* [London], September 21, 1956. Rock and Roll Clash In Oslo.

²⁰ *Times* [London], September 25, 1956. Prince Of Wales Theatre.

that made fun of upper-class people who thought they were above others, so quite possibly he was looking to satirize the beliefs about youths, but the media took it as an attack against the youth for being disruptive.

Throughout the remaining coverage of the trials and court fines for the youths, the *Times* attempted to explain why the Rock and Roll riots occurred. By September 15th “Birmingham, Belfast, Bristol, Liverpool, Carlisle, Bradford, Blackburn, Preston, Blackpool, Bootle, Brighton, Gateshead, and South Shields” banned the film that was becoming the main issue with teenage “rioting” across the nation.²¹ The *Times* once again takes on the same belief of Hoggart that the youth were just being sidetracked on their morals by the American perversion of music, and they sought the same kind of “fulfillment” as the American youths.²² They also described a maddening effect that seemed to take hold of the youth; despite the fact there was more dancing in other films of the era. This general panic made them fear the youth had gone morally wrong somewhere. If Rock ‘ and Roll could make their children do this, then there was no telling what the youth could do in future rioting. No one at the time could have predicted the Notting Hill riots, but if the public thought that the Rock ‘ and Roll riots were bad, then they were in for a rude awakening come August 1958. Either way, the media used Rock and Roll as the scapegoat for rioting and disorders, and failed to realize that they had played a significant role in creating a wedge between the young and old.

Two years later, rioting broke out during the Notting Hill festival in London. This was nothing like the early riots (even though the same word is used) based around music hysteria; the reason for this disorder was racism. As the West Indian population began to increase in the London working-class neighborhoods, the fear by the inhabitants that they would lose jobs had reached the boiling point. This was not reported on until after the rioting, as the *Times* were looking to explain the disturbances. They were quick to blame the youth for the revolts as if it was somehow a conspiracy against the overall population of England. It was not just confined to the London area, and many other fights over territory were under way by the more extreme youth groups. The Teddy Boys, as discussed early in the paper, were very hostile over their neighborhoods and the presence of the immigrants (especially blacks) sent them into frenzy that would result in the Notting Hill riots of 1958.²³

²¹ *Times* [London], September 15th, 1956. U.S Scenes Recall “Jungle Bird House At The Zoo”.

²² *Times* [London], September 15th, 1956. U.S Scenes Recall “Jungle Bird House At The Zoo”.

²³ Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990), pg. 82.

The Teddy Boys were well known in the newspapers by the time the Notting Hill riots broke out. During the early 1950s, the government and police had issued warnings to try and monitor their behavior in various cities. One disgruntled head master of a boy's school even suggested that there be a lower wage for those who are under 21, as they had been causing trouble with their newfound wealth. In Oxford it was motioned, and dismissed with a vote that all boys wearing Edwardian dress would not be allowed into dance halls for fear that they might cause disruption. Blaming the entire riot on the Teddy Boys seems unfair, regardless they became the focus of many aggressive actions against the blacks, and were the ones associated with the working class pro-white mentality. The paper was looking to make an example out of them just as the courts were. It is not clear whether it is a general attack on the youth, or just the Teds, but either way for the purpose of this paper it must be assumed that the *Times* was rejecting youth movements as a whole. This proved to be very hypocritical by the newspapers, as many articles following the riots were in support of new immigration laws that limited the West Indian population.

On Saturday, September 20th 1956, the court cases of thirteen youths who were accused of starting fights in the Notting Hill area were called to the stand. Eight of the thirteen were found not guilty by the judge, and the remaining five faced up to two years imprisonment.²⁴ Notably, of the eight men who were not accused of any crime, four of them were over the age of thirty. This may have happened due to the fact that the government was trying to make examples of the youths involved in the violent riots, rather than adult males. Prior to this incident in the courts, there were twenty-six youths charged in the early court cases of the riot. Fifteen of the men were white, and the remainder were black, and "all except one were in or just out of their teens".²⁵ There seemed to be an ongoing trend that the youth were being sentenced for crimes during the riots, but the older men who had become involved were getting off. Furthermore, the paper did not seem to cover older men's cases, while the media chose to exploit the teen's cases.

