



Historical examples

How punk rock changed the civil society and democratization in Slovenia

Just as in Great Britain and other western countries, so as in Slovenia punk rock music represented a big influence of younger generations in the times of political transition. What made punk rock music so special at the end of 70's and 80's in Slovenia, was its confrontation with aesthetically dominant state-approved, commercial, mainstream, pop music and in the 90's alternatives to the privatization, denationalization and neoliberal capitalism. But in the 1970's rock music became an integral part of mainstream culture in Yugoslavia and through the next years a strong local punk scenes appeared and developed in Slovenia, which became much more than merely a music; it became a way of expressing something "alternative", an escape from (mild) totalitarianism and a social scene, which helped in the development of a powerful and (vocal) civil society, moves which contributed to the democratization processes in the 1980's, is how Žižek and other prominent Slovenian intellectuals describe the punk scene of that time, as Slovenian anthropologist dr. Rajko Muršič writes through his doctoral dissertation on how youth clubs played an important spaces for that as well.

Especially one, somewhere on the upper edge of Slovenske Gorice, along the border with Austria, in a distinctly rural environment, there was the Trate Youth and Rock Club, a hyperactive center of hyperurban culture, in the 80's known as the best punk-rock club in ex-Yugoslavia region, which was self-organized by youth. The club was a kind of subcultural monument, largely associated with the most famous alter band among the northeastern 'tribes' at the time - the Center for Dehumanization (CDZ).

CDZ found an opportunity to create their own "free territory" on the private property, as a self-determining institution. In February 2005, CDZ performed a live concert on the National television, where they presented songs like Blood, Purchase crap, I'm broke, Express yourself. "The last song was textually and visually the most effective: it was sung a capella, with tape over the mouths of the accompanying singers. A combination of bodily expression and mumbling noise created a message: after the bloodshed you buy shit, if you are not broke but in any case you are being interpellated by the forces of neoliberal capitalism, symbolized by a slogan in English language. A paradox: you can and you should express yourself, but you will have to pay for it. If you are broke, you can only scream, and yet you are mute, muzzled," writes Rajko Muršič.

Center for Dehumanization - Historical Youth Punk Rock Band

They have not been involved only in the music but also in making posters, recording and publishing videos, taking photos, VJing and making badges. Various motifs appeared on them, like face without the mouth, Karl Marx, or 'Soldiers are brothers' ... They also put the titles of the most striking songs they sang, like 'The future is in our hands!, Let's all be fighters!'

As a cultural phenomenon of its time, the band received the prestigious alternative award in 1987 - the Golden Bird, a recognition of creators and performers for outstanding achievements in various fields of cultural creation.



Festival without Borders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKpGmhBcme4>

One of their older songs (Victory): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdmgblgBiE0>

The group FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/CZD-193449350275/>

Historical inspiration from 2021

“Today the youth revolt is directed against consumer society and profit as fundamental dehumanizing elements of modern society. Previous generations have resisted ideology socialism, and the current ones are resisting consumerism” (Lozar 2010: 19–20). One of such recent youth mobilization, using creative means for raising awareness and affect public opinion, was in 2021 before the new water management law referendum, at the center of the dispute was a provision regulating the construction of buildings, including hotels, shops and restaurants, close to the sea, rivers or lakes. The law was rejected with 87% of attendance, while mobilization of young voters was historical. Slovenian Youth for Climate Justice Movement organized with the performance in front of the capital’s municipality, with the message: “What our future will look like in the event of the adoption of amendments to the Water Act. We young people spent a relaxed summer afternoon by the water (symbolically shown with a swimming pool), which is carelessly interrupted by politicians who want to concrete us. With the campaign we wanted to show the threat posed by changes of the Water Act for the future .”



Performance action Stuffed with Concrete. Foto: BoBo/Žiga Živulović ml., source MMC RTV Slovenia.

Sources:

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