

Homolka's singers is much more common, full of unfulfilled (and rarely fulfilled) loves, streams, potatoes and sheep... and is far from our imaginary world where "Little hands, don't worry. You are not going to work" holds good.

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**Marta Kolářová (ed.):
REVOLTA STYLEM. Hudební
subkultury mládeže v České
republice. [Revolt in Style.
Music Youth Subcultures in the
Czech Republic.]**

Praha: Slon 2012, 264 pp.
+ photographs.

Revolt in Style is a much awaited contribution bridging the gap in the literature on subcultures from an insider's perspective, an occasion to celebrate and comment on its achievements. Marta Kolářová, a researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, known for her studies on the alter-globalization movement and radical women's activism, set up a team of four significant scholars/active participants in musical and social movements.

The book opens with the editor's goal being to question the specificity of subcultures in post-socialist society in the era of globalization and the usefulness of traditional approaches. After defining subcultures via Jenks, Gelder, Thornton, Bennett, Williams, etc., Kolářová discusses the Chicago School studies of Bohemians and delinquents, Talcott Parsons, and the Birmingham school of

cultural studies' romantic approach to subcultures as resistance to hegemony, with the milestone Hebdige's essay on the symbolic destruction of the social order. Because of Kolářová's interest in gender issues it does not come as a surprise to have the volume enriched by a feminist critique of subcultures as subversive towards society, but not so to the gender regime. The legacy of the Birmingham School and its armchair class approach is dealt with by the leaders of post-subculture studies such as Muggleton. The rave subculture of the 1990s required a new theoretical paradigm of resistance and thus researchers switched their terminology to youth lifestyles, scenes, neo-tribes and Maffesoli's discourse on nomadism. Kolářová follows the developments in the field up to the re-emerged politicization of Reclaim the Streets! EarthFirst! or political anarcho-punk. The former Soviet block subcultures are seen as a life-style choice, not a class issue. Czech writings on subcultures include Vaněk's study of pre-1989 punk of 2002 and Smolík's Youth Subcultures of 2010, which, however, fails to connect Czech subcultures with theory. Kolářová's team focuses on classic subcultures in the contemporary Czech Republic with the aim to interpret their values, politics, structure, lifestyle and relationship to the mainstream and commodification, using "views from the inside," thick description and memory work. In-depth interviews, participant observation in clubs and concerts, lyrics and internet debates, symbols, values, drugs, politics, religions, ideologies, and hierarchies were processed through Atlas coding with the aim to describe and interpret data on the background of existing theories.

A question remains whether the works of the Frankfurt school, especially Adorno (commodification, culture industry, etc.) should not be a part of the subcultural theory scheme.

Michaela Pixová, a doctoral student at Charles University's Faculty of Science (researching alternative spaces in Prague) and a member of Guma Guar political art collective, presents in her chapter *Czech Punk outside and behind the Curtain* two eras of punk's three decades' history: the authentic punk of pre-1898 and two decades of globalized, "contaminated" punk. While British punk of the 1980s was a reaction to economics, the Czechs responded to politics: here Pixová makes a good point – this proves the failure of the universality of the Birmingham School class theories: punk in the Czechoslovakia of the 1980s, allegedly a classless society, was a position against establishment, not a class statement. The lack of goods on the socialist market led to DIY flourishing and precluded commodification from happening in the West. Pre-1989 bands have gained a cult folkloric status attracting otherwise conformist fans. The globalized era punks connect with other subcultures in their fight for social change, squatters, travelers, freetekno, and skinheads. Today's punks combine their lifestyle with study, career, or family, shun the skinny, dirty unhealthy look of the first era and fragment into subgroups such as music punk and opinion punk (critical, less lyrical and commercial).