Just ten days after the court cases, nine youths were on trial for attacks on colored men. The "Nine youths, aged of 17 and 20, from the Shepherds Bush area of West London set out in the early hours of the morning on what one of them was alleged to have described as a 'nigger hunting'" expedition and wanted to inflict pain directly on the black community.²⁶ Five men were attacked, and three of them were

²⁴*Times* [London], September 20th 1958. "Prison Sentences For Making Affray."

²⁵*Times* [London], September 3rd, 1958. "Magistrate Asks For Voluntary Curfew."

²⁶*Times* [London], September 13, 1958. "Nine Youths On Trial: Alleged

considered greatly injured due to the beatings²⁷. The youths who were involved seemed to show no regret for their actions, and said they had been provoked by the colored people in the neighborhood as they “spat” on the street while the boys walked past, and even had pulled weapons on them during previous occasions. Although this could not be proven, the youths seemed to come up with any excuse to give justification. Surprisingly, the paper does not show contempt for the youths going out and beating the black immigrants. When it was a larger event like the Notting Hill race riots, the paper took it out on the youth, but the isolated incident did not follow up with any responses by the correspondent. The youths acted out this way because they felt threatened after the race riots and said aggression had been going on for a long time before Notting Hill. The Teddy Boys had been at the fair in preparation for a fight (if they needed to defend themselves), and other youth involved adopted the same mentality as the Teddy Boys. Although it does not say if they were indeed Teddy Boys, clearly they shared the same racist values as their Teddy counterparts. Actions by the Teddy Boys are further proof that there were separate subcultures within the working-class community of youths because they had become the main aggressors instead of the youth as a whole during the Rock ‘ and Roll hysteria of 1956.

After the stories were printed in the *Times*, there were still acts of aggression being taken out on the blacks and new political agendas were formed around it. Clearly the youth was instrumental in this new way of life, and they forced their own names into the history books by participating in the Rock and Roll riots, and the more bluntly racist Notting Hill riots. The government issued several warnings to the immigrant community following the riots and many hateful articles littered the paper. This then led to the newspapers covering many of the race issues that were happening between political candidates during the following months. One candidate believed that after the race riots, harsh immigration laws should be set in motion and the idea of a mixed culture amongst blacks and whites was “biological sacrilege.”²⁸

Due to the *Times* involvement and coverage of the teenage subcultures, a set back in racial acceptance reverberated through out England and the British Commonwealth. Many were deported due to their involvement in Notting Hill but for the most part, the deportees were only defending themselves from the masses that attacked them. The music, style, and attitudes shared by the working-class youth of Britain did not ensure that they agreed on every subject, especially racial

Attacks On Coloured Men.”

²⁷*Times* [London], September 13, 1958. “Nine Youths On Trial: Alleged Attacks On Coloured Men.”

²⁸*Times* [London], September 18, 1958. “Colour Bar As Election Issue.”

issues. The Jazzers who were close to many black musicians and lived in the same neighborhoods did not agree with the Teddy Boy policy of "Nigger Hunting." The divide between the youth subcultures does not seem to be recognized in the *Times* and often they are seen as the same groups throughout the coverage of the Notting Hill race riots and the *Rock Around The Clock* disturbances. The suggested divides between the youth subcultures are supported by scholars such as Dick Hebdige, and rejected by Richard Hoggart. The *Times* clearly and irrationally rejected the youth, as demonstrated through the daily coverage of the disturbances. In years to come, changes in youth culture throughout England would become even more shocking, especially to the conservative generation who had first rejected Rock ' and Roll. The emergence of Mods, Skin Heads, Punks, and other subcultures among the youth in the years that followed, led the *Times* to continue covering the pressing issues it faced daily with the newly found teenage youth subcultures; ones which were formed during the not so quaint 1950s.