Ondřej Slačálek of Charles University's Faculty of Arts penned a chapter *Czech Freetekno – Moving Space of Autonomy*, which is truly groundbreaking, x-raying the secrets of sound systems and collective

hedonism. Slačálek disagrees with Keller in the diagnosis of the subculture as consumer culture pointing out its autonomous, alternative and oppositional form and is also critical of Smolík as a "good policeman" with his armchair benevolence. After Britain banned raves, a radical part of the scene left for Europe and in 1994 Spiral Tribe and Mutoid Waste Company systems played in the Czech Republic at the Freetekno festival near Hostomice. After that, local sound systems, e.g., Ladronka, Cirkus Alien, etc., formed and parties thrived in squats, pubs, clubs and former military grounds, attracting up to 12,000 visitors by 2001. Slačálek uses the concept of Hakim Bey's autonomous zone and nomadic heterotopies freedom. Technology connected with nature create liminal egalitarian (with the exception of the scorned youngsters, "ještěři," those under 23 years of age) experience, spiritual in the energy and ethos of a tribal community. Freetekno means no money (legal renting of meadows for a fee is a problem) as well as an elite freedom lifestyle. Slačálek's informers from sound systems, fire show, organizers, etc., describe their rituals, connecting people of all walks of life (they would put their hand into fire for me, p. 95) as adventures of summer camps and romanticism of White Gypsies (some organize workshops for Romani children), the radicality of hedonism – loudness of music, disrespect for private property, drugs. Tekno met punk in squats like Ladronka and Milada. Girls sell drinks and take care of visuals; boys carry heavy amps. As for politics, the paradox is the anarchism of the scene while voting ODS – all because of Paroubek's crushing 2005 Czechtech. It would be interesting

to include descriptions of how the trance effects in tekno work, e.g., graphs of brain waves alteration in connection to music frequencies and the effects of mind-altering chemical substances.

Anna Oravcová, a doctoral student of Charles University's Faculty of Humanities, bases her chapter *Underground of Czech Hip Hop* on the data from the Internet portal xchat.cz/hiphop, Hip Hop Foundation events and concerts around the Czech Republic, especially in the Prague club Pantheon. She presents hip hop as a global phenomenon and industry. The effects of the genre's commodification include cultural translation, adoption and adaptation of racially homogenous countries, where identification with the oppressed recharge hip hop's spiritual integrity. Czech hip hop dates from 1984 and Lesík Hajdovský's Jižák and continues with WWW, PSH, Indy and Wich, Bbarak magazine in 2001 and its Hip Hop Kemp festival with 20,000 in attendance. Rough masculinity and honest community are the main allures, not as leisure, but as a stable identity. Performers connect the right voice color, intonation and linguistic mastery with patriotism. Marihuana use is a defining element, marking many of the lyrical odes to the substance. The subculture gained its political dimension with entering public spaces as in the Hip Hop Subway Series in NYC and Prague. Oravcová's conclusion of "only time will show if the Czech Republic has its own, distinctive hip hop culture" seems a bit evasive.

Petra Stejskalová, a graduate of Charles University's Faculty of Social Sciences, describes skinheads in her chapter *Skinhead Subculture – where the Heavy Boots Got to*. Her study of this 50-year-old

subculture is most illuminating because it unravels the myth of the skinheads' exclusive right wing extremism. Stejskalová distinguishes three branches of skinheads: the small and diminishing national socialist (racist), the antifascist (antiracist), and the apolitical, which is the most frequent type. Her conclusion suggests a slow dissolution of the subculture under the pressure of the wide array of leisure time options.

Marta Kolářová's concluding chapter *Values, Structure and Lifestyle of Post-socialist Music Youth Subcultures* makes numerous original points, e.g., the absence of generational revolt, the conservative skinheads being the most authentic subculture with the weakest position of women (acquisition of subcultural identity through boyfriends), a scarcity of active women in all subcultures, descriptions of otherworldly sacred experience of music, aversion of skinheads to marihuana because of its non-European roots and postmodern individualism interpreted as intensified continuation of original Bohemian values.

The book is a complete success: fully equipped with bibliographies, authors' CVs, names and subject indexes. I found only one typo (p. 98: proto se); women's surnames without -ová endings are progressive (one exception – a misprint? on page 42: Corbinová); the relatively large typography makes the book pleasantly easy on the eye.

In the next edition I would love more music analysis – the focus on sociology and politics possibly explains the absence of major writers on the topic such as Simon Reynolds among the sources.

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